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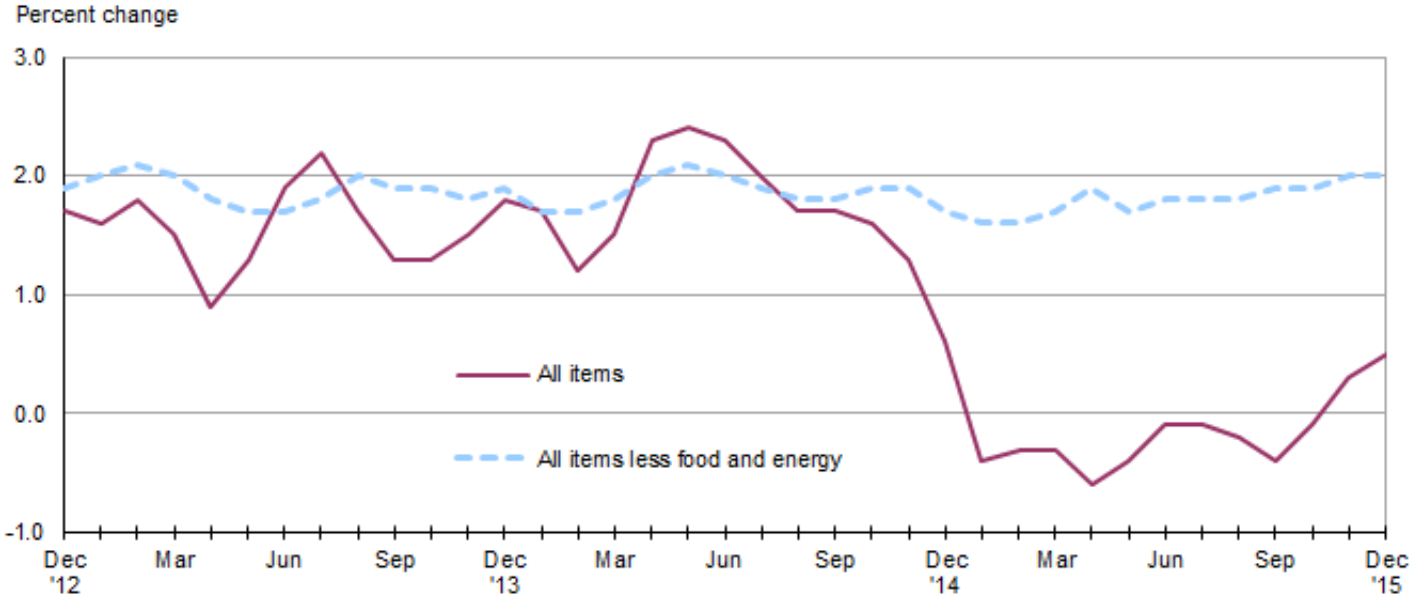
Consumer Price Index, South Region – December 2015

Prices down 0.4 percent over the month; up 0.5 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for the South decreased 0.4 percent in December, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. The energy index declined 2.7 percent over the month. The all items less food and energy, and food indexes were little changed in December, down 0.1 and 0.3 percent, respectively. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, month-to-month changes may reflect the impact of seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months, the all items CPI-U rose 0.5 percent. The all items less food and energy index advanced 2.0 percent over the year as several categories within this group recorded increases. (See chart 1.)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, South region, December 2012–December 2015



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

The food index declined 0.3 percent in December. Prices for food at home decreased 0.7 percent over the month, while those for food away from home inched up 0.1 percent.

Since December 2014, the food index advanced 0.8 percent, reflecting higher prices for food away from home (2.6 percent). The food at home index declined 0.5 percent over the year.

Energy

The energy index decreased 2.7 percent in December, led by a 5.6-percent decline in motor fuel prices. The electricity and utility (piped) gas service indexes also decreased over the month, down 0.3 and 0.8 percent, respectively.

Over the year, energy prices fell 13.4 percent, reflecting a 22.6-percent drop in motor fuel prices. Prices for electricity (-2.8 percent) and utility (piped) gas service (-11.2 percent) also declined over the year.

