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Consumer Price Index, St. Louis area – October 2020

Area prices down 0.3 percent over the past two months, up 1.1 percent from a year ago

Prices in the St. Louis area, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), decreased 0.3 percent for the two months ending in October 2020, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Michael Hirniak noted that the October decrease was most influenced by lower prices for energy. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, bi-monthly changes may reflect seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months, the CPI-U increased 1.1 percent. (See [chart 1.](#)) The index for all items less food and energy increased 1.7 percent over the year and food prices increased 3.2 percent. In contrast, energy prices fell 10.6 percent. (See [table 1.](#))

Food

Food prices crept up 0.2 percent for the two months ending in October. (See [table 1.](#)) Prices for food at home rose 0.4 percent, while prices for food away from home were unchanged for the same period.

Over the year, food prices rose 3.2 percent. The increase was entirely due to higher prices for food at home, which climbed 7.3 percent since a year ago, as prices for food away from home declined 2.0 percent.

Energy

The energy index fell 11.7 percent for the two months ending in October. The decrease was mainly due to lower prices for electricity (-24.7 percent). Prices for gasoline also declined, down 3.2 percent, while prices for natural gas service advanced 1.2 percent for the same period.

Energy prices fell 10.6 percent over the year, largely due to lower prices for gasoline (-19.5 percent). Prices paid for natural gas service also decreased, down 1.8 percent, and prices for electricity fell 0.4 percent during the past year.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy advanced 0.6 percent in the latest two-month period. Higher prices for shelter (2.3 percent), used cars and trucks (3.5 percent), and apparel (3.4 percent) were partially offset by lower prices for recreation (-2.6 percent), motor vehicle insurance (-9.3 percent), and medical care (-1.2 percent).

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy increased 1.7 percent. Components contributing to the increase included shelter (3.9 percent) and used cars and trucks (12.0 percent). Partly offsetting the increases were price decreases in other goods and services (-6.0 percent) and motor vehicle insurance (-7.8 percent).

The December 2020 Consumer Price Index for the St. Louis area is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, January 13, 2021.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Impact on October 2020 Consumer Price Index Data

Data collection by personal visit for the Consumer Price Index (CPI) program has been suspended since March 16, 2020. When possible, data normally collected by personal visit were collected either online or by phone. Additionally, data collection in October was affected by the temporary closing or limited operations of certain types of establishments. These factors resulted in an increase in the number of prices considered temporarily unavailable and imputed. While the CPI program attempted to collect as much data as possible, many indexes are based on smaller amounts of collected prices than usual, and a small number of indexes that are normally published were not published this month. Additional information is available at <https://www.bls.gov/covid19/effects-of-covid-19-pandemic-on-consumer-price-index.htm>.

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 6,000 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 St. Louis, MO-IL, area covered in this release includes Bond, Calhoun, Clinton, Jersey, Macoupin, Madison, Monroe, and St. Clair counties in Illinois; and Franklin, Jefferson, Lincoln, St. Charles, St. Louis, and Warren counties and St. Louis City in Missouri.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, St. Louis, MO-IL (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from -		
	Aug. 2020	Sep. 2020	Oct. 2020	Oct. 2019	Aug. 2020	Sep. 2020
All items	234.818	-	234.108	1.1	-0.3	-
All items (1967 = 100)	697.448	-	695.339			
Food and beverages	265.909	-	266.327	4.0	0.2	-
Food	263.149	-	263.802	3.2	0.2	-
Food at home	245.805	246.200	246.864	7.3	0.4	0.3
Cereals and bakery products	222.882	-	219.380	9.6	-1.6	-
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	269.811	-	270.669	8.5	0.3	-
Dairy and related products	165.538	-	156.728	-2.8	-5.3	-
Fruits and vegetables	372.131	-	389.094	12.1	4.6	-
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1)	176.982	-	177.215	2.3	0.1	-
Other food at home	240.378	-	242.339	6.7	0.8	-
Food away from home	292.239	-	292.239	-2.0	0.0	-
Alcoholic beverages	265.749	-	263.711	13.4	-0.8	-
Housing	232.764	-	232.696	3.3	0.0	-
Shelter	271.674	271.188	277.900	3.9	2.3	2.5
Rent of primary residence	254.975	255.323	256.678	4.0	0.7	0.5
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2)	287.593	287.643	289.273	3.5	0.6	0.6
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2)	287.593	287.643	289.273	3.5	0.6	0.6
Fuels and utilities	239.919	-	208.680	-0.6	-13.0	-
Household energy	213.984	214.301	176.242	-0.9	-17.6	-17.8
Energy services	216.750	217.004	177.949	-0.8	-17.9	-18.0
Electricity	233.940	233.908	176.183	-0.4	-24.7	-24.7
Utility (piped) gas service	147.254	147.969	149.067	-1.8	1.2	0.7
Household furnishings and operations	125.311	-	125.408	3.8	0.1	-
Apparel	127.278	-	131.567	-4.6	3.4	-
Transportation	185.683	-	184.935	-4.1	-0.4	-
Private transportation	188.940	-	187.267	-3.7	-0.9	-
New and used motor vehicles(3)	94.438	-	95.578	2.6	1.2	-
New vehicles(1)	207.289	-	206.531	-0.5	-0.4	-
Used cars and trucks(1)	322.308	-	333.581	12.0	3.5	-
Motor fuel	190.395	187.953	184.417	-19.6	-3.1	-1.9
Gasoline (all types)	187.410	185.004	181.475	-19.5	-3.2	-1.9
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4)	179.365	176.970	173.524	-19.8	-3.3	-1.9
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5)	228.037	226.506	224.073	-17.6	-1.7	-1.1
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4)	203.011	200.785	196.683	-17.0	-3.1	-2.0
Motor vehicle insurance(1)	584.345	-	529.875	-7.8	-9.3	-
Medical care	472.486	-	466.946	0.0	-1.2	-
Recreation(3)	120.416	-	117.260	-0.7	-2.6	-
Education and communication(3)	143.919	-	144.057	2.7	0.1	-
Tuition, other school fees, and childcare(1) ...	1,261.841	-	1,261.841	0.2	0.0	-
Other goods and services	322.529	-	315.633	-6.0	-2.1	-
Commodity and service group						
Commodities	186.729	-	186.736	0.0	0.0	-
Commodities less food and beverages	148.629	-	148.493	-2.5	-0.1	-
Nondurables less food and beverages	195.815	-	193.898	-7.2	-1.0	-
Durables	103.399	-	104.177	2.7	0.8	-
Services	284.013	-	282.641	1.7	-0.5	-
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less shelter	224.041	-	220.744	-0.2	-1.5	-
All items less medical care	222.905	-	222.423	1.2	-0.2	-
Commodities less food	153.249	-	153.054	-1.8	-0.1	-

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, St. Louis, MO-IL (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) - Continued

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from -		
	Aug. 2020	Sep. 2020	Oct. 2020	Oct. 2019	Aug. 2020	Sep. 2020
Nondurables	230.886	-	230.094	-1.3	-0.3	-
Nondurables less food.....	202.028	-	200.094	-5.5	-1.0	-
Services less rent of shelter(2).....	304.545	-	294.942	-0.3	-3.2	-
Services less medical care services.....	266.227	-	265.347	1.9	-0.3	-
Energy	204.965	204.060	181.059	-10.6	-11.7	-11.3
All items less energy	240.833	-	242.172	2.0	0.6	-
All items less food and energy	237.142	-	238.579	1.7	0.6	-

Footnotes

(1) Indexes on an March 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.

- Data not available.