

MID-ATLANTIC INFORMATION OFFICE

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**AVERAGE ENERGY PRICES IN THE WASHINGTON-BALTIMORE AREA –
AUGUST 2009**

Washington-Baltimore area consumers paid 14.6 percent more than the U.S. city average for electricity and 10.6 percent more for utility (piped) gas in August 2009 as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. In contrast, the price for gasoline was 2.5 percent below the national average in the Washington-Baltimore area. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that the percent differential between the local and national prices for electricity widened from August 2008 while the differences between local and national prices for utility (piped) gas and gasoline were little changed over the year. (See table A and table 1.) (All data in this release are not seasonally adjusted; accordingly, over-the-year analysis is used throughout.)

Table A. Average prices for utility (piped) gas, electricity, and gasoline, United States and Washington-Baltimore area, August 2008 and August 2009

Item	August 2008			August 2009		
	United States	Washington-Baltimore	Percent difference	United States	Washington-Baltimore	Percent difference
Electricity (per KWH)	\$0.132	\$0.142	7.6	\$0.130	\$0.149	14.6
Utility (piped) gas per therm	1.596	1.746	9.4	1.058	1.170	10.6
Gasoline per gallon	3.838	3.821	-0.4	2.677	2.609	-2.5

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

A kilowatt-hour (kWh) of electricity cost Washington-Baltimore area consumers \$0.149 in August 2009, 4.9 percent more than one year earlier. Nationwide, electricity prices averaged \$0.130 in August 2009, a decline of 1.5 percent over the year. Electricity prices have generally trended upwards over the last five years both locally and nationally; however, Washington-Baltimore electricity prices have increased at a higher rate (58.5 percent) than U.S. prices (30.0 percent) since August 2004. (See chart A.)

A therm—a measure of constant heating value—of utility (piped) gas, commonly referred to as natural gas, in the Washington-Baltimore area averaged \$1.170 in August 2009, a decrease of 33.0 percent from the previous August. Nationwide, a therm averaged \$1.058 in August 2009, down 33.7 percent over the year. Since August 2004, local and national prices followed similar trends, with local prices remaining generally higher than those for the nation. (See chart B.)

In August 2009, gasoline in Washington-Baltimore averaged \$2.609 per gallon. Local gas prices were \$0.068 (or 2.5 percent) lower than the national average of \$2.677. The over-the-year changes were similar—down 31.7 percent in the Washington-Baltimore area and 30.3 percent nationwide. Though gasoline prices are historically subject to rapid monthly fluctuations, local gasoline prices have been close to the national average over the past five years. (See chart C.)

Chart A. Average prices for electricity, United States and Washington-Baltimore area, August 2004-2009

