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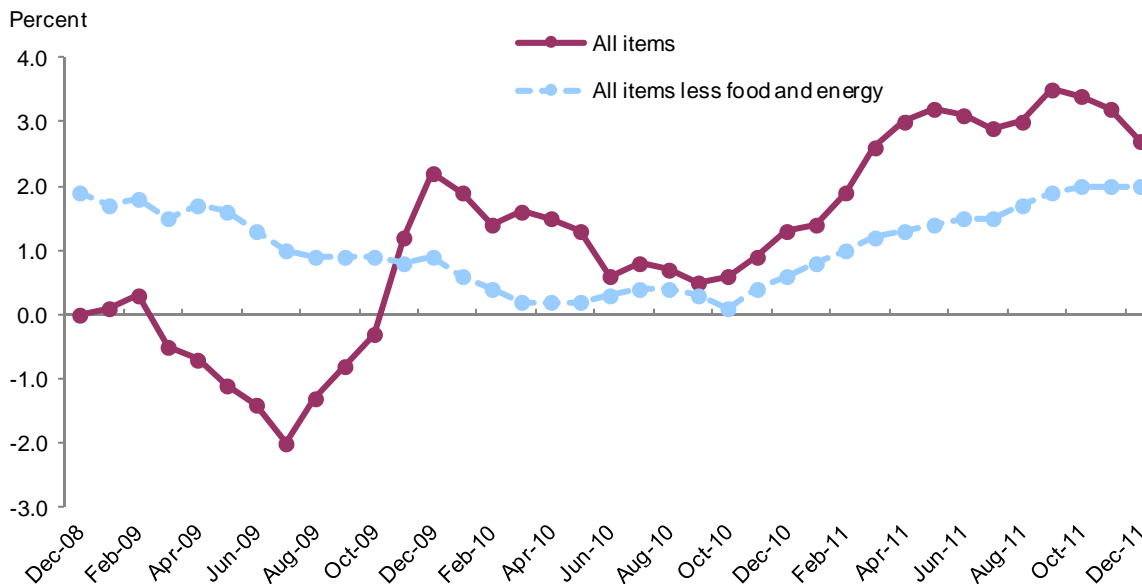
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX, WEST REGION – DECEMBER 2011

Area prices were down 0.3 percent over the past month, up 2.7 percent from a year ago

Prices in the West Region, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), declined 0.3 percent in December, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (See table A.) Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that the December decrease was influenced by lower prices for gasoline and apparel. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, month-to-month changes may reflect seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months, the CPI-U advanced 2.7 percent. (See chart 1.) Energy prices increased 7.2 percent, largely the result of an increase in the price of gasoline. The index for all items less food and energy advanced 2.0 percent since December 2010.

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, West Region, December 2008–December 2011



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Food

Food prices advanced 0.3 percent for the month of December. (See table 1.) Prices for food at home and food away from home both advanced 0.3 percent for the same period.

Over the year, food prices increased 4.5 percent. Prices for food at home advanced 5.7 percent since a year ago and prices for food away from home increased 2.9 percent.

Energy

The energy index decreased 3.6 percent over the month. The decrease was mainly due to lower prices for gasoline (-5.7 percent). Prices for natural gas service inched down 0.2 percent and prices for electricity declined 0.3 percent in December.

Despite recent declines, energy prices increased 7.2 percent over the year, largely attributable to higher prices for gasoline (11.2 percent). Prices paid for electricity rose 1.4 percent, while prices for natural gas service decreased 2.9 percent during the past year.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy was unchanged in December. Higher prices for shelter (0.3 percent) and medical care (0.3 percent) were offset by lower prices for categories such as apparel (-2.4 percent), other goods and services (-0.5 percent), and recreation (-0.2 percent).

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy advanced 2.0 percent. Components contributing to the increase included apparel (3.8 percent), medical care (3.5 percent), and shelter (1.9 percent).

