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## WYOMING COST OF LIVING FOR THE SECOND QUARTER 2010

The **Economic Analysis Division** has completed the Wyoming Cost of Living Index (WCLI) for the second quarter of 2010. The WCLI is a summarization of price data collected in twenty-eight cities and towns throughout Wyoming over the period of July 7, 8, and 9, 2010. The price data collected are used to build a comparative index and to estimate inflation rates for Wyoming and the five regions of the State.

Twenty-eight communities across the State were included in the WCLI based on the following criteria. First, the largest city or town in each county was priced. In addition, prices were collected in any city or town with a population of more than 5,000 persons or where a city or town had at least 85% of that county's largest community's population. In counties where only one community was priced, those prices were used to represent the entire county. In counties where two communities were priced, a population based weighted average of the prices for the two communities was used for the entire county. Also, starting with the second quarter 2003 WCLI report, Afton in Lincoln County was added through legislative action and was included in the comparative index. Kemmerer is still priced. Afton and Kemmerer report separate comparative index numbers. Beginning with the second quarter of 2004, Afton in Lincoln County was included in the inflation calculations.

The 140 items surveyed were aggregated into six categories, which were then weighted according to their overall importance in the average consumer's budget. These categories and their respective weight components include Housing (48.0%), Transportation (16.7%), Food (13.7%), Recreation & Personal Care (10.0%), Medical (6.8%), and Apparel (4.8%)<sup>1</sup>. The Housing category, due to its relative importance in the average consumer's budget, carries the largest weight factor and is the most influential category in both the comparative index and the inflation rates.

### COMPARATIVE INDEX

The comparative index is found in **Table I**. It compares each county's price level to the statewide average for the second quarter of 2010. All twenty-three counties are included in the comparative index. Movement in ranking from a previous survey does not indicate that the price level has increased or decreased in a particular county. Instead, this table reflects only the price level of each county, *at the time of data collection*, compared with the statewide average of 100.

The second quarter of 2010 saw the rankings of the comparative index remain consistent with what has been experienced over the past few years. "Even though Wyoming's economy has been affected by the national recession and is beginning to slowly recover, the relative nature of the comparative index has not significantly changed during this time period," noted Justin Ballard, senior economist with the Economic Analysis Division. "The more rural counties of the State have remained the least expensive locations to live, while Teton and the mineral impacted counties, such as Campbell and Sublette,

<sup>1</sup> Total may not add to 100.0 due to rounding.

continue to record the highest cost of living values. Although the mineral industry was hurt during the recession, it has recovered more quickly than in previous national economic downturns. This has spared Wyoming and its mineral bearing counties from the severe downside of mineral busts seen in the past. Thus, a significant change in the comparative index has not occurred.”

Rural counties in the southeast part of the State, along with Laramie county, could potentially be in store for significant new mineral related activity in the near future. “Oil shale plays in the southeast area of the State have the potential to considerably alter the economic outlook of the region,” commented Ballard. “One job in the oil and gas extraction sector tends to create three other jobs in the economy. If new employment driven by the oil shale formations comes to fruition, **Housing** costs in the region will certainly increase due to the influx of new workers. The resulting effect will be a rise in the overall cost of living for the affected areas. The experience of similar mineral discoveries in the northeast and southwest portions of the State support the potential for higher cost of living rankings.”

### **ANNUAL INFLATION RATES**

**Tables II and III** show estimated Wyoming inflation rates. **Table II** shows estimated inflation rates for all categories, and the respective category weights. **Table III** shows the estimated annual **All Items** inflation rates for the five regions of the State, as well as statewide rates.

The Wyoming annual **All Items** inflation rate for the second quarter of 2009 through the second quarter of 2010 was 1.9%. The inflation rate represents the percent change in the price level of a standard basket of selected consumer items priced this quarter, compared with the price level of the same goods recorded one year ago.