All items less food and energy

The all items less food and energy index inched down 0.1 percent in December. A seasonal decline in apparel prices (-4.7 percent), was partially offset by an increase in prices for shelter (0.1 percent) over the month.

Since December 2014, the all items less food and energy index advanced 2.0 percent as several indexes recorded increases, most notably shelter (3.0 percent). Medical care, led by increases in both medical care services (2.7 percent) and medical care commodities (2.8 percent), rose 2.7 percent over the year. Other indexes with over-the-year increases included education and communication (1.9 percent) and other goods and services (1.6 percent).

Table A. South region CPI-U 1-month and 12-month percent changes, all items index, not seasonally adjusted

Month	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015	
	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month
January	0.5	1.7	0.5	3.2	0.4	1.6	0.3	1.7	-0.7	-0.4
February	0.5	2.2	0.6	3.3	0.9	1.8	0.4	1.2	0.5	-0.3
March	1.2	2.8	0.7	2.8	0.3	1.5	0.6	1.5	0.6	-0.3
April	0.7	3.4	0.4	2.5	-0.2	0.9	0.5	2.3	0.3	-0.6
May	0.5	4.0	-0.4	1.6	0.0	1.3	0.2	2.4	0.4	-0.4
June	-0.2	3.8	-0.2	1.7	0.4	1.9	0.2	2.3	0.5	-0.1
July	0.2	4.1	-0.2	1.4	0.2	2.2	-0.1	2.0	-0.1	-0.1
August	0.4	4.3	0.6	1.6	0.1	1.7	-0.2	1.7	-0.2	-0.2
September	0.0	4.1	0.5	2.1	0.0	1.3	0.1	1.7	-0.2	-0.4
October	-0.2	3.7	-0.2	2.1	-0.2	1.3	-0.3	1.6	0.0	-0.1
November	0.0	3.8	-0.5	1.6	-0.3	1.5	-0.6	1.3	-0.2	0.3
December	-0.2	3.3	-0.1	1.7	0.1	1.8	-0.6	0.6	-0.4	0.5

The Consumer Price Index for January 2016 is scheduled to be released on Friday, February 19, 2016.

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 https://www.bls.gov/opub/hom/pdf/homch17.pdf.

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 **South region** is comprised of Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