Table A. West Region CPI-U monthly and annual percent changes (not seasonally adjusted)

Month	2006		2007		2008		2009		2010		2011	
	Monthly	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly	Annual
January	0.9	3.7	0.8	3.0	0.5	3.8	0.6	0.1	0.3	1.9	0.5	1.4
February	0.5	3.6	0.6	3.1	0.3	3.5	0.5	0.3	0.1	1.4	0.6	1.9
March	0.5	3.4	0.9	3.4	1.0	3.7	0.1	-0.5	0.3	1.6	0.9	2.6
April	0.7	3.4	0.6	3.3	0.4	3.5	0.3	-0.7	0.2	1.5	0.6	3.0
May	0.8	4.1	0.5	3.0	0.7	3.7	0.3	-1.1	0.1	1.3	0.3	3.2
June	-0.2	4.2	-0.2	3.0	0.9	4.9	0.6	-1.4	-0.1	0.6	-0.2	3.1
July	0.1	4.1	-0.1	2.8	0.4	5.3	-0.2	-2.0	0.1	0.8	-0.1	2.9
August	0.4	4.0	-0.1	2.4	-0.5	4.9	0.2	-1.3	0.1	0.7	0.2	3.0
September	0.1	3.0	0.2	2.5	-0.3	4.3	0.2	-0.8	-0.1	0.5	0.4	3.5
October	-0.3	2.2	0.5	3.3	-0.5	3.3	0.1	-0.3	0.1	0.6	0.0	3.4
November	-0.4	2.4	0.5	4.2	-1.8	1.0	-0.3	1.2	0.0	0.9	-0.2	3.2
December	0.0	3.1	-0.1	4.1	-1.1	0.0	-0.2	2.2	0.2	1.3	-0.3	2.7

CPI-W

In December, the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) was 222.968, down 0.4 percent from November. The CPI-W increased 2.8 percent over the year.

The January 2012 Consumer Price Index for the West Region is scheduled to be released on February 17, 2012.

Technical Note

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. The Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes CPIs for two population groups: (1) a CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) which covers approximately 87 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers 32 percent of the total population. The CPI-U includes, in addition to wage earners and clerical workers, groups such as professional, managerial, and technical workers, the self-employed, short-term workers, the unemployed, and retirees and others not in the labor force.

The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, and fuels, transportation fares, charges for doctors' and dentists' services, drugs, and the other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. Each month, prices are collected in 87 urban areas across the country from about 4,000 housing units and approximately 25,000 retail establishments--department stores, supermarkets, hospitals, filling stations, and other types of stores and service establishments. All taxes directly associated with the purchase and use of items are included in the index.

The index measures price changes from a designated reference date (1982-84) that equals 100.0. An increase of 16.5 percent, for example, is shown as 116.5. This change can also be expressed in dollars as follows: the price of a base period "market basket" of goods and services in the CPI has risen from \$10 in 1982-84 to \$11.65. For further details see the CPI home page on the Internet at www.bls.gov/cpi and the *BLS Handbook of Methods, Chapter 17, The Consumer Price Index*, available on the Internet at www.bls.gov/opub/hom/homch17_a.htm.

In calculating the index, price changes for the various items in each location are averaged together with weights that represent their importance in the spending of the appropriate population group. Local data are then combined to obtain a U.S. city average. Because the sample size of a local area is smaller, the local area index is subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. In addition, local indexes are not adjusted for seasonal influences. As a result, local area indexes show greater volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. NOTE: Area indexes do not measure differences in the level of prices between cities; they only measure the average change in prices for each area since the base period.

The West Region covered in this release is comprised of the following thirteen states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

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 Consumer Price Indexes, as well as other Bureau products, contact the Mountain-Plains Information Office at (816) 285-7000 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. CT.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods

