

News

U.S. Department of Labor
Bureau of Labor Statistics
PO Box 193766
San Francisco, Calif. 94119-3766



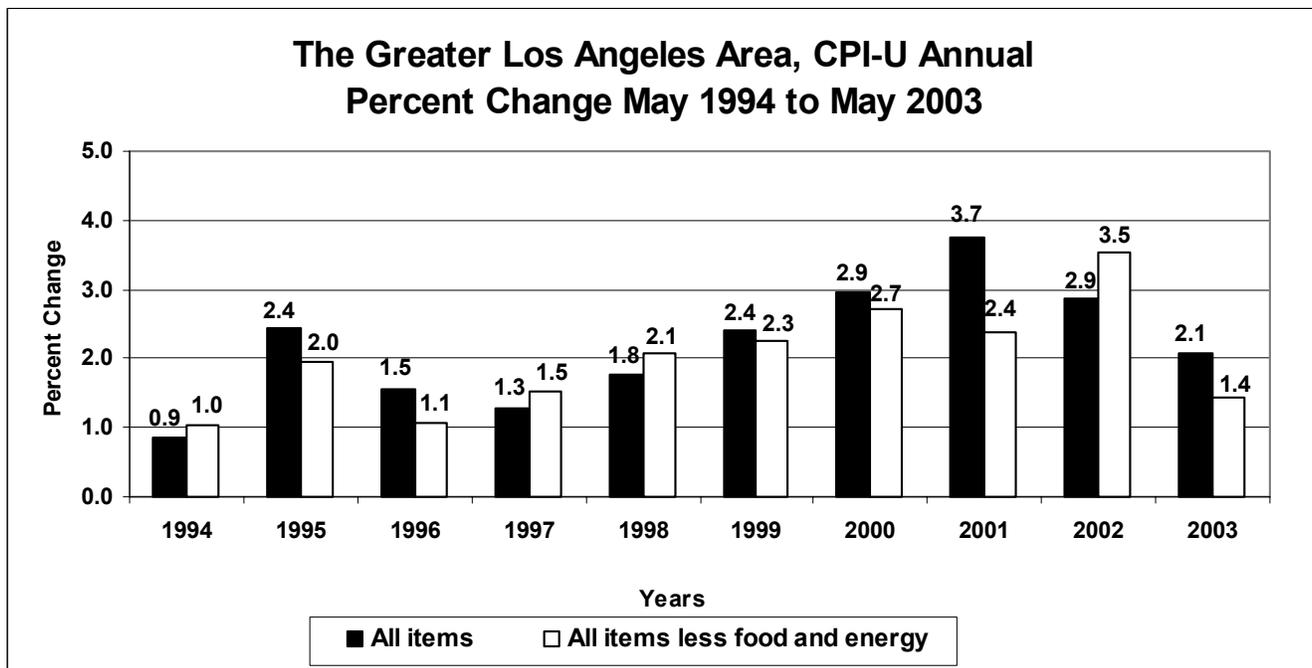
CONTACT:

Stanley P. Stephenson (415) 975-4373
Charlotte Yee (415) 975-4403
Internet address: <http://www.bls.gov/ro9/ro9news.htm>
Fax-On-Demand (415) 975-4567, Document 9140

BLS 03-34
FOR RELEASE:
Tuesday, June 17, 2003

LOS ANGELES AREA CONSUMER PRICES FALL 0.6 PERCENT IN MAY

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today that consumer prices in the greater Los Angeles area decreased 0.6 percent in May, adding to the 0.3 percent decrease registered in April. Regional Commissioner Stanley P. Stephenson said that while the housing component continued to drop, it was the drop in the price of gasoline that contributed markedly to the overall index decline in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the Los Angeles area. Prices for gasoline dropped 11.5 percent over the month, adding to declining prices the month before. For the year however, gasoline prices are still higher by 16.9 percent. Movement in the all items less food and energy index remains negative in May, down 0.4 percent from April. Local area data are not seasonally adjusted.



The housing index dropped a slight 0.3 percent to 192.5. The drop was largely due to the unpublished lodging away from home category. Shelter prices, which include rent of primary residence and owners' equivalent of rent remained virtually flat, changing little from January. Fuels and utilities prices rose 2.1 percent in May. Utility natural gas prices climbed 10.6 percent over the previous month. For the year, utility natural gas is up 19.3 percent. Electricity prices remained stable, unchanged over the month and down 1.4 percent for the year.

Transportation prices continued a downward trend, dropping another 3.1 percent for the month. The three month spike due to perceived changes in supply from February through April appears over, and prices are returning to their previous levels.

The extremely steady medical services index continued to climb in May. In the past 12 months, the index has fallen only twice, quickly regaining pricing ground and continuing an upward path. The index now stands at 286.9. Quickly interpreted, the same purchase of medical goods that cost \$100 between 1982-84, now costs \$286.90.

