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Consumer Price Index, Denver-Aurora-Lakewood – March 2019

Area prices up 1.3 percent over the two months; up 1.4 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for the Denver area turned up 1.3 percent over the two months ended in March 2019 after declining 1.0 percent in the prior period, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Stanley W. Suchman noted that the increase was influenced by higher prices for shelter, gasoline, and apparel. Overall, energy costs were up 5.4 percent. Food prices crept up 0.1 percent and the all items less food and energy index rose 1.2 percent. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, month-to-month changes may reflect the impact of seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months, the CPI-U advanced 1.4 percent as lower prices for energy (-5.1 percent) and apparel (-5.9 percent) moderated the overall increase. Prices for food were down 0.2 percent over the year while the index for all items less food and energy was up 2.1 percent. (See [table 1.](#))

Food

Food prices were little changed, up 0.1 percent, during the February-March period. Prices for food at home also registered little change (-0.1 percent), but prices for food away from home rose 0.4 percent.

Over the year, the food index edged down 0.2 percent as food at home prices declined 1.4 percent. Costs for food away from home rose 1.2 percent.

Energy

The energy index rose 5.4 percent over the two-month pricing period, largely due to a 9.6-percent increase in prices for gasoline. Electricity costs recorded an increase of 0.8 percent over the two-month period. Prices for utility (piped) gas service were down 0.3 percent.

Over the year, the energy index decreased 5.1 percent reflecting lower prices for all major components. Prices for gasoline were down 4.6 percent, electricity costs declined 6.0 percent, and utility (piped) gas service prices were 5.5 percent lower.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy turned up 1.2 percent during the most recent two-month period. Shelter (0.8 percent) and apparel prices (10.2 percent) were among those that contributed to the increase, while other goods and services (-2.2 percent) was among the indexes that registered lower prices over the period.

From March 2018 to March 2019, the index for all items less food and energy advanced 2.1 percent. The broad-based increase was led by higher prices for shelter (2.3 percent) and medical care (4.0 percent). Apparel prices declined 5.9 percent and had the largest offsetting movement over the year.

CPI-W

The Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) for the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO metropolitan area for March 2019 was 254.616. The CPI-W increased 1.3 percent over the two months and rose 1.5 percent over the year.

The Consumer Price Index for April 2019 is scheduled to be released on Friday, May 10, 2019, at 8:30 a.m. (ET).

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 93 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers approximately 29 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 75 urban areas across the country from about 5,000 housing units and approximately 22,000 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/pdf/homch17.pdf.

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 Denver-Aurora-Lakewood metropolitan area is comprised of Adams, Arapahoe, Broomfield, Clear Creek, Denver, Douglas, Elbert, Gilpin, Jefferson, and Park counties in Colorado.

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Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from -		
	Jan. 2019	Feb. 2019	Mar. 2019	Mar. 2018	Jan. 2019	Feb. 2019
All items	260.942	-	264.332	1.4	1.3	-
All items (1967 = 100)	870.132	-	881.436			
Food and beverages	236.193	-	236.310	0.0	0.0	-
Food	239.967	-	240.244	-0.2	0.1	-
Food at home	228.059	230.278	227.780	-1.4	-0.1	-1.1
Cereals and bakery products	283.821	-	278.023	-4.4	-2.0	-
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	217.905	-	219.017	1.8	0.5	-
Dairy and related products	196.859	-	198.073	0.4	0.6	-
Fruits and vegetables	280.512	-	273.030	-4.4	-2.7	-
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1)	150.999	-	154.504	-1.0	2.3	-
Other food at home	205.642	-	207.394	-0.9	0.9	-
Food away from home	255.377	-	256.333	1.2	0.4	-
Alcoholic beverages	204.721	-	203.074	2.0	-0.8	-
Housing	264.065	-	266.012	1.8	0.7	-
Shelter	305.997	307.285	308.358	2.3	0.8	0.3
Rent of primary residence	321.394	321.489	322.919	2.9	0.5	0.4
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2)	300.013	301.077	302.301	2.0	0.8	0.4
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2)	300.013	301.077	302.301	2.0	0.8	0.4
Fuels and utilities	237.148	-	240.157	-2.6	1.3	-
Household energy	158.146	161.842	158.889	-5.8	0.5	-1.8
Energy services	156.869	160.498	157.518	-5.9	0.4	-1.9
Electricity	156.302	157.540	157.540	-6.0	0.8	0.0
Utility (piped) gas service	160.361	168.722	159.868	-5.5	-0.3	-5.2
Household furnishings and operations	117.196	-	117.185	1.0	0.0	-
Apparel	87.066	-	95.941	-5.9	10.2	-
Transportation	245.589	-	253.795	1.8	3.3	-
Private transportation	242.189	-	250.445	2.2	3.4	-
New and used motor vehicles(3)	107.858	-	109.164	1.4	1.2	-
New vehicles(1)	215.826	-	221.723	2.2	2.7	-
Used cars and trucks(1)	265.187	-	269.406	2.3	1.6	-
Motor fuel	179.256	172.007	196.321	-4.5	9.5	14.1
Gasoline (all types)	177.371	170.059	194.424	-4.6	9.6	14.3
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4)	169.927	162.786	187.110	-5.1	10.1	14.9
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5)	180.789	172.432	195.505	-4.3	8.1	13.4
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4)	206.084	198.617	221.150	-2.4	7.3	11.3
Motor vehicle insurance(1)	2,858.006	-	2,858.006	11.2	0.0	-
Medical care	604.317	-	616.374	4.0	2.0	-
Recreation(3)	159.916	-	161.672	0.3	1.1	-
Education and communication(3)	123.190	-	123.373	1.8	0.1	-
Tuition, other school fees, and childcare(1) ...	1,062.586	-	1,063.647	3.9	0.1	-
Other goods and services	372.277	-	364.148	1.5	-2.2	-
Commodity and service group						
Commodities	166.899	-	170.344	-0.2	2.1	-
Commodities less food and beverages	133.077	-	137.534	-0.3	3.3	-
Nondurables less food and beverages	157.171	-	166.343	-0.8	5.8	-
Durables	107.186	-	108.091	0.1	0.8	-
Services	344.917	-	348.089	2.3	0.9	-
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less shelter	239.499	-	243.377	0.9	1.6	-
All items less medical care	245.357	-	248.381	1.2	1.2	-
Commodities less food	135.765	-	140.066	-0.2	3.2	-

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) - Continued

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from -		
	Jan. 2019	Feb. 2019	Mar. 2019	Mar. 2018	Jan. 2019	Feb. 2019
Nondurables	196.286	-	201.383	-0.4	2.6	-
Nondurables less food.....	160.287	-	168.752	-0.5	5.3	-
Services less rent of shelter(2).....	396.993	-	401.351	2.3	1.1	-
Services less medical care services.....	323.063	-	325.690	2.2	0.8	-
Energy	164.504	162.605	173.422	-5.1	5.4	6.7
All items less energy	271.041	-	273.974	1.8	1.1	-
All items less food and energy	277.490	-	280.880	2.1	1.2	-

Footnotes

(1) Indexes on a January 1978=100 base.

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

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

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

(5) Index on a December 1993=100 base.

- Data not available.