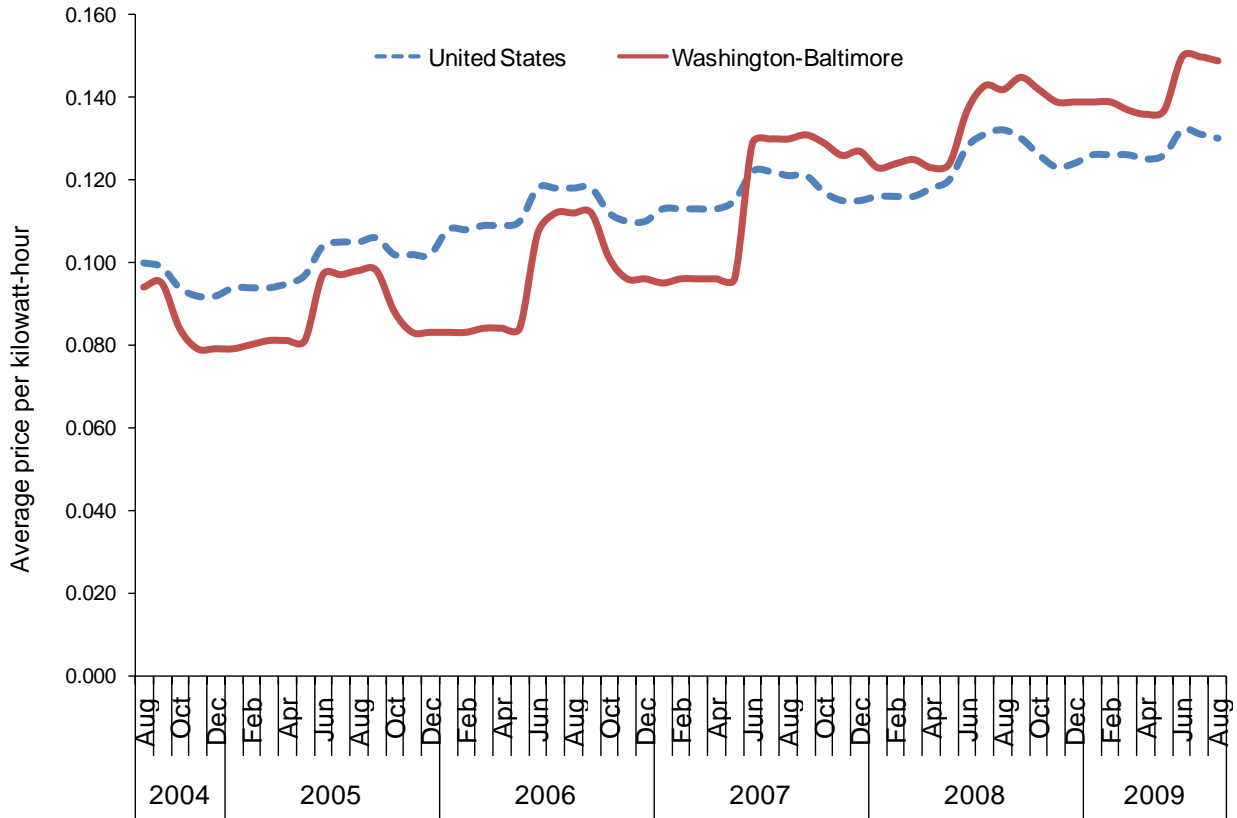


Chart B. Average prices for utility (piped) gas, United States and Washington-Baltimore area, August 2004-2009

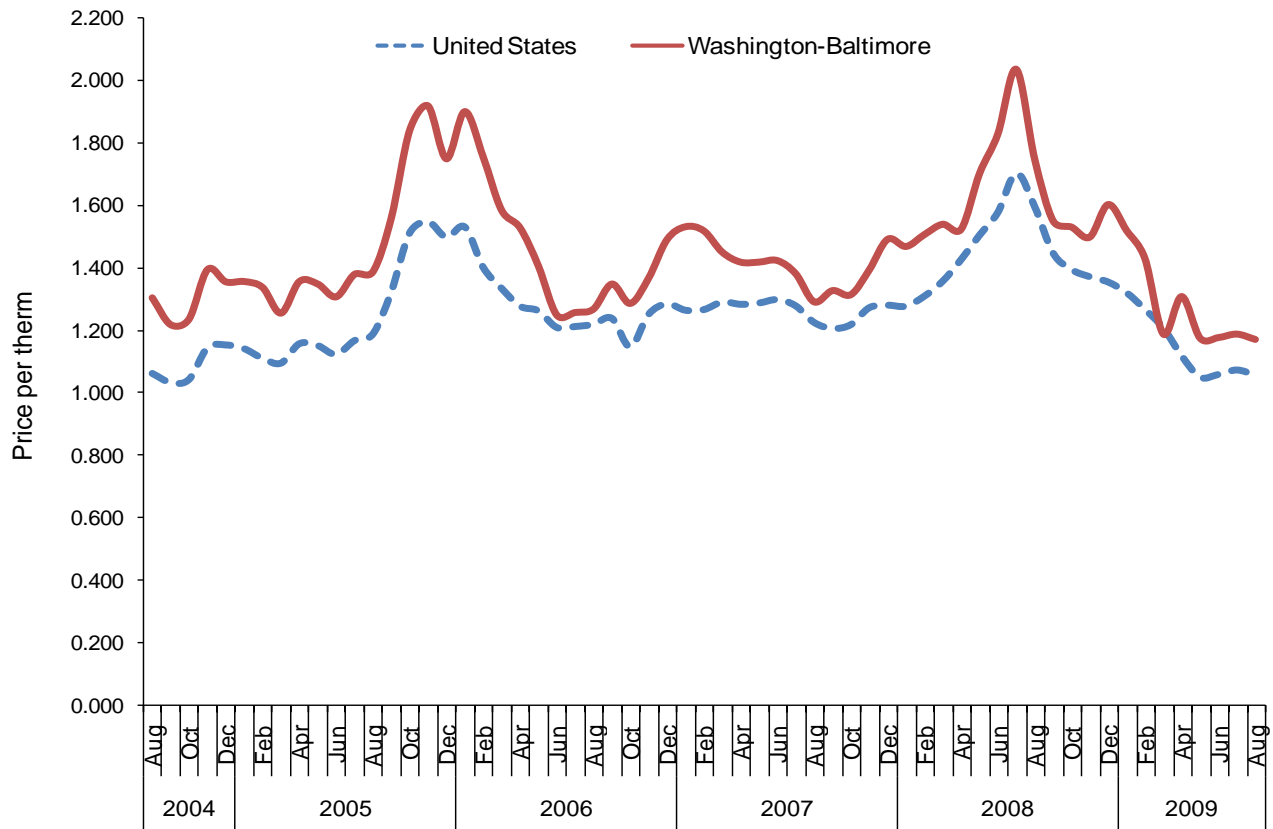
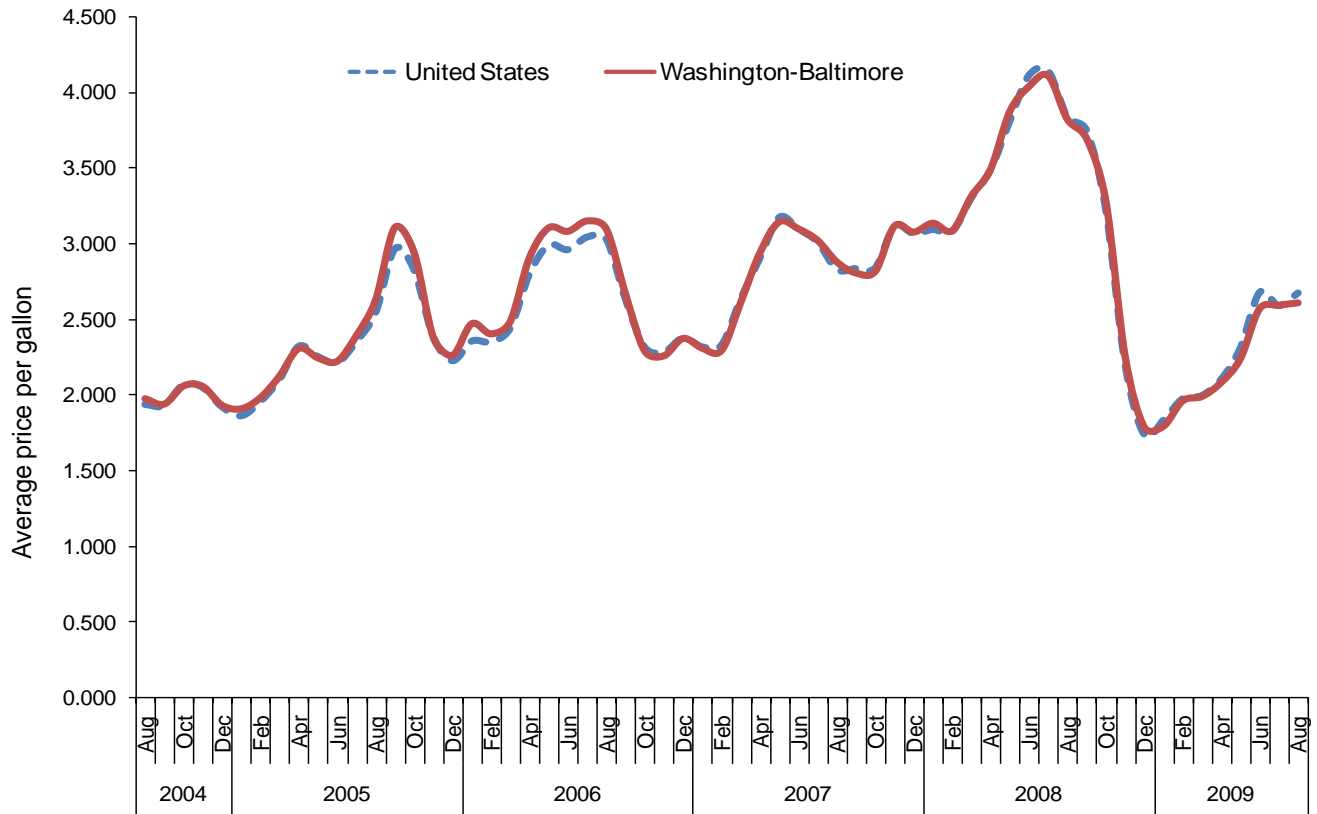