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Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods South (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from-		
	Oct. 2015	Nov. 2015	Dec. 2015	Dec. 2014	Oct. 2015	Nov. 2015
Expenditure category						
All Items	230.860	230.422	229.581	0.5	-0.6	-0.4
All items (December 1977=100)	374.487	373.776	372.412	-	-	-
Food and beverages	247.559	246.957	246.125	0.8	-0.6	-0.3
Food	249.050	248.396	247.543	0.8	-0.6	-0.3
Food at home	242.704	241.401	239.762	-0.5	-1.2	-0.7
Food away from home	261.397	261.693	261.992	2.6	0.2	0.1
Alcoholic beverages	226.136	226.257	225.705	0.8	-0.2	-0.2
Housing	222.701	222.564	222.710	1.9	0.0	0.1
Shelter	253.160	253.487	253.815	3.0	0.3	0.1
Rent of primary residence [1]	260.738	261.335	261.682	3.5	0.4	0.1
Owners' equiv. rent of residences [1] [2]	255.561	256.092	256.398	2.8	0.3	0.1
Owners' equiv. rent of primary residence [1] [2]	255.548	256.079	256.387	2.8	0.3	0.1
Fuels and utilities	228.373	225.933	225.482	-2.4	-1.3	-0.2
Household energy	186.316	183.332	182.721	-4.2	-1.9	-0.3
Energy services [1]	186.709	183.643	183.050	-3.9	-2.0	-0.3
Electricity [1]	186.767	183.295	182.834	-2.8	-2.1	-0.3
Utility (piped) gas service [1]	170.886	170.711	169.306	-11.2	-0.9	-0.8
Household furnishings and operations	121.789	121.614	121.533	-0.5	-0.2	-0.1
Apparel	138.679	136.716	130.231	-1.8	-6.1	-4.7
Transportation	193.612	192.674	190.467	-4.6	-1.6	-1.1
Private transportation	191.369	190.298	188.175	-4.8	-1.7	-1.1
New and used motor vehicles [3]	102.623	102.111	102.262	0.2	-0.4	0.1
New vehicles	152.584	152.539	153.011	-0.2	0.3	0.3
New cars and trucks [3] [4]	103.853	103.826	104.155	-0.2	0.3	0.3
New cars [4]	153.118	152.684	153.465	-0.8	0.2	0.5
Used cars and trucks	145.776	143.435	142.825	1.1	-2.0	-0.4
Motor fuel	186.574	180.994	170.941	-22.6	-8.4	-5.6
Gasoline (all types)	185.552	179.960	169.930	-22.3	-8.4	-5.6
Unleaded regular [4]	181.117	175.445	165.316	-23.1	-8.7	-5.8
Unleaded midgrade [4] [5]	204.210	199.105	189.665	-19.7	-7.1	-4.7
Unleaded premium [4]	203.732	199.001	189.917	-17.6	-6.8	-4.6
Medical care	428.455	429.361	428.859	2.7	0.1	-0.1
Medical care commodities	346.080	346.645	344.468	2.8	-0.5	-0.6
Medical care services	455.976	457.012	457.246	2.7	0.3	0.1
Professional services	357.889	358.863	358.852	1.2	0.3	0.0
Recreation [3]	115.958	115.582	115.861	0.3	-0.1	0.2
Education and communication [3]	137.002	137.092	137.064	1.9	0.0	0.0
Other goods and services	410.318	409.946	410.087	1.6	-0.1	0.0
Commodity and service group						
All Items	230.860	230.422	229.581	0.5	-0.6	-0.4
Commodities	181.512	180.266	178.113	-2.7	-1.9	-1.2
Commodities less food and beverages	150.198	148.729	146.106	-5.0	-2.7	-1.8
Nondurables less food and beverages	191.118	188.611	183.278	-7.4	-4.1	-2.8
Nondurables less food, beverages, and apparel	224.198	221.338	216.563	-9.2	-3.4	-2.2
Durables	111.006	110.450	110.173	-1.4	-0.8	-0.3
Services	280.687	281.024	281.443	2.6	0.3	0.1
Rent of shelter [2]	259.813	260.134	260.430	3.0	0.2	0.1
Transportation services	314.114	317.389	318.421	4.3	1.4	0.3

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 South (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) - Continued

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from-		
	Oct. 2015	Nov. 2015	Dec. 2015	Dec. 2014	Oct. 2015	Nov. 2015
Other services	334.204	334.801	335.662	2.7	0.4	0.3
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less medical care	219.953	219.462	218.616	0.3	-0.6	-0.4
All items less food	227.832	227.427	226.589	0.4	-0.5	-0.4
All items less shelter	223.279	222.521	221.191	-0.7	-0.9	-0.6
Commodities less food	152.553	151.122	148.549	-4.8	-2.6	-1.7
Nondurables	217.990	216.361	213.102	-3.2	-2.2	-1.5
Nondurables less food	192.866	190.506	185.442	-6.9	-3.8	-2.7
Nondurables less food and apparel	223.245	220.651	216.256	-8.4	-3.1	-2.0
Services less rent of shelter [2]	315.714	316.082	316.668	2.1	0.3	0.2
Services less medical care services	264.730	265.019	265.440	2.6	0.3	0.2
Energy	182.677	178.574	173.686	-13.4	-4.9	-2.7
All items less energy	236.990	236.962	236.573	1.8	-0.2	-0.2
All items less food and energy	235.281	235.362	235.053	2.0	-0.1	-0.1
Commodities less food and energy commodities	149.114	148.263	146.744	-0.9	-1.6	-1.0
Energy commodities	190.061	184.518	174.457	-22.4	-8.2	-5.5
Services less energy services	290.545	291.268	291.800	3.1	0.4	0.2

Footnotes
(1) This index series was calculated using a Laspeyres estimator. All other item stratum index series were calculated using a geometric means estimator.
(2) Index is on a December 1982=100 base.
(3) Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.
(4) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.
(5) Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.
- Data not available.
Regions defined as the four Census regions. South includes Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.
NOTE: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date. Data not seasonally adjusted.