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PHILADELPHIA AREA RETAIL FOOD, ENERGY, AND SHELTER PRICE INDEXES: SEPTEMBER 2004

Philadelphia area food at home prices rose, while energy and shelter prices fell in September, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that the recent decrease in the shelter index was the first one-month decline this year.

The food at home index for Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties in Pennsylvania; Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem Counties in New Jersey; New Castle County in Delaware; and Cecil County in Maryland, rose 0.7 percent in September. Higher prices for chicken, citrus fruits, and lettuce, among others, were partially offset by lower prices for a number of items including bread, milk, and eggs. Over the year, food at home prices were 6.3 percent higher.

The Philadelphia area food at home index was 195.1 on the 1982-84 base, which means that grocery shoppers in the Philadelphia area would have had to spend \$19.51 last month for a market basket of food items that cost \$10.00 in 1982-84.

Energy prices fell 0.4 percent since August due entirely to lower gasoline prices as higher prices for fuel oil and utility (piped) gas service more than offset lower electricity prices. Gasoline prices fell for the third consecutive month, down 11.0 percent since June. Despite the recent declines, gasoline prices were 4.9 percent higher than last year. Electricity prices edged down 0.2 percent over the month but were 2.0 percent higher over the year. Utility gas service prices rose 0.3 percent in September to a level 5.8 percent higher than a year ago. Over the last 12 months, the overall energy index rose 5.8 percent—the 23rd consecutive 12-month advance.

The Philadelphia energy index stood at 156.0 on the 1982-84 base, which means that energy users in the Philadelphia area would have had to spend \$15.60 last month for a group of energy items that cost \$10.00 in 1982-84.

Due entirely to lower prices for other lodging away from home, including hotels and motels, the shelter index fell 1.6 percent in September. Moderating the overall decline in the shelter index were higher prices for owners' equivalent rent of primary residence (0.7 percent) and rent of primary residence (0.5 percent). These two components had over-the-year increases of 5.3 and 3.9 percent, respectively. Over the last 12 months, the shelter index rose 6.0 percent.

NOTE: Local area CPI indexes are by-products of the national CPI program. Because each local index is a small subset of the national index, it has a smaller sample size and is, therefore, subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. As a result, local area indexes show greater volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. Short-term changes may reflect strictly seasonal influences.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, PA-NJ-DE-MD (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Expenditure category	Indexes			Percent change from-		
	July 2004	Aug. 2004	Sep. 2004	Sep. 2003	July 2004	Aug. 2004
All items.....	-	199.1	-	-	-	-
All items (1967=100).....	-	575.1	-	-	-	-
Food and beverages.....	-	182.5	-	-	-	-
Food.....	-	182.1	-	-	-	-
Food at home.....	194.2	193.7	195.1	6.3	0.5	0.7
Food away from home.....	-	162.8	-	-	-	-
Alcoholic beverages.....	-	182.7	-	-	-	-
Housing.....	-	205.3	-	-	-	-
Shelter.....	247.9	248.2	244.3	6.0	-1.5	-1.6
Rent of primary residence (1).....	220.5	220.7	221.7	3.9	.5	.5
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence (1) (2).....	242.3	244.6	246.3	5.3	1.7	.7
Fuels and utilities.....	-	166.8	-	-	-	-
Fuels.....	152.2	153.3	153.8	5.5	1.1	.3
Gas (piped) and electricity (1).....	170.8	170.9	170.9	3.6	.1	.0
Electricity (1).....	165.6	165.7	165.4	2.0	-.1	-.2
Utility (piped) gas service (1).....	185.9	186.0	186.6	5.8	.4	.3
Household furnishings and operations.....	-	113.1	-	-	-	-
Apparel.....	-	103.7	-	-	-	-
Transportation.....	-	166.3	-	-	-	-
Private transportation.....	-	164.5	-	-	-	-
Motor fuel.....	173.6	166.4	164.4	4.9	-5.3	-1.2
Gasoline (all types).....	171.2	164.0	162.0	4.9	-5.4	-1.2
Gasoline, unleaded regular (3).....	173.3	165.4	163.8	5.1	-5.5	-1.0
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade (3) (4).....	164.8	159.4	156.1	4.2	-5.3	-2.1
Gasoline, unleaded premium (3).....	157.5	151.8	149.7	4.3	-5.0	-1.4
Medical care.....	-	358.2	-	-	-	-
Recreation (5).....	-	113.6	-	-	-	-
Education and communication (5).....	-	111.9	-	-	-	-
Other goods and services.....	-	338.3	-	-	-	-
Commodity and service group						
Commodities.....	-	152.1	-	-	-	-
Commodities less food and beverages.....	-	133.5	-	-	-	-
Nondurables less food and beverages.....	-	153.3	-	-	-	-
Durables.....	-	109.3	-	-	-	-
Services.....	-	247.5	-	-	-	-
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less medical care.....	-	192.1	-	-	-	-
All items less shelter.....	-	183.5	-	-	-	-
Commodities less food.....	-	135.5	-	-	-	-
Nondurables.....	-	168.8	-	-	-	-
Nondurables less food.....	-	155.4	-	-	-	-
Services less rent of shelter (2).....	-	251.9	-	-	-	-
Services less medical care services.....	-	238.1	-	-	-	-
Energy.....	158.8	156.6	156.0	5.8	-1.8	-0.4
All items less energy.....	-	205.2	-	-	-	-
All items less food and energy.....	-	211.3	-	-	-	-