West (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from—		
	Oct. 2011	Nov. 2011	Dec. 2011	Dec. 2010	Oct. 2011	Nov. 2011
Expenditure category						
All items	229.195	228.771	228.117	2.7	-0.5	-0.3
All items (December 1977=100)	370.481	369.796	368.738	-	-	-
Food and beverages	232.492	232.514	232.996	4.1	.2	.2
Food	232.328	232.345	232.959	4.5	.3	.3
Food at home	235.362	234.363	234.972	5.7	-.2	.3
Food away from home	226.958	228.336	228.953	2.9	.9	.3
Alcoholic beverages	231.291	231.387	229.982	-1.1	-.6	-.6
Housing	229.801	229.244	229.784	1.8	.0	.2
Shelter	256.443	256.697	257.567	1.9	.4	.3
Rent of primary residence ¹	264.418	265.453	266.990	2.4	1.0	.6
Owners' equivalent rent of residences ^{1 2}	270.086	270.602	271.508	1.7	.5	.3
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence ^{1 2}	270.108	270.619	271.522	1.7	.5	.3
Fuels and utilities	251.752	244.240	243.773	2.2	-3.2	-.2
Household energy	228.459	218.890	218.186	.7	-4.5	-.3
Energy services ¹	230.015	219.873	219.279	.4	-4.7	-.3
Electricity ¹	250.839	241.639	240.937	1.4	-3.9	-.3
Utility (piped) gas service ¹	194.587	181.288	180.926	-2.9	-7.0	-.2
Household furnishings and operations	128.920	128.957	128.816	1.1	-.1	-.1
Apparel	118.991	118.372	115.534	3.8	-2.9	-2.4
Transportation	213.771	212.688	208.980	4.5	-2.2	-1.7
Private transportation	207.889	206.737	202.911	4.7	-2.4	-1.9
New and used motor vehicles ³	100.255	99.812	99.671	2.3	-.6	-.1
New vehicles	141.911	142.406	142.481	2.9	.4	.1
New cars and trucks ^{3 4}	98.492	98.848	98.903	2.9	.4	.1
New cars ⁴	143.679	144.164	144.353	4.1	.5	.1
Used cars and trucks	146.111	143.238	142.239	2.2	-2.7	-.7
Motor fuel	304.471	299.963	283.397	11.6	-6.9	-5.5
Gasoline (all types)	303.558	298.483	281.568	11.2	-7.2	-5.7
Gasoline, unleaded regular ⁴	302.918	297.834	280.690	11.4	-7.3	-5.8
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade ^{4 5}	284.019	279.457	264.053	10.8	-7.0	-5.5
Gasoline, unleaded premium ⁴	287.801	282.840	267.777	10.6	-7.0	-5.3
Medical care	411.795	411.757	413.076	3.5	.3	.3
Medical care commodities	330.820	329.952	331.066	2.9	.1	.3
Medical care services	436.461	436.764	438.140	3.7	.4	.3
Professional services	311.729	311.938	312.338	1.8	.2	.1
Recreation ³	108.218	108.665	108.417	1.5	.2	-.2
Education and communication ³	133.716	133.538	133.335	1.8	-.3	-.2
Other goods and services	382.975	383.597	381.710	.4	-.3	-.5
Commodity and service group						
All items	229.195	228.771	228.117	2.7	-.5	-.3
Commodities	181.784	181.173	179.309	3.7	-1.4	-1.0
Commodities less food and beverages	154.564	153.736	151.050	3.5	-2.3	-1.7
Nondurables less food and beverages	200.335	198.994	193.497	5.2	-3.4	-2.8
Nondurables less food, beverages, and apparel	257.371	255.533	248.189	5.6	-3.6	-2.9
Durables	112.514	112.138	111.890	1.0	-.6	-.2
Services	272.238	272.006	272.554	2.1	.1	.2
Rent of shelter ²	272.735	273.003	273.935	1.9	.4	.3
Transportation services	266.626	267.367	267.143	.7	.2	-.1

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods-Continued

West (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from—		
	Oct. 2011	Nov. 2011	Dec. 2011	Dec. 2010	Oct. 2011	Nov. 2011
Commodity and service group						
Other services	315.470	316.391	316.583	2.9	0.4	0.1
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less medical care	220.712	220.279	219.559	2.7	-.5	-.3
All items less food	228.869	228.376	227.524	2.4	-.6	-.4
All items less shelter	219.623	218.910	217.607	3.1	-.9	-.6
Commodities less food	157.777	156.966	154.290	3.3	-2.2	-1.7
Nondurables	217.875	217.142	214.315	4.6	-1.6	-1.3
Nondurables less food	203.323	202.048	196.727	4.8	-3.2	-2.6
Nondurables less food and apparel	254.656	252.984	246.153	5.0	-3.3	-2.7
Services less rent of shelter ²	302.620	301.703	301.809	2.4	-.3	.0
Services less medical care services	260.739	260.482	260.982	2.0	.1	.2
Energy	273.262	266.451	256.824	7.2	-6.0	-3.6
All items less energy	227.630	227.711	227.763	2.3	.1	.0
All items less food and energy	227.503	227.594	227.550	2.0	.0	.0
Commodities less food and energy commodities	141.270	140.881	139.889	1.4	-1.0	-.7
Energy commodities	308.270	303.947	287.363	11.5	-6.8	-5.5
Services less energy services	275.602	276.025	276.649	2.2	.4	.2

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

² Index is on a December 1982=100 base.

³ Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

⁴ Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

⁵ Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

- Data not available.

Regions defined as the four Census regions. West includes Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

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