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AVERAGE ENERGY PRICES IN THE WASHINGTON-BALTIMORE AREA – AUGUST 2012

Washington-Baltimore area consumers paid 24.4 percent more than the U.S. city average for utility (piped) gas in August 2012 as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau’s regional commissioner, noted that the local price for utility (piped) gas declined less than the national average since August 2011, widening their price difference. In contrast, local prices for both gasoline and electricity were close to their national averages. Since last August, the Washington-Baltimore area prices for gasoline and electricity were nearly unchanged. (See table A. Data in this release are not seasonally adjusted; accordingly, over-the-year analysis is used throughout.)

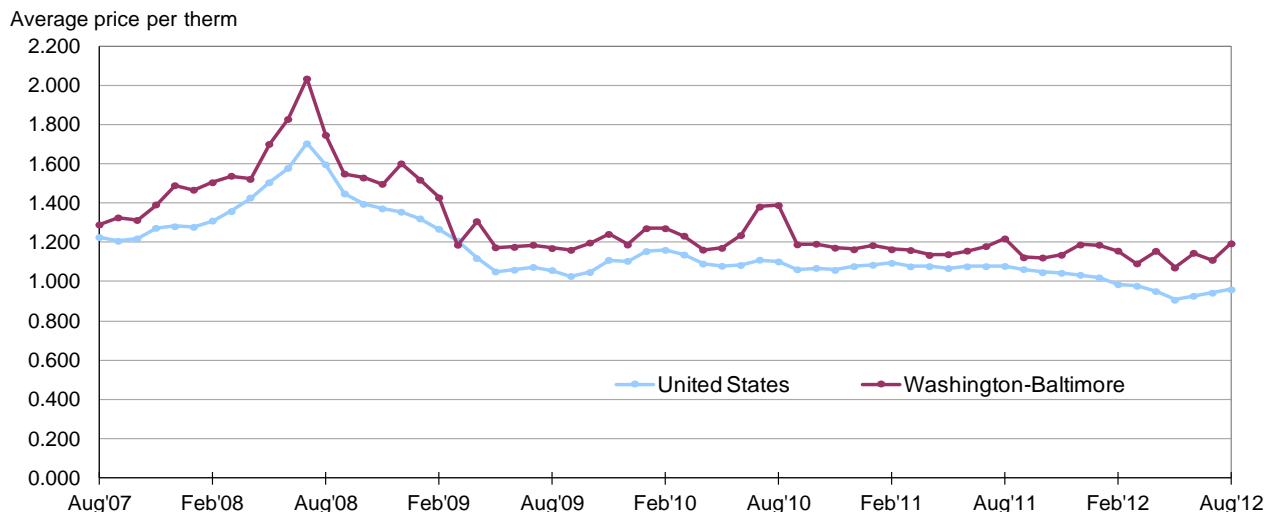
Table A. Average prices for utility (piped) gas, gasoline, and electricity, United States and the Washington-Baltimore area, August 2011 and August 2012

Item	August 2011			August 2012		
	United States	Washington-Baltimore	Percent difference	United States	Washington-Baltimore	Percent difference
Utility (piped) gas per therm	\$1.079	\$1.219	13.0	\$0.960	\$1.194	24.4
Gasoline per gallon	3.680	3.704	0.7	3.759	3.722	-1.0
Electricity per kWh	0.135	0.133	-1.5	0.133	0.132	-0.8

NOTE: A positive percent difference measures how much the price in the Washington-Baltimore area is above the national price, while a negative difference reflects a lower price in the Washington-Baltimore area.

A therm—a measure of constant heating value—of utility (piped) gas, commonly referred to as natural gas, in the Washington-Baltimore area averaged \$1.194 in August 2012, down 2.1 percent from the previous August. Nationwide, a therm averaged \$0.960 in August 2012, down 11.0 percent from one year earlier. (See table 1.) Over the last five years, local and national prices have generally followed similar trends, though local prices were above those for the nation in all but one month. (See chart 1.)