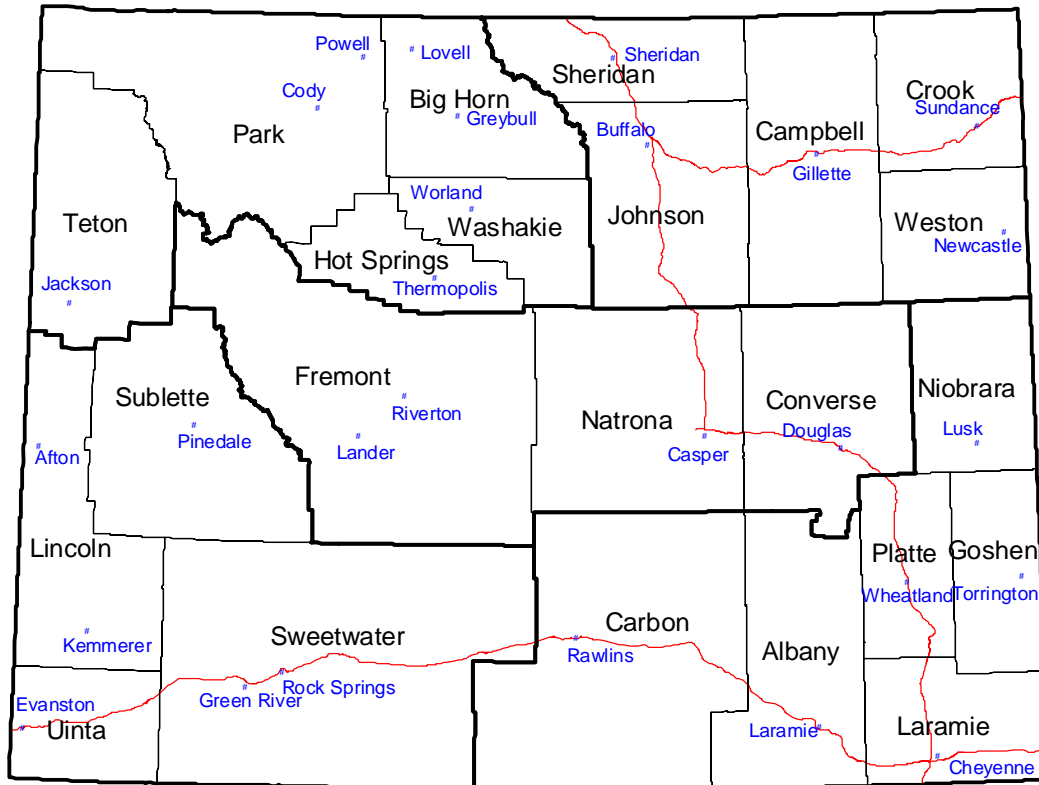
For the first time since 2008, each item category posted positive inflation during the latest cost of living pricing period. “The second quarter of 2010 registered an annual increase of 1.9%,” stated Ballard. “Although Wyoming’s inflation rate was higher than the nation’s (1.1%), it was lower than what was posted during the last quarter of 2009 (2.7%). A leveling off of gasoline prices lead to **Transportation** inflation of 5.4%. This was a departure from the recent wild swings in **Transportation** related costs which saw annual changes range from a positive 16.9% to a negative 15.1% over the past few years.”

National inflation is expected to remain relatively low in the short and medium term. “Wyoming’s economic recovery has been led by energy related activities, but a faster expansion of the State’s economy will depend on increased energy demand from the rest of the country as the national economy attempts to accelerate its current economic revival,” commented Ballard. “As long as mineral development does not enter a period of significant contraction, Wyoming’s inflation rate will likely remain above the national level. This will particularly be the case if new mineral discoveries are developed in the State and new workers are attracted to the area.”

The data were weighted by population to more accurately represent the price changes experienced by the majority of consumers in Wyoming. Nationally, the inflation rate from June 2009 to June 2010 was **1.1%** (CPI-U), as reported by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. The WCLI is also available on the Division’s homepage at <http://eadiv.state.wy.us>. For additional information about the survey, or retrieving the information electronically, please contact the Division at (307) 777-7504 or email: [ead@wyo.gov](mailto:ead@wyo.gov).

