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PHILADELPHIA AREA CONSUMER PRICE INDEX: SEPTEMBER 2009

Largest Over-the-Year Decline in Food at Home Prices since 1959

Philadelphia area shelter prices fell, while food at home prices were unchanged and energy prices rose in September, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that the shelter index rose 2.0 percent over the last 12 months, while the food at home index fell 3.9 percent (the largest over-the-year decrease since May 1959) and the energy index dropped 16.9 percent. (See table 1.)

Shelter prices decreased 0.4 percent in September due entirely to lower prices for other lodging away from home, including hotels and motels. Prices for both published components of the shelter index, owners' equivalent rent of primary residence and rent of primary residence, were 0.1 percent higher since August. Over the year, the owner's equivalent rent of primary residence and rent of primary residence indexes increased 2.9 and 1.1 percent, respectively.

The Philadelphia area shelter index stood at 280.392 on the 1982-84 reference base, which means that local residents would have had to spend \$28.04 last month for various types of shelter that cost \$10.00 in 1982-84.

Following a 0.8-percent decline in August, the food at home index was unchanged in September. Lower prices for a number of items, including nonfrozen noncarbonated juices and drinks, lettuce, and uncooked beef steaks were offset by higher prices for a variety of items such as chicken, other fresh fruits, and fats and oils.

The Philadelphia area food at home index stood at 213.560 on the 1982-84 reference base, which means that grocery shoppers in the Philadelphia area would have had to spend \$21.36 last month for a market basket of food items that cost \$10.00 in 1982-84.

Energy prices rose for the sixth consecutive month, up 14.8 percent since March and 0.2 percent since August. The recent one-month advance reflected higher prices for gasoline and fuel oil. Gasoline prices increased 0.5 percent since August but were 25.3 percent below their year-ago levels. Utility (piped) gas service prices declined 1.4 percent over the month and fell 17.1 percent since September 2008. Electricity prices were unchanged since August but rose 0.8 percent over the last 12 months.

The Philadelphia area energy index stood at 206.995 on the 1982-84 reference base, which means that energy users in the Philadelphia area would have had to spend \$20.70 last month for a group of energy items that cost \$10.00 in 1982-84.

The Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, Pa.-N.J.-Del.-Md., Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA) 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.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, Pa.-N.J.-Del.-Md. (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Expenditure category	Indexes			Percent change from-		
	July 2009	Aug. 2009	Sep. 2009	Sep. 2008	July 2009	Aug. 2009
All items	-	226.039	-	-	-	-
Food and beverages	-	205.367	-	-	-	-
Food	-	204.931	-	-	-	-
Food at home	215.243	213.594	213.560	-3.9	-0.8	0.0
Food away from home	-	187.826	-	-	-	-
Alcoholic beverages	-	208.618	-	-	-	-
Housing	-	235.599	-	-	-	-
Shelter	280.881	281.580	280.392	2.0	-0.2	-0.4
Rent of primary residence (1)	258.974	259.231	259.376	1.1	0.2	0.1
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence (1) (2)	286.334	287.371	287.653	2.9	0.5	0.1
Fuels and utilities	-	213.541	-	-	-	-
Household energy	191.251	191.627	191.613	-9.0	0.2	0.0
Gas (piped) and electricity (1)	211.205	210.790	209.924	-4.9	-0.6	-0.4
Electricity (1)	210.405	209.859	209.794	0.8	-0.3	0.0
Utility (piped) gas service (1)	208.004	207.937	205.035	-17.1	-1.4	-1.4
Household furnishings and operations	-	123.351	-	-	-	-
Apparel	-	106.339	-	-	-	-
Transportation	-	186.232	-	-	-	-
Private transportation	-	184.125	-	-	-	-
Motor fuel	233.230	235.074	236.395	-25.7	1.4	0.6
Gasoline (all types)	230.363	232.073	233.244	-25.3	1.3	0.5
Gasoline, unleaded regular (3)	230.623	232.846	233.508	-25.5	1.3	0.3
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade (3) (4)	225.993	226.678	228.993	-25.3	1.3	1.0
Gasoline, unleaded premium (3)	218.460	218.976	220.975	-24.4	1.2	0.9
Medical care	-	425.550	-	-	-	-
Recreation (5)	-	123.057	-	-	-	-
Education and communication (5)	-	130.132	-	-	-	-
Other goods and services	-	412.602	-	-	-	-
Commodity and service group						
Commodities	-	167.585	-	-	-	-
Commodities less food and beverages	-	145.370	-	-	-	-
Nondurables less food and beverages	-	179.574	-	-	-	-
Durables	-	107.528	-	-	-	-
Services	-	286.268	-	-	-	-
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less medical care	-	217.553	-	-	-	-
All items less shelter	-	208.540	-	-	-	-
Commodities less food	-	147.714	-	-	-	-
Nondurables	-	193.773	-	-	-	-
Nondurables less food	-	181.222	-	-	-	-
Services less rent of shelter (2)	-	298.057	-	-	-	-
Services less medical care services	-	274.947	-	-	-	-
Energy	205.602	206.517	206.995	-16.9	0.7	0.2
All items less energy	-	229.840	-	-	-	-
All items less food and energy	-	236.496	-	-	-	-

(1) This index series was calculated using a Laspeyres estimator. All other item stratum index series were calculated using a geometric means estimator.

(2) Indexes on a December 1982=100 base.

(3) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

(4) Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

(5) Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

- Data not available.

NOTE: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.