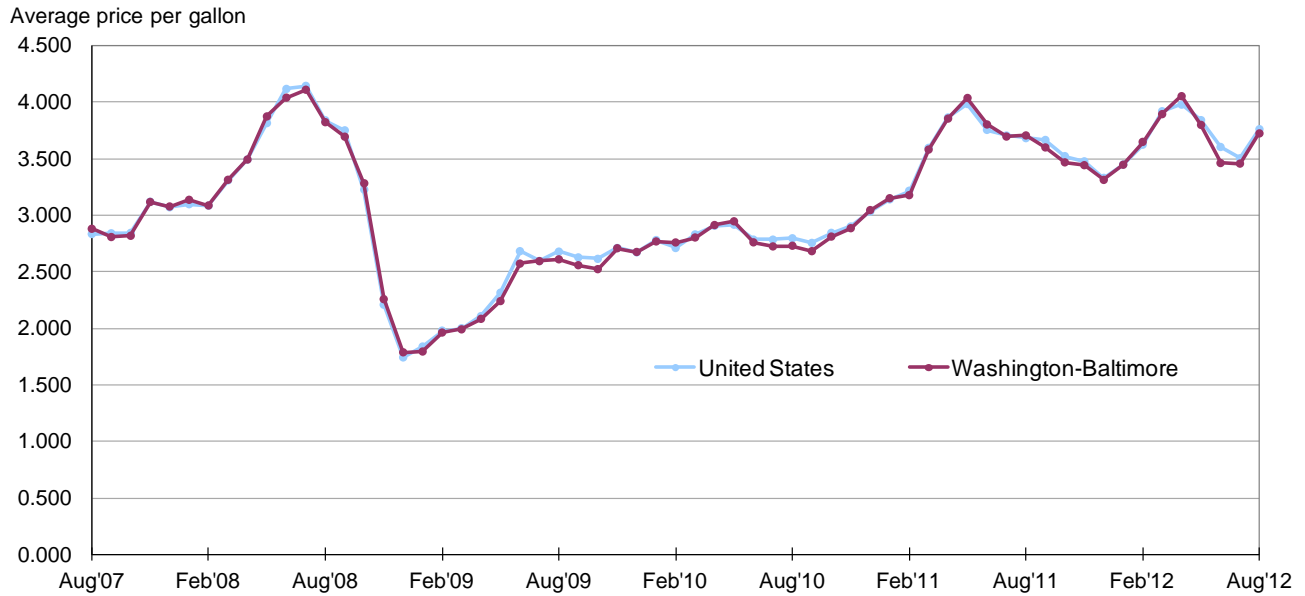
Chart 1. Average prices for utility (piped) gas, United States and the Washington-Baltimore area, August 2007–August 2012



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

In August 2012, gasoline prices in the Washington-Baltimore area averaged \$3.722 per gallon. Local gas prices were slightly lower than the national average of \$3.759. Over the year, gasoline prices rose 0.5 percent in the Washington-Baltimore area and 2.1 percent nationwide. Though gasoline prices are historically subject to rapid monthly fluctuations, area prices have stayed close to the national average over the past five years. (See chart 2.)

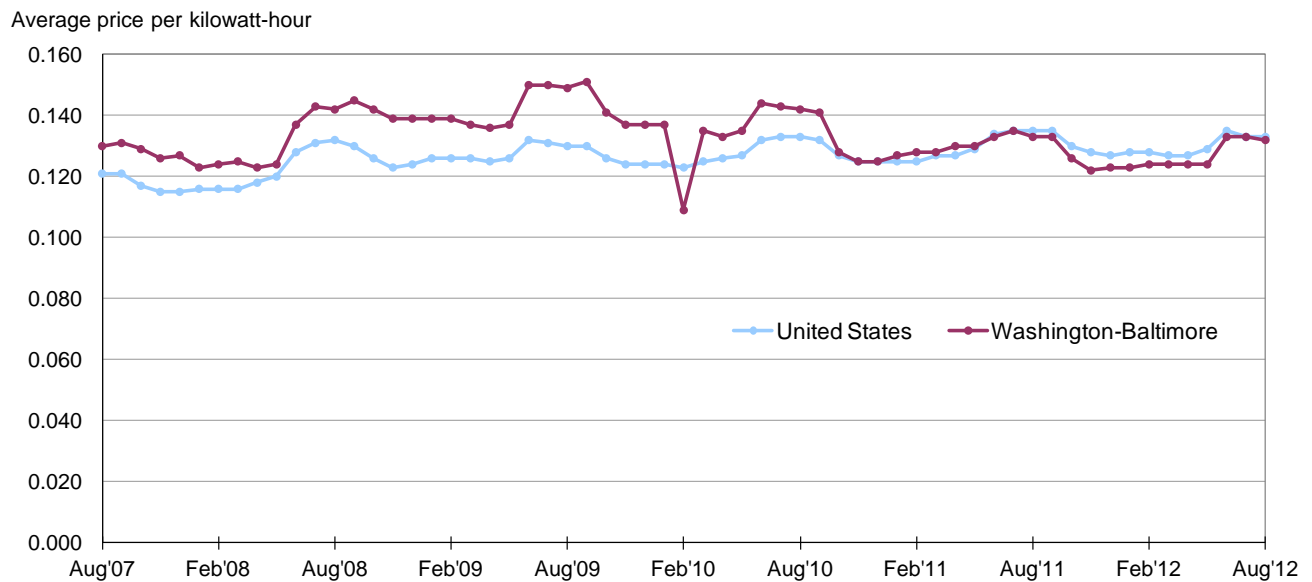
Chart 2. Average prices for gasoline, United States and the Washington-Baltimore area, August 2007–August 2012



