

MID-ATLANTIC INFORMATION OFFICE
Philadelphia, Pa.

For release: Thursday, April 26, 2012

12-792-PHI

Technical Information: (215) 597-3282 • BLSInfoPhiladelphia@bls.gov • www.bls.gov/ro3
Media Contact: (215) 861-5600 • BLSMediaPhiladelphia@bls.gov

AVERAGE ENERGY PRICES IN THE PHILADELPHIA AREA – MARCH 2012

Consumers in the Philadelphia area paid more for electricity (27.6 percent) and utility (piped) gas (22.5 percent) than the U.S. city average in March 2012, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau’s regional commissioner, noted that gasoline prices for the Philadelphia area remained close to those nationwide as both local and national gasoline prices increased over the year. (See table A. All data in this release are not seasonally adjusted; accordingly, over-the-year analysis is used throughout.)

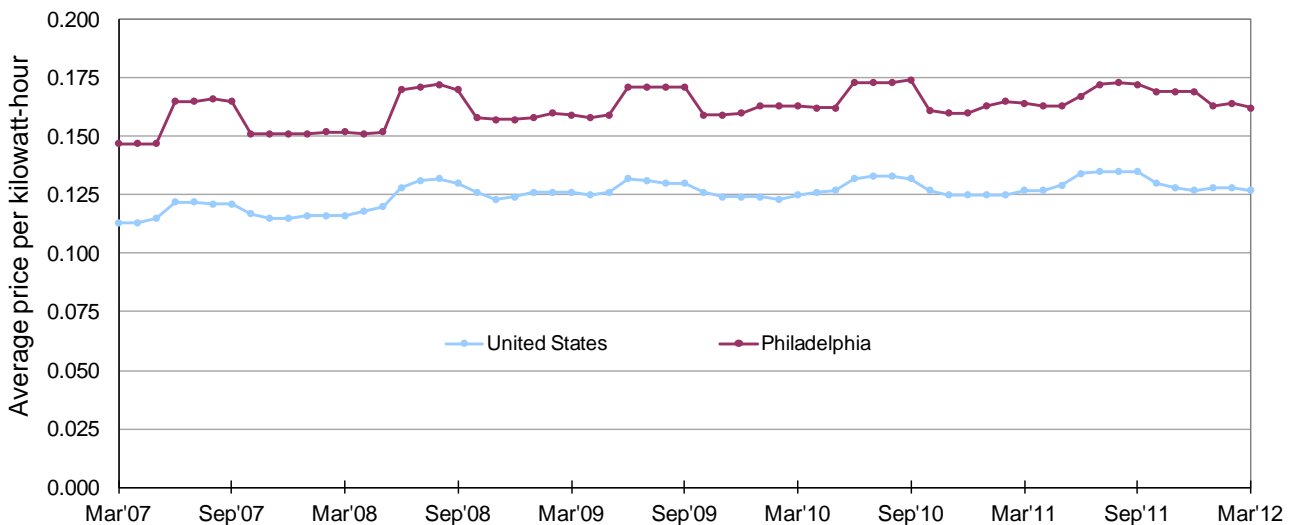
Table A. Average prices for electricity, utility (piped) gas, and gasoline, United States and the Philadelphia area, March 2011 and March 2012

Item	March 2011			March 2012		
	United States	Philadelphia	Percent difference	United States	Philadelphia	Percent difference
Electricity per kWh	\$0.127	\$0.164	29.1	\$0.127	\$0.162	27.6
Utility (piped) gas per therm	1.077	1.315	22.1	0.978	1.198	22.5
Gasoline per gallon	3.594	3.478	-3.2	3.918	3.777	-3.6

NOTE: A positive percent difference measures how much the price in the Philadelphia area is above the national price, while a negative difference reflects a lower price in the Philadelphia area.

A kilowatt-hour (kWh) of electricity cost Philadelphia consumers \$0.162 in March 2012, little changed from one year earlier, down just 1.2 percent. (See table 1.) Nationwide, electricity prices averaged \$0.127 in March 2012, unchanged from last year. Electricity prices have generally trended upward over the last five years, advancing 10.2 percent locally and 12.4 percent nationally since March 2007. (See chart 1.)

