

MOUNTAIN-PLAINS INFORMATION OFFICE  
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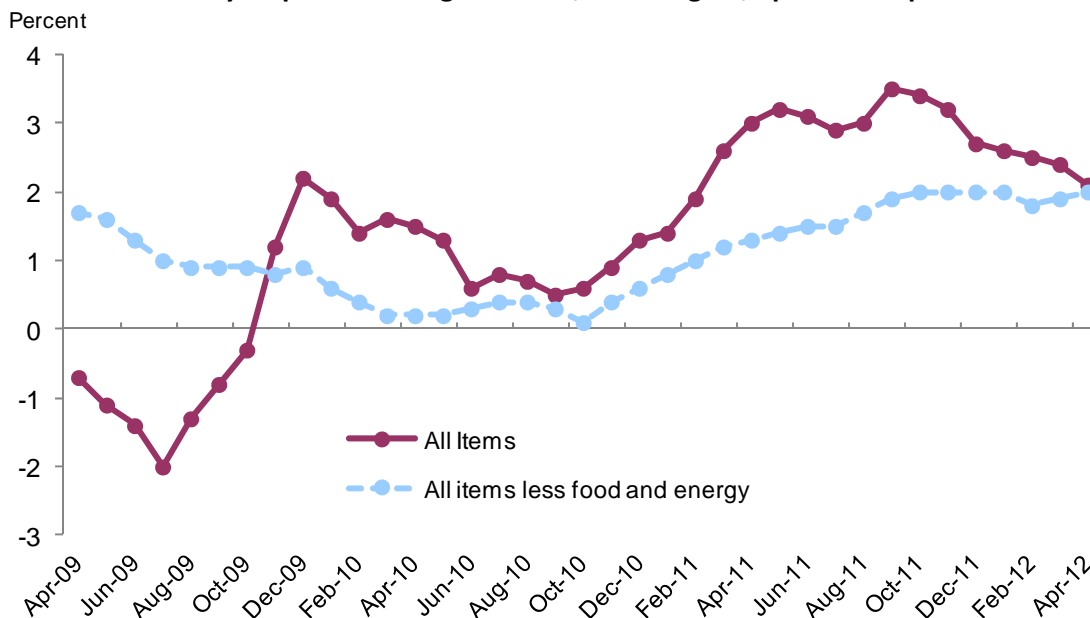
**CONSUMER PRICE INDEX, WEST REGION – APRIL 2012**

**Area prices were up 0.2 percent over the past month, up 2.1 percent from a year ago**

Prices in the West Region, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), increased 0.2 percent in April, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (See table A.) Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that the April advance was influenced by higher prices for shelter, new and used vehicles, and apparel. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, month-to-month changes may reflect seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months, the CPI-U rose 2.1 percent. Over-the-year increases have slowed for seven consecutive months since a 3.5-percent increase was recorded in September 2011. (See chart 1.) Energy prices advanced 1.6 percent, largely the result of an increase in the price of gasoline. The index for all items less food and energy advanced 2.0 percent since April 2011.

**Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, West Region, April 2009–April 2012**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Food

Food prices crept up 0.2 percent for the month of April. (See table 1.) Prices for food at home were unchanged, while prices for food away from home rose 0.4 percent for the same period.

Over the year, food prices increased 2.5 percent. Prices for food at home advanced 1.9 percent since a year ago, and prices for food away from home increased 3.2 percent.

## Energy

The energy index edged down 0.2 percent over the month. The decrease was mainly due to lower prices for natural gas service (-1.5 percent). Prices for electricity inched up 0.2 percent, while prices for gasoline were virtually unchanged in April.

Energy prices advanced 1.6 percent over the year, largely due to higher prices for gasoline (3.4 percent). Prices paid for electricity advanced 0.3 percent, but prices for natural gas service decreased 8.5 percent during the past year.

## All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy advanced 0.3 percent in April. Higher prices for categories such as used cars and trucks (1.7 percent), apparel (1.2 percent), and shelter (0.2 percent) were partially offset by lower prices for alcoholic beverages (-0.3 percent) and medical care commodities (-0.2 percent).

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy advanced 2.0 percent. Components contributing to the increase included apparel (4.4 percent), medical care (2.9 percent), and shelter (2.3 percent).