**The Division wishes to extend its sincere appreciation to all of the businesses and individuals whose cooperation and assistance made this survey possible.**

# SURVEYED COMMUNITIES IN EACH COUNTY



## Regional Composition for Inflation Estimate:

**Southeast:** Albany, Carbon, Goshen, Laramie, Niobrara, and Platte counties.

**Southwest:** Lincoln (Kemmerer), Lincoln (Afton), Sublette, Sweetwater, and Uinta counties.

**Central:** Converse, Fremont, and Natrona counties.

**Northeast:** Campbell, Crook, Johnson, Sheridan, and Weston counties.

**Northwest:** Big Horn, Hot Springs, Park, Teton, and Washakie counties.

**Note:** Starting with the 2Q03 WCLI report, Afton in Lincoln County was included in the comparative index. Starting with the 2Q04 WCLI report, Afton in Lincoln County was included in the inflation numbers.

**Table I**  
**Wyoming Comparative Cost of Living Index - 2Q10**  
**Prices as of July 7, 8, and 9, 2010 (Statewide Average = 100)**

COUNTY	Index Number by Category:						
	All Items	Food	Housing	Apparel	Transportation	Medical	Recreation & Personal Care
Teton	133	103	161	122	104	112	110
Sublette	114	102	121	133	103	104	115
Campbell	108	102	115	97	101	96	104
Sheridan	105	108	105	127	98	104	103
Sweetwater	103	99	106	97	101	103	98
Lincoln-Afton	102	99	103	96	100	95	110
Carbon	101	100	100	113	102	97	101
Natrona	101	101	102	96	101	98	95
Johnson	101	107	95	123	102	103	103
Lincoln-Kemmerer	99	95	98	113	102	95	100
Albany	98	97	98	96	97	99	96
Laramie	97	99	98	88	98	95	98
Fremont	96	95	94	87	100	105	103
Park	95	107	85	106	101	107	99
Converse	95	94	92	86	100	97	102
Uinta	95	93	93	97	99	88	100
Washakie	92	101	78	115	101	108	107
Crook	92	100	80	111	102	103	102
Weston	90	95	84	86	100	98	95
Goshen	90	97	78	121	99	111	96
Hot Springs	87	101	72	97	101	103	106
Big Horn	87	102	73	107	100	99	96
Niobrara	86	95	74	101	100	101	95
Platte	85	96	71	90	100	104	100

Starting with the 2Q03 Comparative Index, Lincoln-Afton was included.

**Table II**  
**Annual Inflation Rates by Category**

QUARTER:	Inflation Rate by Category (Statewide Average):						
	All Items	Food	Housing	Apparel	Transportation	Medical	Recreation & Personal Care
<b>WEIGHTS:</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>48.0</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>10.0</b>
2Q04	4.9	5.2	6.3	1.8	4.8	5.0	-0.4
4Q04	4.3	4.2	4.8	0.4	5.9	5.5	0.4
2Q05	4.5	3.1	5.1	1.0	6.2	5.0	1.5
4Q05	5.0	5.3	5.3	4.4	6.6	5.8	0.4
2Q06	5.6	2.0	6.9	3.7	7.9	4.3	2.0
4Q06	4.4	0.4	7.2	3.6	1.2	3.8	2.3
2Q07	4.7	6.5	6.1	3.5	1.2	5.0	2.2
4Q07	6.1	6.8	5.2	2.9	9.9	5.9	4.6
2Q08	7.9	7.4	7.2	2.3	15.0	5.5	3.4
4Q08	2.6	7.0	6.5	2.3	-15.1	5.6	7.5
2Q09	0.0	1.7	1.1	2.4	-11.2	5.3	5.2
4Q09	2.7	-0.8	-0.6	1.7	16.9	2.8	2.6
2Q10	1.9	1.5	0.8	0.1	5.4	4.0	1.5

Note: Item weights may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Note: The 2Q99 inflation calculations mark the first time the WCLI used all 23 counties to calculate the inflation rates.

