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WESTERN INFORMATION OFFICE: San Francisco, Calif.

Technical information: (415) 625-2270 BLSinfoSF@bls.gov www.bls.gov/regions/west

Media contact: (415) 625-2270

Consumer Price Index, Anchorage area – April 2020

Area prices were down 1.6 percent over the past two months, down 2.5 percent from a year ago

Prices in the Anchorage area, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), declined 1.6 percent for the two months ending in April 2020, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Richard Holden noted that the April decrease was influenced by lower prices for gasoline. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, bi-monthly changes may reflect seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months, the CPI-U declined 2.5 percent. Energy prices fell 22.3 percent, largely the result of a decrease in the price of gasoline. The index for all items less food and energy declined 1.8 percent over the year. Food prices rose 5.2 percent. (See [table 1.](#))

Food

Food prices advanced 2.8 percent for the two months ending in April. (See [table 1.](#)) Prices for food at home rose 4.6 percent, while prices for food away from home were unchanged for the same period.

Over the year, food prices rose 5.2 percent. Prices for food at home advanced 7.6 percent since a year ago, and prices for food away from home increased 1.4 percent.

Energy

The energy index fell 16.0 percent for the two months ending in April. The decrease was mainly due to lower prices for gasoline (-29.3 percent). Prices for electricity decreased 8.1 percent, while prices for natural gas service were unchanged for the same period.

Energy prices fell 22.3 percent over the year, largely due to lower prices for gasoline (-38.2 percent). Prices for electricity fell 14.7 percent, but prices paid for natural gas service advanced 5.3 percent during the past year.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy decreased 1.1 percent in the latest two-month period. Lower prices for apparel (-11.6 percent), other goods and services (-1.4 percent), and recreation (-0.9 percent) were partially offset by higher prices for household furnishings and operations (4.1 percent).

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy declined 1.8 percent. Components contributing to the decrease included apparel (-6.8 percent) and shelter (-2.0 percent). Partly offsetting the decreases were price increases in household furnishings and operations (6.0 percent) and medical care (3.3 percent).

The June 2020 Consumer Price Index for the Anchorage area is scheduled to be released on July 14, 2020.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Impact on April 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 April 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 www.bls.gov/bls/effects-of-covid-19-pandemic-on-bls-price-indexes.htm#CPI.

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-		
	Feb. 2020	Mar. 2020	Apr. 2020	Apr. 2019	Feb. 2020	Mar. 2020
Expenditure category						
All items	226.510	-	222.909	-2.5	-1.6	-
All items (1967=100)	604.587	-	594.976	-	-	-
Food and beverages	219.024	-	224.076	4.6	2.3	-
Food	224.636	-	230.928	5.2	2.8	-
Food at home	218.176	217.310	228.182	7.6	4.6	5.0
Cereals and bakery products	223.812	-	227.953	1.8	1.9	-
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	201.562	-	206.836	5.7	2.6	-
Dairy and related products	219.974	-	231.062	16.3	5.0	-
Fruits and vegetables	346.203	-	354.124	8.6	2.3	-
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1)	151.955	-	159.295	6.0	4.8	-
Other food at home	177.711	-	193.379	8.4	8.8	-
Food away from home	232.382	-	232.452	1.4	0.0	-
Alcoholic beverages	162.098	-	157.298	-1.1	-3.0	-
Housing	205.150	-	204.959	-1.6	-0.1	-
Shelter	203.391	203.216	203.244	-2.0	-0.1	0.0
Rent of primary residence(2)	197.808	198.980	199.045	-1.0	0.6	0.0
Owners' equiv. rent of residences(2)	205.137	205.205	205.210	-0.5	0.0	0.0
Owners' equiv. rent of primary residence(2)	205.137	205.205	205.210	-0.5	0.0	0.0
Fuels and utilities	357.178	-	344.631	-4.7	-3.5	-
Household energy	373.036	372.971	356.183	-6.7	-4.5	-4.5
Energy services	415.761	415.761	396.980	-6.8	-4.5	-4.5
Electricity	362.576	362.576	333.116	-14.7	-8.1	-8.1
Utility (piped) gas service	483.350	483.350	483.350	5.3	0.0	0.0
Household furnishings and operations	131.125	-	136.476	6.0	4.1	-
Apparel	156.886	-	138.657	-6.8	-11.6	-
Transportation	218.384	-	198.860	-14.4	-8.9	-
Private transportation	227.135	-	206.871	-14.2	-8.9	-
New and used motor vehicles(3)	-	-	107.221	-2.9	-	-
New vehicles(1)	-	-	249.726	-1.8	-	-
Used cars and trucks(1)	255.564	-	260.239	-1.2	1.8	-
Motor fuel	230.476	219.188	163.391	-37.9	-29.1	-25.5
Gasoline (all types)	231.488	220.078	163.589	-38.2	-29.3	-25.7
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4)	222.475	211.671	156.344	-38.8	-29.7	-26.1
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5)	224.300	215.276	162.960	-35.7	-27.3	-24.3
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4)	239.441	226.215	173.756	-34.8	-27.4	-23.2
Motor vehicle insurance(1)	895.661	-	761.312	-24.4	-15.0	-
Medical care	631.082	-	630.835	3.3	0.0	-
Recreation(3)	129.429	-	128.250	-0.4	-0.9	-
Education and communication(3)	114.166	-	112.952	-0.5	-1.1	-
Tuition, other school fees, and child care(1) ..	747.792	-	747.792	2.7	0.0	-
Other goods and services	367.873	-	362.854	1.7	-1.4	-
Commodity and service group						
All items	226.510	-	222.909	-2.5	-1.6	-
Commodities	183.746	-	179.473	-3.0	-2.3	-
Commodities less food & beverages	165.565	-	156.764	-7.5	-5.3	-
Nondurables less food & beverages	211.866	-	190.069	-12.7	-10.3	-
Durables	126.218	-	126.391	-1.8	0.1	-
Services	263.262	-	260.347	-2.1	-1.1	-

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-		
	Feb. 2020	Mar. 2020	Apr. 2020	Apr. 2019	Feb. 2020	Mar. 2020
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less medical care	212.523	-	208.840	-2.9	-1.7	-
All items less shelter.....	236.187	-	230.757	-2.7	-2.3	-
Commodities less food	165.835	-	157.225	-7.2	-5.2	-
Nondurables	216.137	-	208.938	-3.4	-3.3	-
Nondurables less food.....	208.666	-	188.661	-11.6	-9.6	-
Services less rent of shelter(2).....	362.000	-	353.877	-2.4	-2.2	-
Services less medical care services.....	241.959	-	238.849	-2.9	-1.3	-
Energy	290.582	283.901	244.045	-22.3	-16.0	-14.0
All items less energy	223.101	-	222.045	-0.8	-0.5	-
All items less food and energy	223.218	-	220.842	-1.8	-1.1	-

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.