**Table A. West Region CPI-U monthly and annual percent changes (not seasonally adjusted)**

Month	2007		2008		2009		2010		2011		2012	
	Monthly	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly	Annual
January	0.8	3.0	0.5	3.8	0.6	0.1	0.3	1.9	0.5	1.4	0.4	2.6
February	0.6	3.1	0.3	3.5	0.5	0.3	0.1	1.4	0.6	1.9	0.4	2.5
March	0.9	3.4	1.0	3.7	0.1	-0.5	0.3	1.6	0.9	2.6	0.9	2.4
April	0.6	3.3	0.4	3.5	0.3	-0.7	0.2	1.5	0.6	3.0	0.2	2.1
May	0.5	3.0	0.7	3.7	0.3	-1.1	0.1	1.3	0.3	3.2	-	-
June	-0.2	3.0	0.9	4.9	0.6	-1.4	-0.1	0.6	-0.2	3.1	-	-
July	-0.1	2.8	0.4	5.3	-0.2	-2.0	0.1	0.8	-0.1	2.9	-	-
August	-0.1	2.4	-0.5	4.9	0.2	-1.3	0.1	0.7	0.2	3.0	-	-
September	0.2	2.5	-0.3	4.3	0.2	-0.8	-0.1	0.5	0.4	3.5	-	-
October	0.5	3.3	-0.5	3.3	0.1	-0.3	0.1	0.6	0.0	3.4	-	-
November	0.5	4.2	-1.8	1.0	-0.3	1.2	0.0	0.9	-0.2	3.2	-	-
December	-0.1	4.1	-1.1	0.0	-0.2	2.2	0.2	1.3	-0.3	2.7	-	-

## CPI-W

In April, the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) was 227.686, up 0.2 percent from March. The CPI-W increased 2.0 percent over the year.

**The May 2012 Consumer Price Index for the West Region is scheduled to be released on June 14, 2012.**

## 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 88 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers 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 87 urban areas across the country from about 4,000 housing units and approximately 26,000 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](http://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](http://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 West Region covered in this release is comprised of the following thirteen states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339.

For personal assistance or further information on Consumer Price Indexes, as well as other Bureau products, contact the Mountain-Plains Information Office at (816) 285-7000 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. CT.

**Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods**

**West** (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from—		
	Feb. 2012	Mar. 2012	Apr. 2012	Apr. 2011	Feb. 2012	Mar. 2012
<b>Expenditure category</b>						
All items .....	229.995	232.039	232.561	2.1	1.1	0.2
All items (December 1977=100) .....	371.774	375.079	375.922	-	-	-
Food and beverages .....	234.052	234.467	234.762	2.3	.3	.1
Food .....	233.781	234.271	234.633	2.5	.4	.2
Food at home .....	235.641	236.079	236.089	1.9	.2	.0
Food away from home .....	229.986	230.548	231.407	3.2	.6	.4
Alcoholic beverages .....	234.358	233.706	233.049	.0	-.6	-.3
Housing .....	231.045	231.487	231.797	1.9	.3	.1
Shelter .....	258.737	259.346	259.824	2.3	.4	.2
Rent of primary residence <sup>1</sup> .....	268.590	268.921	269.074	2.9	.2	.1
Owners' equivalent rent of residences <sup>1 2</sup> .....	272.398	272.884	273.400	2.1	.4	.2
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence <sup>1 2</sup> .....	272.411	272.897	273.413	2.1	.4	.2
Fuels and utilities .....	245.936	245.632	245.335	.2	-.2	-.1
Household energy .....	218.901	217.986	217.429	-1.8	-.7	-.3
Energy services <sup>1</sup> .....	219.929	218.985	218.517	-1.9	-.6	-.2
Electricity <sup>1</sup> .....	241.837	242.346	242.902	.3	.4	.2
Utility (piped) gas service <sup>1</sup> .....	181.058	176.935	174.234	-8.5	-3.8	-1.5
Household furnishings and operations .....	130.029	130.271	130.282	.8	.2	.0
Apparel .....	116.575	119.935	121.428	4.4	4.2	1.2
Transportation .....	213.387	221.749	222.885	2.6	4.5	.5
Private transportation .....	207.715	216.439	217.189	2.7	4.6	.3
New and used motor vehicles <sup>3</sup> .....	99.405	100.233	101.225	1.7	1.8	1.0
New vehicles .....	143.324	143.703	144.080	1.8	.5	.3
New cars and trucks <sup>3 4</sup> .....	99.543	99.812	100.061	1.9	.5	.2
New cars <sup>4</sup> .....	144.810	145.077	145.531	2.2	.5	.3
Used cars and trucks .....	141.212	142.963	145.363	1.8	2.9	1.7
Motor fuel .....	302.988	334.851	334.508	3.4	10.4	-.1
Gasoline (all types) .....	301.567	333.726	333.397	3.4	10.6	-.1
Gasoline, unleaded regular <sup>4</sup> .....	300.493	333.240	333.150	3.6	10.9	.0
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade <sup>4 5</sup> .....	283.105	312.081	311.319	3.2	10.0	-.2
Gasoline, unleaded premium <sup>4</sup> .....	287.155	315.365	314.278	2.9	9.4	-.3
Medical care .....	417.828	418.910	419.221	2.9	.3	.1
Medical care commodities .....	333.725	335.359	334.740	1.1	.3	-.2
Medical care services .....	443.612	444.472	445.129	3.5	.3	.1
Professional services .....	313.685	313.836	313.759	.9	.0	.0
Recreation <sup>3</sup> .....	108.919	109.057	109.074	1.0	.1	.0
Education and communication <sup>3</sup> .....	133.901	134.127	134.138	2.0	.2	.0
Other goods and services .....	383.570	383.518	384.769	.7	.3	.3
<b>Commodity and service group</b>						
All items .....	229.995	232.039	232.561	2.1	1.1	.2
Commodities .....	181.783	185.271	185.651	1.9	2.1	.2
Commodities less food and beverages .....	154.063	158.777	159.182	1.9	3.3	.3
Nondurables less food and beverages .....	199.218	208.242	208.674	2.5	4.7	.2
Nondurables less food, beverages, and apparel .....	257.191	270.188	269.876	2.0	4.9	-.1
Durables .....	112.218	112.655	113.043	.1	.7	.3
Services .....	273.824	274.427	275.081	2.2	.5	.2
Rent of shelter <sup>2</sup> .....	275.271	275.925	276.362	2.3	.4	.2
Transportation services .....	266.182	267.180	269.568	.7	1.3	.9

See footnotes at end of table.

**Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods-Continued**

**West** (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from—		
	Feb. 2012	Mar. 2012	Apr. 2012	Apr. 2011	Feb. 2012	Mar. 2012
<b>Commodity and service group</b>						
Other services .....	317.479	318.321	318.978	2.9	0.5	0.2
<b>Special aggregate indexes</b>						
All items less medical care .....	221.315	223.384	223.911	2.0	1.2	.2
All items less food .....	229.582	231.888	232.437	2.0	1.2	.2
All items less shelter .....	219.801	222.470	223.015	2.0	1.5	.2
Commodities less food .....	157.362	161.959	162.337	1.8	3.2	.2
Nondurables .....	217.915	223.008	223.381	2.3	2.5	.2
Nondurables less food .....	202.412	210.971	211.346	2.3	4.4	.2
Nondurables less food and apparel .....	254.732	266.503	266.162	1.8	4.5	-.1
Services less rent of shelter <sup>2</sup> .....	303.137	303.741	304.754	2.1	.5	.3
Services less medical care services .....	262.003	262.586	263.235	2.1	.5	.2
Energy .....	268.155	285.654	285.212	1.6	6.4	-.2
All items less energy .....	228.888	229.693	230.297	2.1	.6	.3
All items less food and energy .....	228.736	229.601	230.253	2.0	.7	.3
Commodities less food and energy commodities .....	140.811	141.865	142.360	1.0	1.1	.3
Energy commodities .....	306.929	338.634	338.209	3.4	10.2	-.1
Services less energy services .....	277.964	278.672	279.403	2.4	.5	.3

<sup>1</sup> This index series was calculated using a Laspeyres estimator. All other item stratum index series were calculated using a geometric means estimator.

<sup>2</sup> Index is on a December 1982=100 base.

<sup>3</sup> Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

<sup>4</sup> Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

<sup>5</sup> Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

- Data not available.

Regions defined as the four Census regions. West includes Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

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