Previously, only 15 counties were used. Starting with the 2Q04 report, the inflation numbers include Lincoln-Afton.

**Table III**  
**Annual Inflation Rates by Region**

QUARTER:	U.S. CPI*	Statewide All Items	Inflation Rate By Region (All Items):				
			Southeast	Southwest	Central	Northeast	Northwest
2Q04	3.3	4.9	4.4	4.6	5.1	6.4	4.4
4Q04	3.3	4.3	4.0	4.8	4.8	4.3	3.3
2Q05	2.5	4.5	4.4	6.6	4.6	3.2	3.5
4Q05	3.4	5.0	3.8	8.3	5.1	5.5	3.4
2Q06	4.3	5.6	5.3	7.6	5.2	6.2	4.0
4Q06	2.5	4.4	3.5	4.8	4.7	5.6	3.8
2Q07	2.7	4.7	2.1	6.2	6.0	6.4	4.6
4Q07	4.1	6.1	3.4	8.1	8.0	6.6	5.9
2Q08	5.0	7.9	6.9	8.1	9.1	8.4	7.4
4Q08	0.1	2.6	1.8	2.1	3.0	3.7	2.7
2Q09	-1.4	0.0	0.2	-0.2	0.1	0.1	-0.5
4Q09	2.7	2.7	3.4	1.5	2.7	3.0	2.1
2Q10	1.1	1.9	2.6	1.6	1.9	1.0	2.1

Note: The 2Q99 inflation calculations mark the first time the WCLI used all 23 counties to calculate the inflation rates.

Previously, only 15 counties were used. Starting with the 2Q04 report, the inflation numbers include Lincoln-Afton.

\* 4th Quarter represents the December to December and 2nd Quarter represents the June to June percent change in the US CPI-U.

**Regional Composition for Inflation Estimate:**

- Southeast:** Albany, Carbon, Goshen, Laramie, Niobrara, and Platte counties.
- Southwest:** Lincoln-Kemmerer, Lincoln-Afton, Sublette, Sweetwater, and Uinta counties.
- Central:** Converse, Fremont, and Natrona counties.
- Northeast:** Campbell, Crook, Johnson, Sheridan, and Weston counties.
- Northwest:** Big Horn, Hot Springs, Park, Teton, and Washakie counties.



