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Consumer Price Index, Riverside Area – March 2020

Area prices were unchanged over the past two months, up 2.3 percent from a year ago

Prices in the Riverside 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 lower prices for household furnishings and operations. (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 2.3 percent. The index for all items less food and energy advanced 2.4 percent over the year. Food prices rose 3.7 percent. Energy prices declined 0.5 percent, largely the result of a decrease in the price of gasoline. (See [table 1](#).)

Food

Food prices inched up 0.2 percent for the two months ending in March. (See [table 1](#).) Prices for food at home increased 0.9 percent, but prices for food away from home decreased 0.5 percent for the same period.

Over the year, food prices rose 3.7 percent. Prices for food away from home advanced 5.2 percent, and prices for food at home rose 2.2 percent.

Energy

The energy index decreased 4.4 percent for the two months ending in March. The decrease was mainly due to lower prices for gasoline (-5.9 percent). Prices for natural gas service declined 9.5 percent, while prices for electricity were unchanged for the same period.

Energy prices declined 0.5 percent over the year, largely due to lower prices for gasoline (-2.3 percent). Prices paid for natural gas service decreased 6.6 percent, while prices for electricity rose 4.1 percent during the past year.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy advanced 0.5 percent in the latest two-month period. Higher prices for apparel (4.3 percent), recreation (2.3 percent), and shelter (0.8 percent) were partially offset by lower prices for household furnishings and operations (-5.2 percent).

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy advanced 2.4 percent. Components contributing to the increase included medical care (5.8 percent) and shelter (5.1 percent). Partly offsetting the increases were price decreases in apparel (-7.0 percent) and recreation (-0.6 percent).

The May 2020 Consumer Price Index for the Riverside 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/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 Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario metropolitan area covered in this release consists of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties 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 Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario (December 2017=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.....	107.143	-	107.162	2.3	0.0	-
Food and beverages	106.468	-	106.700	3.5	0.2	-
Food	106.853	-	107.099	3.7	0.2	-
Food at home	102.662	102.524	103.561	2.2	0.9	1.0
Cereals and bakery products	104.874	-	106.098	1.9	1.2	-
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.....	101.213	-	103.272	1.9	2.0	-
Dairy and related products	105.764	-	105.285	1.2	-0.5	-
Fruits and vegetables.....	104.337	-	104.932	4.0	0.6	-
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials.....	107.980	-	111.713	7.3	3.5	-
Other food at home	98.237	-	97.063	-1.0	-1.2	-
Food away from home.....	111.259	-	110.736	5.2	-0.5	-
Food away from home.....	111.259	-	110.736	5.2	-0.5	-
Alcoholic beverages	99.817	-	99.779	0.4	0.0	-
Housing	109.886	-	109.955	4.4	0.1	-
Shelter	109.951	110.684	110.835	5.1	0.8	0.1
Rent of primary residence	110.071	110.644	110.836	5.5	0.7	0.2
Owners' equiv. rent of residences	110.345	110.950	111.161	5.7	0.7	0.2
Owners' equiv. rent of primary residence	110.345	110.950	111.161	5.7	0.7	0.2
Fuels and utilities.....	112.719	-	111.293	2.3	-1.3	-
Household energy	110.807	109.641	108.627	1.4	-2.0	-0.9
Energy services.....	111.031	109.838	108.831	1.6	-2.0	-0.9
Electricity	108.669	108.669	108.665	4.1	0.0	0.0
Utility (piped) gas service	119.941	113.768	108.573	-6.6	-9.5	-4.6
Household furnishings and operations.....	105.077	-	99.660	-0.3	-5.2	-
Apparel	93.442	-	97.442	-7.0	4.3	-
Transportation	106.672	-	103.961	-2.3	-2.5	-
Private transportation	106.595	-	104.834	-1.5	-1.7	-
New and used motor vehicles	98.503	-	99.065	-3.6	0.6	-
New vehicles	101.840	-	102.993	0.4	1.1	-
Used cars and trucks.....	99.340	-	102.569	-0.1	3.3	-
Motor fuel	115.399	114.514	108.421	-2.3	-6.0	-5.3
Gasoline (all types).....	115.336	114.536	108.474	-2.3	-5.9	-5.3
Gasoline, unleaded regular(1).....	115.310	114.586	108.339	-2.5	-6.0	-5.5
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(1).....	116.067	115.089	111.433	0.2	-4.0	-3.2
Gasoline, unleaded premium(1).....	115.258	114.094	108.597	-1.5	-5.8	-4.8
Motor vehicle insurance	113.655	-	116.349	5.7	2.4	-
Medical care	105.768	-	107.539	5.8	1.7	-
Recreation	99.300	-	101.545	-0.6	2.3	-
Education and communication	104.746	-	105.182	1.2	0.4	-
Tuition, other school fees, and child care.....	116.139	-	116.232	3.8	0.1	-
Other goods and services	107.738	-	108.452	1.3	0.7	-
Commodity and service group						
All items.....	107.143	-	107.162	2.3	0.0	-
Commodities	104.416	-	103.827	0.1	-0.6	-
Commodities less food & beverages.....	103.175	-	102.106	-2.0	-1.0	-
Nondurables less food & beverages	104.120	-	102.000	-2.8	-2.0	-
Durables	101.653	-	101.708	-1.4	0.1	-
Services.....	108.834	-	109.210	3.7	0.3	-
Special aggregate indexes						

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 Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario (December 2017=100 unless otherwise noted) - Continued

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from-		
	Jan. 2020	Feb. 2020	Mar. 2020	Mar. 2019	Jan. 2020	Feb. 2020
All items less medical care	107.238	-	107.138	2.1	-0.1	-
All items less shelter.....	105.582	-	105.094	0.7	-0.5	-
Commodities less food	103.044	-	102.003	-2.0	-1.0	-
Nondurables	105.367	-	104.496	0.5	-0.8	-
Nondurables less food.....	103.851	-	101.842	-2.7	-1.9	-
Services less rent of shelter	107.288	-	106.946	1.6	-0.3	-
Services less medical care services.....	108.882	-	109.112	3.4	0.2	-
Energy	114.089	113.083	109.047	-0.5	-4.4	-3.6
All items less energy	106.515	-	106.975	2.5	0.4	-
All items less food and energy	106.496	-	106.992	2.4	0.5	-

Footnotes

(1) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

- Data not available

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