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

2 Indexes on a December 1982=100 base.

3 Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

4 Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

5 Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

- Data not available.

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

Table 2. Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, PA-NJ-DE-MD (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Expenditure category	Indexes			Percent change from-		
	July 2004	Aug. 2004	Sep. 2004	Sep. 2003	July 2004	Aug. 2004
All items.....	-	198.0	-	-	-	-
All items (1967=100).....	-	575.0	-	-	-	-
Food and beverages.....	-	185.3	-	-	-	-
Food.....	-	184.7	-	-	-	-
Food at home.....	196.4	195.6	197.1	6.7	0.4	0.8
Food away from home.....	-	163.0	-	-	-	-
Alcoholic beverages.....	-	188.8	-	-	-	-
Housing.....	-	205.4	-	-	-	-
Shelter.....	249.3	250.1	247.9	5.8	- .6	- .9
Rent of primary residence (1).....	220.5	220.7	221.7	3.9	.5	.5
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence (1) (2).....	215.5	217.5	219.1	5.3	1.7	.7
Fuels and utilities.....	-	166.9	-	-	-	-
Fuels.....	150.9	151.9	152.4	5.2	1.0	.3
Gas (piped) and electricity (1).....	169.8	169.9	170.0	3.5	.1	.1
Electricity (1).....	165.6	165.7	165.4	2.0	- .1	- .2
Utility (piped) gas service (1).....	185.9	186.0	186.6	5.8	.4	.3
Household furnishings and operations.....	-	109.8	-	-	-	-
Apparel.....	-	102.0	-	-	-	-
Transportation.....	-	169.5	-	-	-	-
Private transportation.....	-	168.4	-	-	-	-
Motor fuel.....	173.6	166.4	164.4	4.9	-5.3	-1.2
Gasoline (all types).....	171.2	164.0	162.0	4.9	-5.4	-1.2
Gasoline, unleaded regular (3).....	173.3	165.4	163.8	5.1	-5.5	-1.0
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade (3) (4).....	164.8	159.4	156.1	4.2	-5.3	-2.1
Gasoline, unleaded premium (3).....	157.5	151.8	149.7	4.3	-5.0	-1.4
Medical care.....	-	349.5	-	-	-	-
Recreation (5).....	-	112.7	-	-	-	-
Education and communication (5).....	-	109.8	-	-	-	-
Other goods and services.....	-	345.7	-	-	-	-
Commodity and service group						
Commodities.....	-	157.5	-	-	-	-
Commodities less food and beverages.....	-	138.3	-	-	-	-
Nondurables less food and beverages.....	-	153.0	-	-	-	-
Durables.....	-	113.8	-	-	-	-
Services.....	-	245.7	-	-	-	-
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less medical care.....	-	192.4	-	-	-	-
All items less shelter.....	-	183.1	-	-	-	-
Commodities less food.....	-	140.3	-	-	-	-
Nondurables.....	-	171.0	-	-	-	-
Nondurables less food.....	-	155.6	-	-	-	-
Services less rent of shelter (2).....	-	218.3	-	-	-	-
Services less medical care services.....	-	237.6	-	-	-	-
Energy.....	155.9	153.6	153.1	5.4	-1.8	-0.3
All items less energy.....	-	204.4	-	-	-	-
All items less food and energy.....	-	210.3	-	-	-	-

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

2 Indexes on a December 1984=100 base

3 Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

4 Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

5 Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

- Data not available.

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