

## Gasoline prices climbing steadily

by Bend\_Weekly\_News\_Sources

Oregon prices now 4th highest in US; rising 6-cents per gallon last week

As retailers across the nation prepare for the March switch from winter to summer grade fuels, pump prices continue to climb. In the past week, the national average price for a gallon of regular jumped by almost 11-cents to \$2.37—the highest it's been since September 2006. Oregon's statewide average price rose by about six cents per gallon to \$2.519. Of the state's four measured metro areas, Medford-Ashland experienced the largest increase—almost 14-cents per gallon.

"A combination of factors are contributing to the rising prices," said AAA Oregon Public Affairs Director Elliott Eki. "In addition to transitioning to the cleaner burning, more expensive summer fuel blends, global influences pushed the price of crude oil near \$62 per barrel; gasoline demand has been high—especially for a February; and adding upward pressure to West Coast pricing, a north Texas refinery, which serves New Mexico and Arizona, remains off-line due to a major fire. Until the refinery resumes production, those two states will turn to California for replacement supplies, which will impact Pacific Northwest supplies and pricing."

At \$2.52, Oregon's average gasoline price is 4th highest in the nation. Hawaii has the highest average price at \$2.86, with California close behind at \$2.83, then Nevada, a distant third, at \$2.58. Washington's statewide average price is slightly lower than Oregon's at \$2.51, and Idaho's average price gained slightly to \$2.23. Utah has the lowest statewide average price at \$2.18. During the past week, the national average diesel price rose to \$2.63 per gallon. Idaho's average diesel price rose to \$2.70, Washington's dipped to \$2.84, California's held steady at \$3.05, Nevada's climbed to \$2.82 and Oregon's went up a penny to \$2.69.

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