

Gas prices could reach \$3 per gallon

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Gasoline prices nationwide on upward swing. Oregon's current average is 5th highest in the nation, and could soon rise to between \$2.60 and \$3.00 per gallon.

Consumers should expect fuel prices to climb steadily nationwide. In the past week, the national average price for a gallon of regular rose by more than four cents to \$2.23. In Oregon, the statewide average went down a couple tenths of a cent to \$2.42, but indications are the price decline, which began in early January, has run its course.

Compared to January first, the current national average price is about 10-cents lower, and Oregon's statewide average is down 27-cents per gallon, but during the month, it consistently remained well above the national average.

"The price of crude is moving closer to the \$60 per barrel mark and refineries are preparing for the March switch to the more expensive, cleaner burning summer fuel blends," said AAA Public Affairs Director Elliott Eki. "In addition, some west coast refineries are conducting routine maintenance, and, regional demand for gasoline has increased."

The current national average price is about 7-cents lower than it was in mid-February 2006, but the Oregon average price is about 20-cents higher. Analysts with the Oil Price Information Service, which provides AAA's pricing data, noting that the California statewide average price is already pushing \$2.70, say West Coast prices could reach September 2006 levels soon. That would put the Oregon average price between \$2.60 and \$3.00.

National Average	Regular Unleaded	Current	\$2.23	Feb 6, '07	\$2.18	Month Ago	\$2.24	
Year Ago	\$2.29	Area Current	Feb 6, '07	Month Ago	Year Ago	Statewide	\$2.42 \$2.42 \$2.65 \$2.22	
Portland	\$2.40 \$2.40	\$2.64	\$2.10	Eugene/Spfld	\$2.41 \$2.40	\$2.68	\$2.19 Salem	\$2.43 \$2.44 \$2.67
\$2.08	Medford/Ashland	\$2.42 \$2.46	\$2.70	\$2.37	Vancouver, WA	\$2.45 \$2.46	\$2.71 \$2.14	Highest
Recorded	National Average	\$3.06	9/5/2005	Statewide	\$3.11	5/28/2006	Portland	\$3.10 5/30/2006
Eugene / Spfld	\$3.16	5/27/2006	Salem	\$3.09	6/1/2006	Medford/Ashland	\$3.17	6/2/2006 Vancouver,
WA	\$3.09	5/29/2006	At \$2.42, Oregon's average gasoline price is 5th highest in the nation. Hawaii has the highest average price at \$2.86, followed by California at \$2.66, Nevada at \$2.49 and Washington at \$2.45. Idaho's average price is down to \$2.20. South Carolina has the lowest statewide average price at \$2.05.					

During the past week, the national average diesel price nudged up to \$2.56 per gallon. Idaho's average diesel price fell to \$2.67, Washington's rose seven cents to \$2.81, California's went up another nickel to \$3.03, Nevada's rose to \$2.80 and Oregon's went up slightly to \$2.68.

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