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Consumer Price Index, Alaska area – August 2019

Area prices were down 1.6 percent over the past two months, up 0.7 percent from a year ago

Prices in the Anchorage area, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), decreased 1.6 percent for the two months ending in August 2019, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (See [table A](#).) Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Richard Holden noted that the August decrease was influenced by lower prices for all items less food and 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 0.7 percent. (See [chart 1](#) and [table A](#).) The index for all items less food and energy advanced 0.6 percent over the year. Food prices increased 3.1 percent. Energy prices decreased 1.4 percent, largely the result of a decrease in the price of gasoline. (See [table 1](#).)

Food

Food prices inched down 0.1 percent for the two months ending in August. (See [table 1](#).) Prices for food at home decreased 1.3 percent, but prices for food away from home rose 1.4 percent for the same period.

Over the year, food prices increased 3.1 percent. Prices for food away from home advanced 4.5 percent since a year ago, and prices for food at home increased 2.1 percent.

Energy

The energy index decreased 5.6 percent for the two months ending in August. The decrease was mainly due to lower prices for gasoline (-9.2 percent). Prices for electricity decreased 6.0 percent, but prices for natural gas service advanced 5.3 percent for the same period.

Energy prices decreased 1.4 percent over the year, largely due to lower prices for gasoline (-8.2 percent). Prices paid for electricity advanced 7.9 percent, and prices for natural gas service increased 5.3 percent during the past year.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy declined 1.4 percent in the latest two-month period. Lower prices for shelter (-3.8 percent) and household furnishings and operations (-2.2 percent) were partially offset by higher prices for apparel (2.1 percent) and education and communication (1.2 percent).

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy advanced 0.6 percent. Components contributing to the increase included medical care (4.5 percent) and other goods and services (3.2 percent). Partly offsetting the increases were price declines in apparel (-6.6 percent) and recreation (-1.7 percent).

The October 2019 Consumer Price Index for the Anchorage area is scheduled to be released on November 13, 2019.

Consumer Price Index Geographic Revision for 2018

In January 2018, BLS introduced a new geographic area sample for the Consumer Price Index (CPI). This index changed to a bimonthly publication schedule beginning in February, 2018. Additional information on the geographic revision is available at: www.bls.gov/cpi/additional-resources/geographic-revision-2018.htm.

Historical data, including semiannual and annual averages, are available at: www.bls.gov/cpi/data.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 89 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers 28 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 6,000 housing units and approximately 24,000 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 Urban Alaska area covered in this release consists of Anchorage and Matanuska-Susitna Borough in the State of Alaska.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; Federal Relay Service: 1-800-877-8339.

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

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from-		
	Jun. 2019	Jul. 2019	Aug. 2019	Aug. 2018	Jun. 2019	Jul. 2019
Expenditure category						
All items.....	234.179	-	230.406	0.7	-1.6	-
All items (1967=100).....	625.057	-	614.985	-	-	-
Food and beverages.....	216.386	-	216.210	3.1	-0.1	-
Food.....	222.170	-	221.923	3.1	-0.1	-
Food at home.....	216.487	214.063	213.707	2.1	-1.3	-0.2
Cereals and bakery products.....	229.490	-	218.575	-1.4	-4.8	-
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.....	200.417	-	197.438	-0.3	-1.5	-
Dairy and related products.....	201.828	-	206.577	5.9	2.4	-
Fruits and vegetables.....	337.937	-	338.855	8.0	0.3	-
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1).....	152.298	-	150.428	-0.9	-1.2	-
Other food at home.....	179.853	-	175.883	0.8	-2.2	-
Food away from home.....	229.239	-	232.512	4.5	1.4	-
Alcoholic beverages.....	158.334	-	158.759	2.9	0.3	-
Housing.....	219.951	-	212.472	0.4	-3.4	-
Shelter.....	221.485	214.565	213.044	-0.3	-3.8	-0.7
Rent of primary residence(2).....	201.021	201.844	200.744	-0.6	-0.1	-0.5
Owners' equiv. rent of residences(2).....	206.237	206.514	205.856	0.5	-0.2	-0.3
Owners' equiv. rent of primary residence(2).....	206.237	206.514	205.856	0.5	-0.2	-0.3
Fuels and utilities.....	362.233	-	357.184	6.7	-1.4	-
Household energy.....	382.101	375.283	375.169	6.7	-1.8	0.0
Energy services.....	425.742	418.271	418.271	6.9	-1.8	0.0
Electricity.....	390.372	366.844	366.844	7.9	-6.0	0.0
Utility (piped) gas service.....	459.057	483.599	483.599	5.3	5.3	0.0
Household furnishings and operations.....	131.232	-	128.363	-1.4	-2.2	-
Apparel.....	151.944	-	155.197	-6.6	2.1	-
Transportation.....	232.431	-	227.990	0.4	-1.9	-
Private transportation.....	243.149	-	238.482	0.2	-1.9	-
New and used motor vehicles(3).....	112.246	-	-	-	-	-
New vehicles(1).....	255.423	-	-	-	-	-
Used cars and trucks(1).....	264.737	-	271.005	2.6	2.4	-
Motor fuel.....	264.336	250.042	240.413	-8.2	-9.1	-3.9
Gasoline (all types).....	265.709	251.154	241.182	-8.2	-9.2	-4.0
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4).....	256.617	242.071	232.048	-8.7	-9.6	-4.1
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5).....	254.432	241.602	233.172	-7.2	-8.4	-3.5
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4).....	267.860	255.900	248.004	-6.1	-7.4	-3.1
Motor vehicle insurance(1).....	1,007.596	-	1,007.596	3.2	0.0	-
Medical care.....	618.009	-	623.192	4.5	0.8	-
Recreation(3).....	126.900	-	126.733	-1.7	-0.1	-
Education and communication(3).....	113.521	-	114.889	-0.6	1.2	-
Tuition, other school fees, and child care(1) ..	727.981	-	729.669	2.6	0.2	-
Other goods and services.....	360.376	-	362.222	3.2	0.5	-
Commodity and service group						
All items.....	234.179	-	230.406	0.7	-1.6	-
Commodities.....	186.344	-	184.902	0.3	-0.8	-
Commodities less food & beverages.....	170.399	-	168.457	-1.2	-1.1	-
Nondurables less food & beverages.....	217.598	-	213.585	-3.8	-1.8	-
Durables.....	130.127	-	129.492	1.4	-0.5	-
Services.....	275.467	-	269.628	1.0	-2.1	-

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 Urban Alaska (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) - Continued

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from-		
	Jun. 2019	Jul. 2019	Aug. 2019	Aug. 2018	Jun. 2019	Jul. 2019
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less medical care	220.663	-	216.693	0.5	-1.8	-
All items less shelter.....	238.209	-	236.964	1.2	-0.5	-
Commodities less food	170.271	-	168.425	-1.0	-1.1	-
Nondurables	217.426	-	215.423	-0.3	-0.9	-
Nondurables less food.....	213.372	-	209.794	-3.3	-1.7	-
Services less rent of shelter(2).....	362.612	-	361.924	2.5	-0.2	-
Services less medical care services.....	255.124	-	248.962	0.6	-2.4	-
Energy	314.929	303.358	297.329	-1.4	-5.6	-2.0
All items less energy	229.771	-	226.877	0.9	-1.3	-
All items less food and energy	231.374	-	228.059	0.6	-1.4	-

Footnotes

- (1) Indexes on a December 1978=100 base.
- (2) Indexes 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

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