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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, San Diego Area – March 2020

Area prices were unchanged over the past two months, up 1.8 percent from a year ago

Prices in the San Diego area, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), were unchanged for the two months ending in March 2020, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Richard Holden noted that the March index was influenced by higher prices for shelter and medical care and lower prices for apparel and education and communication. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, bi-monthly changes may reflect seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months, the CPI-U advanced 1.8 percent. The index for all items less food and energy advanced 1.8 percent over the year. Energy prices advanced 2.3 percent, largely the result of an increase in the price of electricity. Food prices rose 0.8 percent. (See [table 1.](#))

Food

Food prices rose 0.7 percent for the two months ending in March. (See [table 1.](#)) Prices for food at home increased 1.1 percent, and prices for food away from home rose 0.3 percent for the same period.

Over the year, food prices rose 0.8 percent. Prices for food away from home rose 1.7 percent, while prices for food at home were virtually unchanged during the past year.

Energy

The energy index decreased 2.4 percent for the two months ending in March. The decrease was mainly due to lower prices for gasoline (-4.4 percent). Prices for natural gas service declined 7.4 percent, but electricity prices rose 4.0 percent for the same period.

Energy prices advanced 2.3 percent over the year, largely due to higher prices for electricity (5.0 percent). Prices paid for natural gas service increased 5.9 percent, and prices for gasoline advanced 0.9 percent during the past year.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy was unchanged in the latest two-month period. Higher prices for medical care (1.8 percent), recreation (1.2 percent), and shelter (0.4 percent) were partially offset by lower prices for apparel (-1.9 percent) and education and communication (-0.9 percent).

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy advanced 1.8 percent. Components contributing to the increase included medical care (4.3 percent), recreation (3.7 percent), and shelter (2.8 percent). Partly offsetting the increases was a price decline in education and communication (-2.7 percent).

The May 2020 Consumer Price Index for the San Diego area is scheduled to be released on June 10, 2020.

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

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) program suspended data collection by personal visit on March 16, 2020. When possible, data normally collected by personal visit were collected either online or by phone. Additionally, data collection in March 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 being 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.

Specific information about the impact of COVID-19 on March 2020 CPI data collection is available at www.bls.gov/cpi/additional-resources/covid19-statement-march-2020.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/opus/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 San Diego-Carlsbad, CA metropolitan area covered in this release consists of San Diego County in the State of California.

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 San Diego-Carlsbad (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from-		
	Jan. 2020	Feb. 2020	Mar. 2020	Mar. 2019	Jan. 2020	Feb. 2020
Expenditure category						
All items	302.564	-	302.589	1.8	0.0	-
All items (1967=100)	1,023.062	-	1,023.146	-	-	-
Food and beverages	262.528	-	265.155	0.8	1.0	-
Food	261.528	-	263.347	0.8	0.7	-
Food at home	230.671	231.374	233.133	0.1	1.1	0.8
Cereals and bakery products	260.540	-	256.531	-3.8	-1.5	-
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	239.904	-	240.900	-0.1	0.4	-
Dairy and related products	193.408	-	194.576	5.1	0.6	-
Fruits and vegetables	260.880	-	264.063	2.2	1.2	-
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1)	256.982	-	265.233	1.9	3.2	-
Other food at home	213.699	-	218.097	-1.7	2.1	-
Food away from home	302.504	-	303.360	1.7	0.3	-
Food away from home	302.504	-	303.360	1.7	0.3	-
Alcoholic beverages	263.403	-	273.876	0.4	4.0	-
Housing	361.568	-	363.301	2.8	0.5	-
Shelter	412.648	414.188	414.243	2.8	0.4	0.0
Rent of primary residence(2)	408.428	408.844	409.457	3.5	0.3	0.1
Owners' equiv. rent of residences(2)	436.396	436.139	436.563	3.2	0.0	0.1
Owners' equiv. rent of primary residence(2)	436.396	436.139	436.563	3.2	0.0	0.1
Fuels and utilities	342.790	-	345.910	4.0	0.9	-
Household energy	308.284	314.644	311.976	5.2	1.2	-0.8
Energy services	304.148	310.817	308.365	5.5	1.4	-0.8
Electricity	290.406	302.165	302.165	5.0	4.0	0.0
Utility (piped) gas service	249.092	239.216	230.552	5.9	-7.4	-3.6
Household furnishings and operations	189.407	-	191.200	2.0	0.9	-
Apparel	161.111	-	157.971	0.3	-1.9	-
Transportation	231.819	-	223.714	-0.7	-3.5	-
Private transportation	223.798	-	222.269	1.2	-0.7	-
New and used motor vehicles(3)	105.898	-	107.143	-1.3	1.2	-
New vehicles(1)	230.644	-	231.042	1.1	0.2	-
Used cars and trucks(1)	226.820	-	234.192	-0.1	3.3	-
Motor fuel	283.929	281.132	271.395	0.9	-4.4	-3.5
Gasoline (all types)	283.626	280.909	271.195	0.9	-4.4	-3.5
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4)	293.004	290.335	281.283	1.0	-4.0	-3.1
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5)	247.834	245.037	232.893	0.7	-6.0	-5.0
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4)	292.655	289.326	275.712	0.5	-5.8	-4.7
Motor vehicle insurance(1)	556.668	-	549.852	2.9	-1.2	-
Medical care	498.962	-	507.904	4.3	1.8	-
Recreation(3)	159.728	-	161.577	3.7	1.2	-
Education and communication(3)	130.384	-	129.186	-2.7	-0.9	-
Tuition, other school fees, and child care(1) ..	1,538.385	-	1,538.385	-3.6	0.0	-
Other goods and services	411.720	-	414.683	1.0	0.7	-
Commodity and service group						
All items	302.564	-	302.589	1.8	0.0	-
Commodities	203.197	-	203.920	1.0	0.4	-
Commodities less food & beverages	171.845	-	171.515	0.9	-0.2	-
Nondurables less food & beverages	206.337	-	202.500	1.0	-1.9	-
Durables	135.842	-	138.757	0.3	2.1	-
Services	390.676	-	389.958	2.2	-0.2	-

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 San Diego-Carlsbad (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) - Continued

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from-		
	Jan. 2020	Feb. 2020	Mar. 2020	Mar. 2019	Jan. 2020	Feb. 2020
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less medical care	293.305	-	292.915	1.6	-0.1	-
All items less shelter.....	259.123	-	258.580	1.2	-0.2	-
Commodities less food	175.979	-	176.179	0.9	0.1	-
Nondurables	235.690	-	235.303	1.2	-0.2	-
Nondurables less food.....	211.900	-	209.435	1.2	-1.2	-
Services less rent of shelter(2).....	384.065	-	380.525	1.3	-0.9	-
Services less medical care services.....	378.263	-	376.765	1.9	-0.4	-
Energy	288.936	289.230	281.964	2.3	-2.4	-2.5
All items less energy	306.116	-	306.552	1.7	0.1	-
All items less food and energy	315.675	-	315.801	1.8	0.0	-

Footnotes

- (1) Indexes on a November 1977=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) Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

- Data not available

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