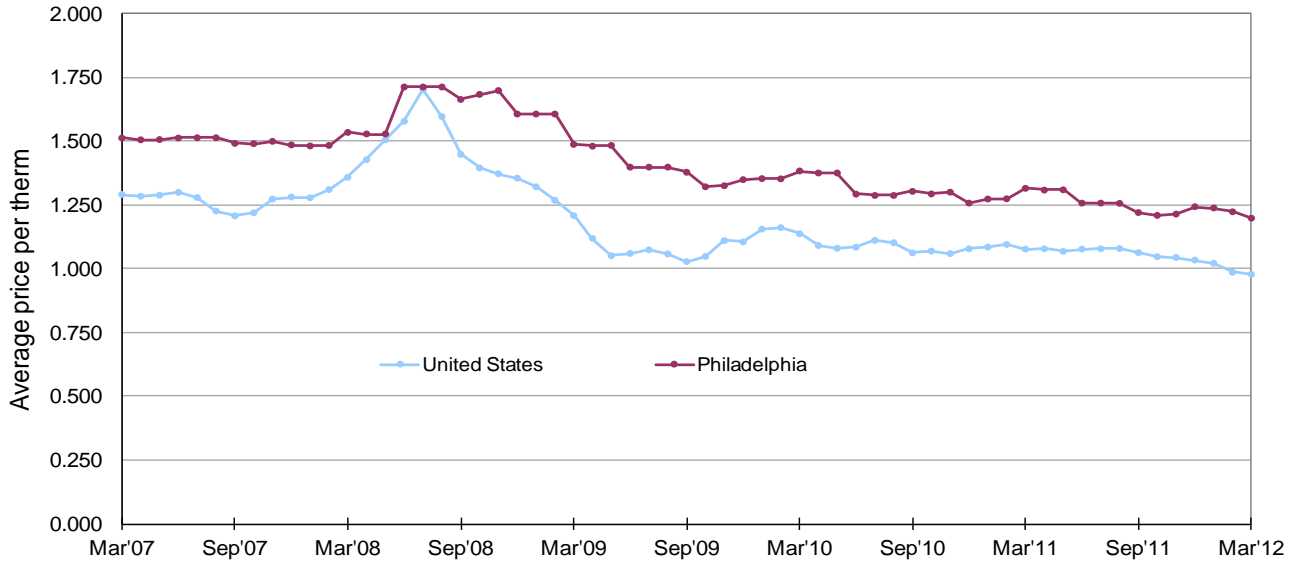
Chart 1. Average prices for electricity, United States and the Philadelphia area, March 2007-March 2012



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

A therm—a measure of constant heating value—of utility (piped) gas, commonly referred to as natural gas, in the Philadelphia area averaged \$1.198 in March 2012, a decrease of 8.9 percent from the previous March. Nationwide, a therm of natural gas averaged \$0.978 in March 2012, 9.2 percent lower than a year ago. Over the last five years, local prices have generally been higher than those for the nation. (See chart 2.)

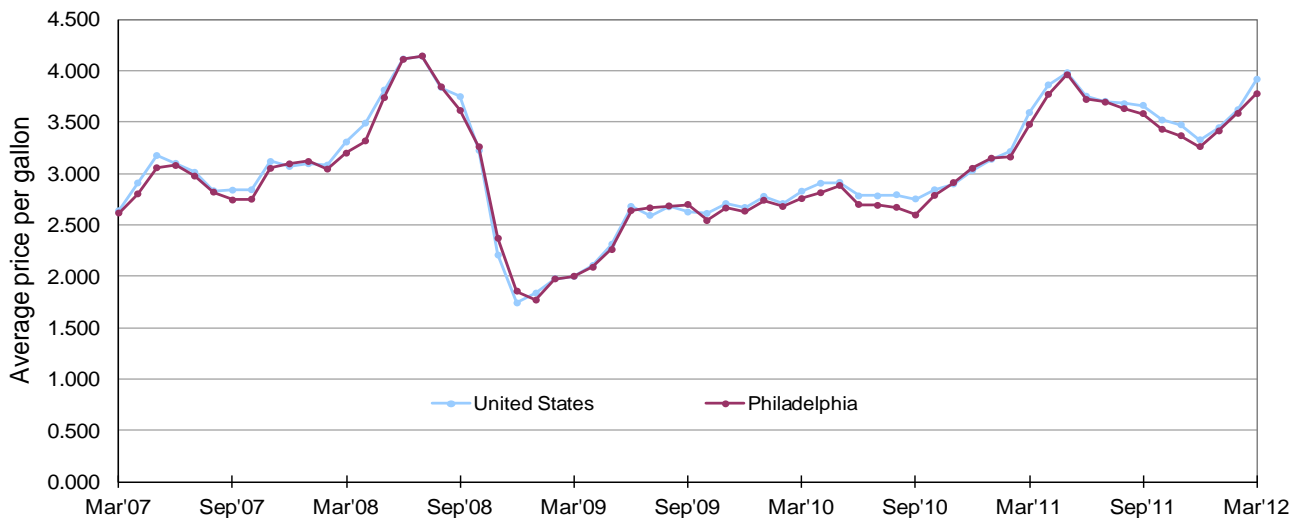
Chart 2. Average prices for utility (piped) gas, United States and the Philadelphia area, March 2007-March 2012