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

A kilowatt-hour (kWh) of electricity cost Washington-Baltimore area consumers \$0.132 in August 2012, declining just \$0.001 from a year ago. Nationwide, electricity prices were also little changed, decreasing \$0.002 to an average of \$0.133 in August 2012. Locally, electricity prices have stayed close to those for the nation since October 2010. (See chart 3.)

Chart 3. Average prices for electricity, United States and the Washington-Baltimore area, August 2007–August 2012



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

The Washington-Baltimore, D.C.-Md.-Va.-W.Va. Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA) includes the District of Columbia; Baltimore City and the counties of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Carroll, Charles, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, and Washington in Maryland; the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Manassas, and Manassas Park and the counties of Arlington, Clarke, Culpeper, Fairfax, Fauquier, King George, Loudoun, Prince William, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Warren in Virginia; and the counties of Berkeley and Jefferson in West Virginia.

Additional information

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.

Technical Note

Average prices for electricity, utility (piped) gas, and gasoline are published monthly for the U.S. city average, the 4 regions, the 3 population size classes, 10 region/size-class cross-classifications, and the 14 largest local index areas. For electricity, average prices per kilowatt-hour (kWh) and per 500 kWh are published. For utility (piped) gas, average prices per therm, per 40 therms, and per 100 therms are published. For gasoline, the average price per gallon is published. Average prices for commonly available grades of gasoline are published as well as the average price across all grades.

Price quotes for 40 therms and 100 therms of utility (piped) gas and for 500 kWh of electricity are collected in sample outlets for use in the average price programs only. Since they are for specified consumption amounts, they are not used in the CPI. All other price quotes used for average price estimation are regular CPI data.

With the exception of the 40 therms, 100 therms, and 500 kWh price quotes, all eligible prices are converted to a price per normalized quantity. These prices are then used to estimate a price for a defined fixed quantity.

Table 1. Average prices for utility (piped) gas, gasoline, and electricity, United States and the Washington-Baltimore area, August 2011–August 2012, not seasonally adjusted

Year and Month	Utility (piped) gas per therm		Gasoline per gallon		Electricity per kWh	
	United States	Washington-Baltimore	United States	Washington-Baltimore	United States	Washington-Baltimore
2011						
August	1.079	1.219	3.680	3.704	0.135	0.133
September	1.063	1.123	3.664	3.598	0.135	0.133
October	1.047	1.122	3.521	3.466	0.130	0.126
November	1.044	1.136	3.475	3.441	0.128	0.122
December	1.034	1.188	3.329	3.311	0.127	0.123
2012						
January	1.021	1.187	3.447	3.445	0.128	0.123
February	0.986	1.157	3.622	3.647	0.128	0.124
March	0.978	1.092	3.918	3.892	0.127	0.124
April	0.951	1.156	3.976	4.051	0.127	0.124
May	0.907	1.071	3.839	3.797	0.129	0.124
June	0.927	1.146	3.602	3.460	0.135	0.133
July	0.943	1.110	3.502	3.455	0.133	0.133
August	0.960	1.194	3.759	3.722	0.133	0.132