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AVERAGE ENERGY PRICES IN THE PHILADELPHIA AREA, JULY 2009

Philadelphia area consumers paid prices well above the U.S. city average for electricity (30.5 percent) and utility (piped) gas (30.2 percent), but closer to the national average for gasoline (2.8 percent) in July 2009, according to data from the Consumer Price Index (CPI) published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that with few exceptions, local consumers have consistently paid more for electricity and utility gas than the national average during July over the last 10 years. (See table A.) On the other hand, local gasoline prices in July over the last decade were typically much closer to those for the United States as a whole.

Table A. Average prices for electricity, utility (piped) gas, and gasoline, United States and Philadelphia area, July 1999-2009

Year	Electricity per kWh			Utility (piped) gas per therm			Gasoline per gallon		
	United States	Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City	Percent Difference	United States	Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City	Percent Difference	United States	Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City	Percent Difference
1999	\$0.090	\$0.131	45.6	0.675	\$0.813	20.4	\$1.244	\$1.187	-4.6
2000	0.091	0.125	37.4	0.813	0.805	-1.0	1.642	1.669	1.6
2001	0.099	0.128	29.3	0.888	1.186	33.6	1.565	1.657	5.9
2002	0.095	0.130	36.8	0.772	0.982	27.2	1.496	1.431	-4.3
2003	0.098	0.129	31.6	0.986	1.144	16.0	1.567	1.529	-2.4
2004	0.099	0.135	36.4	1.058	1.250	18.1	1.982	1.995	0.7
2005	0.105	0.136	29.5	1.168	1.324	13.4	2.357	2.382	1.1
2006	0.118	0.155	31.4	1.213	1.603	32.2	3.046	3.158	3.7
2007	0.122	0.165	35.2	1.279	1.513	18.3	3.013	2.976	-1.2
2008	0.131	0.171	30.5	1.703	1.712	0.5	4.142	4.144	0.0
2009	0.131	0.171	30.5	1.074	1.398	30.2	2.594	2.667	2.8

A kilowatt-hour (kWh) of electricity cost Philadelphia area consumers \$0.171 in July 2009—unchanged from the previous year but 36.8 percent more than in 2000 when the local price was at its lowest July level over the last 10 years. Nationwide, electricity prices averaged \$0.131 in July 2009, also unchanged over the year. Except for last year, electricity prices have generally trended upward over the decade at both the local and national levels. Philadelphia prices have remained about 30 to 36 percent higher than the national average over the past several years in July. (See chart A.)

A therm—a measure of constant heating value—of utility (piped) gas, commonly referred to as natural gas, in the Philadelphia area averaged \$1.398 in July 2009, a decrease of 18.3 percent from the previous July. However, national prices dropped 36.9 percent over the last year to \$1.074 per therm; as a result, the percent difference between local and national prices widened to 30.2 percent in July 2009 from only 0.5 percent in July 2008. The local area's natural gas prices have been well above the nation's price level in May in 8 of the last 10 years. (See chart B.)

Chart A. Average prices for electricity, United States and Philadelphia area, July 1999-2009