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

In March 2012, gasoline prices in the Philadelphia area averaged \$3.777 per gallon, close to the national average of \$3.918. Over the year, gasoline prices increased 8.6 percent in the Philadelphia area and 9.0 percent nationwide. Though gasoline prices are historically subject to rapid monthly fluctuations, local area prices have been close to the national average over the past five years. (See chart 3.)

Chart 3. Average prices for gasoline, United States and the Philadelphia area, March 2007-March 2012



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

The Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, Pa.-N.J.-Del.-Md. Consolidated Metropolitan Area includes Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties in Pennsylvania; Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem Counties in New Jersey; New Castle County in Delaware; and Cecil County in Maryland.

Additional Information

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339.

For personal assistance or further information on the CPI data, as well as other Bureau data, contact the Mid-Atlantic Information Office at 215-597-3282 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. ET. Information on the Consumer Price Index and other surveys and programs is available on our Web site at www.bls.gov/ro3/.

Technical Note

Average prices for electricity, utility (piped) gas, and gasoline are published monthly for the U.S. city average, the 4 regions, the 3 population size classes, 10 region/size-class cross-classifications, and the 14 largest local index areas. For electricity, average prices per kilowatt-hour (kWh) and per 500 kWh are published. For utility (piped) gas, average prices per therm, per 40 therms, and per 100 therms are published. For gasoline, the average price per gallon is published. Average prices for commonly available grades of gasoline are published as well as the average price across all grades.

Price quotes for 40 therms and 100 therms of utility (piped) gas and for 500 kWh of electricity are collected in sample outlets for use in the average price programs only. Since they are for specified consumption amounts, they are not used in the CPI. All other price quotes used for average price estimation are regular CPI data.

With the exception of the 40 therms, 100 therms, and 500 kWh price quotes, all eligible prices are converted to a price per normalized quantity. These prices are then used to estimate a price for a defined fixed quantity.

Table 1. Average prices for electricity, utility (piped) gas, and gasoline, United States and the Philadelphia area, March 2011-March 2012, not seasonally adjusted

Year and Month	Electricity per kWh		Utility (piped) gas per therm		Gasoline per gallon	
	United States	Philadelphia	United States	Philadelphia	United States	Philadelphia
2011						
March	0.127	0.164	1.077	1.315	3.594	3.478
April	0.127	0.163	1.078	1.308	3.863	3.771
May	0.129	0.163	1.068	1.309	3.982	3.961
June	0.134	0.167	1.077	1.257	3.753	3.721
July	0.135	0.172	1.078	1.257	3.703	3.695
August	0.135	0.173	1.079	1.256	3.680	3.632
September	0.135	0.172	1.063	1.220	3.664	3.584
October	0.130	0.169	1.047	1.209	3.521	3.431
November	0.128	0.169	1.044	1.214	3.475	3.369
December	0.127	0.169	1.034	1.243	3.329	3.263
2012						
January	0.128	0.163	1.021	1.238	3.447	3.415
February	0.128	0.164	0.986	1.223	3.622	3.586
March	0.127	0.162	0.978	1.198	3.918	3.777