Chart C. Average prices for gasoline, United States and Washington-Baltimore area, August 2004-2009



The Washington-Baltimore, D.C.-Md.-Va.-W.Va., Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA) includes the District of Columbia; Baltimore City and the counties of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Carroll, Charles, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, and Washington in Maryland; the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Manassas, and Manassas Park and the counties of Arlington, Clarke, Fairfax, Fauquier, King George, Loudoun, Prince William, Rappahannock, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Warren in Virginia; and the counties of Berkeley and Jefferson in West Virginia.

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 Washington-Baltimore area, August 2008-August 2009, not seasonally adjusted

Year and Month	Electricity per kWh		Utility (piped) gas per therm		Gasoline per gallon	
	United States	Washington-Baltimore	United States	Washington-Baltimore	United States	Washington-Baltimore
2008						
August	0.132	0.142	1.596	1.746	3.838	3.821
September	0.130	0.145	1.448	1.549	3.749	3.693
October	0.126	0.142	1.395	1.529	3.225	3.281
November	0.123	0.139	1.372	1.497	2.208	2.257
December	0.124	0.139	1.355	1.601	1.742	1.787
2009						
January	0.126	0.139	1.321	1.518	1.838	1.794
February	0.126	0.139	1.268	1.428	1.979	1.962
March	0.126	0.137	1.208	1.187	2.000	1.990
April	0.125	0.136	1.119	1.307	2.107	2.083
May	0.126	0.137	1.051	1.174	2.314	2.240
June	0.132	0.150	1.060	1.176	2.681	2.571
July	0.131	0.150	1.074	1.187	2.594	2.593
August	0.130	0.149	1.058	1.170	2.677	2.609