BLS publishes a special aggregate index for energy. This index combines price changes in household fuels with price changes in motor fuel. Following a steady climb in the first quarter of 2003, energy prices continued to trend lower, falling 5.6 percent over one month, and 9.3 percent over two months.

In May, the All Items Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, (CPI-U), in the Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area, measured 186.4 on the 1982-84=100 reference base. This indicates a market basket of goods and services costing \$100.00 in 1982-84 would have cost \$186.40 in May 2003.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request.

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

Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County, CA (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from-		
	Mar. 2003	Apr. 2003	May 2003	May 2002	Mar. 2003	Apr. 2003
Expenditure category						
All items	188.2	187.6	186.4	2.1	-1.0	-0.6
All items (1967=100)	556.1	554.1	550.7	-	-	-
Food and beverages	187.7	187.5	189.1	2.0	0.7	0.9
Food	185.6	185.5	187.1	1.9	0.8	0.9
Food at home	194.1	193.8	195.9	1.6	0.9	1.1
Food away from home	173.2	173.4	174.5	2.5	0.8	0.6
Alcoholic beverages	208.1	205.9	206.3	2.6	-0.9	0.2
Housing	194.1	193.1	192.5	2.6	-0.8	-0.3
Shelter	209.9	209.7	210.1	3.8	0.1	0.2
Rent of primary residence (1).....	204.0	205.1	206.0	5.1	1.0	0.4
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence (1) (2)	219.3	219.6	220.1	5.0	0.4	0.2
Fuels and utilities	202.7	192.0	196.1	3.6	-3.3	2.1
Fuels	207.9	194.1	199.3	3.9	-4.1	2.7
Gas (piped) and electricity (1).....	208.4	194.5	200.0	3.7	-4.0	2.8
Electricity (1).....	231.3	227.4	227.4	-1.4	-1.7	0.0
Utility natural gas service (1).....	197.8	162.1	179.3	19.3	-9.4	10.6
Household furnishings and operations	127.7	128.4	121.4	-6.0	-4.9	-5.5
Apparel	110.1	108.8	107.5	-3.4	-2.4	-1.2
Transportation	167.2	166.7	161.6	3.9	-3.3	-3.1
Private transportation	161.7	160.9	155.7	4.5	-3.7	-3.2
Motor fuel	167.5	164.2	145.3	16.8	-13.3	-11.5
Gasoline (all types)	164.1	160.9	142.4	16.9	-13.2	-11.5
Gasoline, unleaded regular (3).....	163.4	160.1	141.0	17.5	-13.7	-11.9
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade (3) (4).....	156.9	153.9	137.2	16.4	-12.6	-10.9
Gasoline, unleaded premium (3).....	158.5	156.3	139.7	14.8	-11.9	-10.6
Medical care	286.4	285.9	286.9	1.7	0.2	0.3
Recreation (5).....	109.7	108.8	108.6	-2.3	-1.0	-0.2
Education and communication (5).....	105.3	105.7	105.5	4.4	0.2	-0.2
Other goods and services	297.5	298.0	296.8	0.0	-0.2	-0.4

See footnotes at end of table.

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

Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County, CA (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (Continued)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from-		
	Mar. 2003	Apr. 2003	May 2003	May 2002	Mar. 2003	Apr. 2003
Commodity and service group						
All items	188.2	187.6	186.4	2.1	-1.0	-0.6
Commodities	156.4	155.7	152.5	-0.1	-2.5	-2.1
Commodities less food and beverages	136.4	135.4	130.3	-1.3	-4.5	-3.8
Nondurables less food and beverages	154.0	152.4	145.5	1.7	-5.5	-4.5
Durables	116.4	116.1	112.9	-5.0	-3.0	-2.8
Services	215.9	215.3	215.8	3.4	0.0	0.2
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less medical care	183.3	182.6	181.4	2.1	-1.0	-0.7
All items less shelter	179.5	178.6	176.7	1.1	-1.6	-1.1
Commodities less food	140.0	139.0	133.9	-1.2	-4.4	-3.7
Nondurables	172.8	171.8	168.7	1.8	-2.4	-1.8
Nondurables less food	159.1	157.5	150.8	1.8	-5.2	-4.3
Services less rent of shelter (2)	231.8	230.6	231.3	2.9	-0.2	0.3
Services less medical care services	209.9	209.3	209.8	3.5	0.0	0.2
Energy	182.1	174.9	165.1	10.6	-9.3	-5.6
All items less energy	189.9	189.8	189.4	1.5	-0.3	-0.2
All items less food and energy	191.2	191.1	190.3	1.4	-0.5	-0.4

1 This index series was calculated using a Laspeyres estimator. All other item stratum index series converted to a geometric means estimator in January, 1999.

2 Index is 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.