**WYOMING COST OF LIVING INDEX - TABLE V  
AVERAGE RENTAL RATES - 2Q10 & 2Q09**

County	APARTMENT (1)			MOBILE HOME LOT (2)			HOUSE (3)			MOBILE HOME (4)		
	2Q10	2Q09	Percent Change	2Q10	2Q09	Percent Change	2Q10	2Q09	Percent Change	2Q10	2Q09	Percent Change
Albany	\$636	\$602	5.5%	\$284	\$276	3.0%	\$924	\$902	2.4%	\$628	\$580	8.3%
Big Horn	\$401	\$469	-14.4%	\$162	\$162	0.0%	\$412	\$395	4.4%	\$366	\$385	-5.1%
Campbell	\$719	\$762	-5.7%	\$363	\$347	4.8%	\$1,182	\$1,326	-10.8%	\$844	\$908	-7.0%
Carbon	\$678	\$722	-6.2%	NA	\$278	NA	\$815	\$845	-3.6%	\$640	\$708	-9.6%
Converse	\$603	\$622	-3.1%	\$190	\$180	5.6%	\$693	\$673	3.0%	\$604	\$550	9.7%
Crook	\$450	\$439	2.6%	\$133	\$115	15.9%	\$465	\$475	-2.1%	NA	NA	NA
Fremont	\$568	\$519	9.3%	\$199	\$209	-4.8%	\$789	\$751	5.1%	\$666	\$677	-1.6%
Goshen	\$520	\$467	11.4%	\$160	\$170	-5.9%	\$524	\$471	11.2%	NA	NA	NA
Hot Springs	\$437	\$413	5.6%	\$150	\$150	0.0%	\$498	\$459	8.4%	NA	NA	NA
Johnson	\$625	\$570	9.8%	\$275	NA	NA	\$833	\$808	3.2%	\$565	\$576	-1.9%
Laramie	\$621	\$587	5.8%	\$309	\$293	5.7%	\$936	\$892	4.9%	\$630	\$576	9.4%
Lincoln (Kemmerer)	\$660	\$616	7.0%	\$368	\$347	6.1%	\$665	\$624	6.6%	NA	NA	NA
Lincoln (Afton)	\$624	\$623	0.2%	NA	\$250	NA	\$818	\$848	-3.5%	NA	\$501	NA
Natrona	\$673	\$710	-5.2%	\$269	\$254	5.9%	\$1,009	\$1,032	-2.2%	\$597	\$603	-1.0%
Niobrara	\$433	\$424	2.1%	NA	NA	NA	\$542	\$550	-1.4%	NA	NA	NA
Park	\$512	\$485	5.6%	\$200	\$192	4.0%	\$702	\$672	4.5%	\$510	\$522	-2.3%
Platte	\$451	\$420	7.2%	\$128	\$120	6.3%	\$455	\$425	7.1%	\$398	\$389	2.4%
Sheridan	\$701	\$671	4.4%	NA	\$450	NA	\$902	\$992	-9.1%	\$555	\$683	-18.7%
Sublette	\$868	\$866	0.2%	NA	NA	NA	\$1,324	\$1,416	-6.5%	\$550	\$600	-8.3%
Sweetwater	\$691	\$741	-6.7%	\$325	\$306	6.2%	\$935	\$1,016	-8.0%	\$756	\$821	-7.9%
Teton	\$1,219	\$1,328	-8.2%	\$328	\$328	0.0%	\$1,675	\$1,881	-10.9%	\$715	\$744	-3.9%
Uinta	\$627	\$631	-0.7%	\$267	\$242	10.3%	\$724	\$725	-0.1%	\$489	\$494	-1.2%
Washakie	\$480	\$465	3.1%	\$200	\$150	33.3%	\$592	\$525	12.7%	\$430	\$390	10.3%
Weston	\$547	\$556	-1.7%	\$123	\$121	1.7%	\$647	\$650	-0.5%	\$438	\$434	1.0%
Southeast	\$610	\$583	4.6%	\$281	\$268	4.8%	\$860	\$829	3.7%	\$601	\$561	7.1%
Southwest	\$684	\$704	-2.7%	\$316	\$291	8.8%	\$884	\$929	-4.9%	\$624	\$667	-6.4%
Central	\$633	\$642	-1.4%	\$239	\$232	2.9%	\$908	\$908	0.1%	\$619	\$620	-0.2%
Northeast	\$673	\$679	-0.8%	\$364	\$347	4.8%	\$976	\$1,069	-8.7%	\$674	\$743	-9.3%
Northwest	\$687	\$716	-4.0%	\$227	\$219	3.8%	\$908	\$942	-3.7%	\$536	\$545	-1.6%
Statewide Average	\$649	\$651	-0.3%	\$284	\$271	5.0%	\$902	\$921	-2.0%	\$613	\$622	-1.4%
Regions:							(1) - Two-bedroom, unfurnished, excluding gas and electric.					
Southeast: Albany, Carbon, Goshen, Laramie, Niobrara, Platte							(2) - Single-wide, including water.					
Southwest: Lincoln (Afton), Lincoln (Kemmerer), Sublette, Sweetwater, Uinta							(3) - Two or three-bedroom, single family, excluding gas and electric.					
Central: Converse, Fremont, Natrona							(4) - This price reflects total monthly rental expense, including lot rent.					
Northeast: Campbell, Crook, Johnson, Sheridan, Weston							Note: The regional averages are weighted by population within the region.					
Northwest: Big Horn, Hot Springs, Park, Teton, Washakie							(NA) - There were too few observations to report the data.					