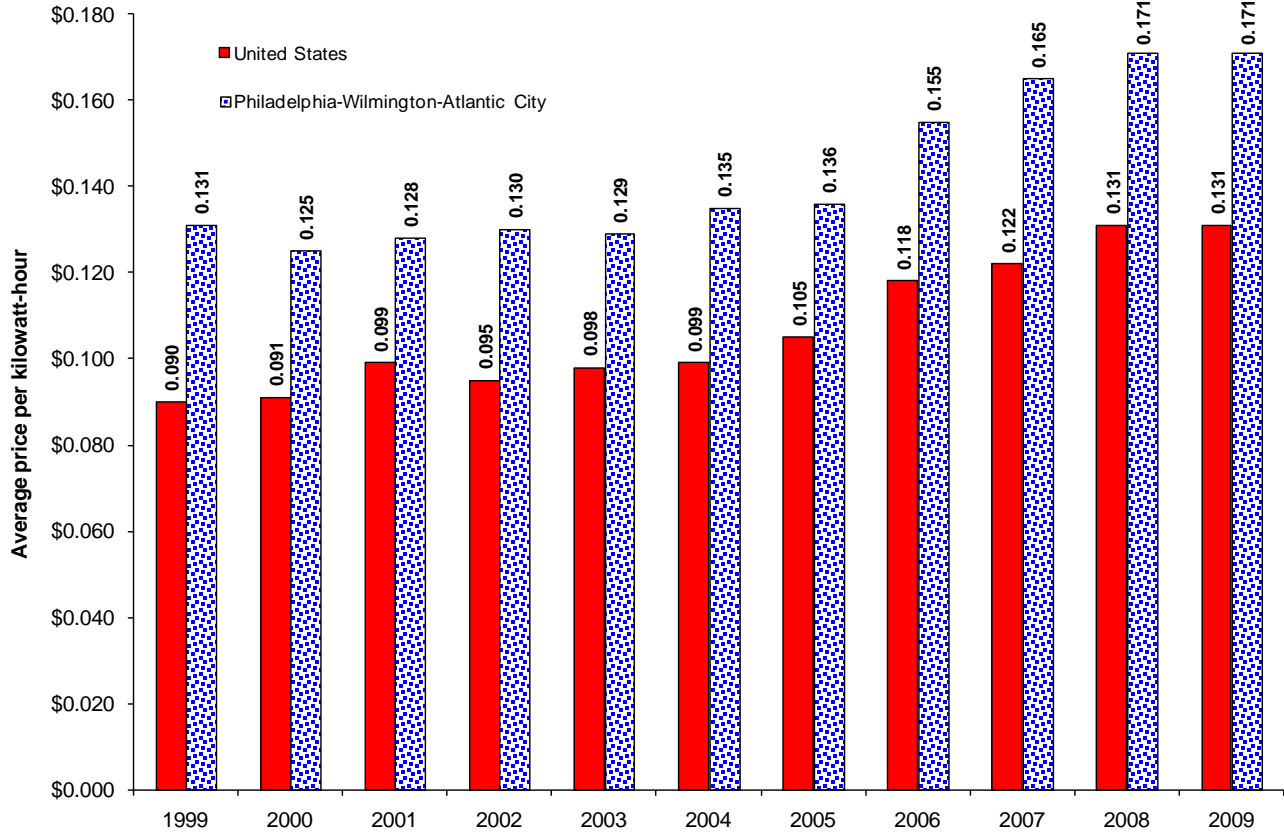
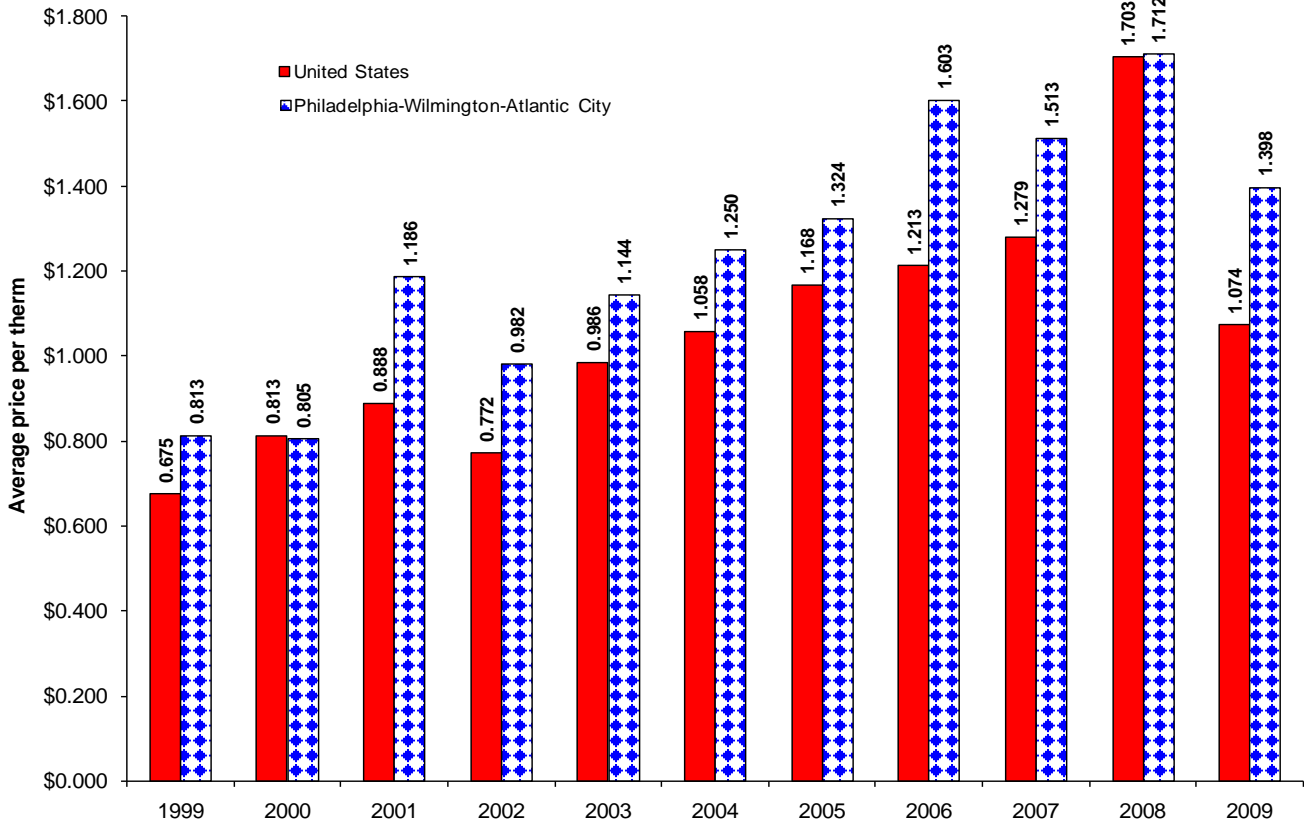
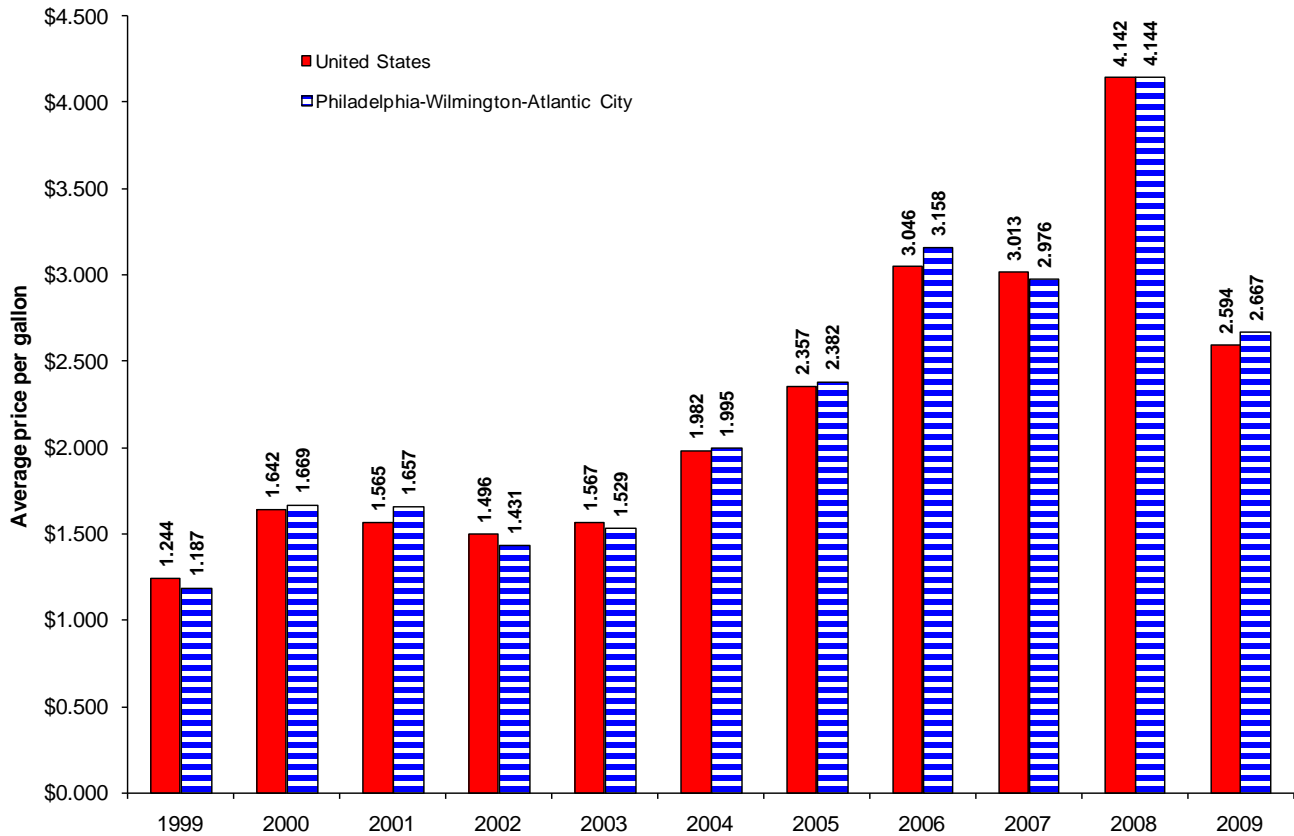


Chart B. Average prices for utility (piped) gas, United States and Philadelphia area, July 1999-2009



Gasoline prices are historically subject to rapid monthly fluctuations. Over the last decade, the price per gallon in both the United States and the Philadelphia area has generally trended upward. However, since last July, gasoline prices dropped 37.4 percent in the United States and 35.6 percent in Philadelphia. In July 2009, the price of gasoline in the Philadelphia area (\$2.667 per gallon) was 2.8 percent higher than the national price of \$2.594, the third-highest differential in July over the last 10 years. Local prices in July last exceeded those for the nation in 2006. (See chart C.)

Chart C. Average prices for gasoline, United States and Philadelphia area, July 1999-2009



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.