



## Consumer Price Index—Beyond the All-Item Indexes

*“The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) increased 0.5 percent in June on a seasonally adjusted basis, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today...”*

*“The index for all items less food and energy increased 0.2 percent in June...Advances in the indexes for shelter, medical care and apparel accounted for most of the rise...”*

*BLS Consumer Price Index News Release, July 16, 2013*

Consumers of economic data are hardly ever satisfied. More is always better than less. The Analyst Resource Center, acknowledging this tendency has, over the years, found ways to increase the depth and breadth of the content of a number of data tables in the Workforce Information Database. Check the [Summer 2010 ARC eNews](#), and you’ll find an article written by Kim Hughes, former Nebraska database administrator, about one approach to increasing the number of geographic areas for which CPI data can be stored in the WID. The ARC Structure Committee has decided to take this a step farther, potentially increasing the number indexes that can be housed in the CPI table. *Continued Page 4*

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## WID Standards for Non-Standard Tables & Data

The Analyst Resource Center (ARC) has published a [web page](#) describing “non-standard” tables for the Workforce Information Database on the National Crosswalk Service Center web site for over ten years. What exactly can be found on that page, and how did that content get there? Does it make any sense to have standards for non-standard data? The ARC Structure Committee believes that it makes a great deal of sense, given differing update cycles for source data, the timing of new releases of the WID, and the desire to reduce redundancy in databases used for delivery of workforce information.

Some common FAQs:

Q. What type of information is found on the non-standard data page?

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## Sequestration Update

The future of funding for many federal government programs is on just about everyone's mind as some of the impacts of across-the-board (sequestration) spending cuts have become clearer. The National Crosswalk Service Center has compiled a list of planned or enacted budget cuts to programs that may be of interest to the Workforce Information community:

### **Bureau of Labor Statistics**

(estimated impact: \$30 million): On June 30<sup>th</sup>, BLS eliminated three programs: Measuring Green Jobs, Mass Layoff Statistics and International Labor Comparisons. They also plan to freeze hiring and curtail other spending. This may result in slower response to customer inquiries, losses of detail in some data series, and the delayed implementation of critical data improvements in a number of programs.

### **Employment and Training**

**Administration** (estimated Impact: \$329 million in non-unemployment insurance spending): PY 2013 Workforce Information Grants to States would be held at their PY2012 levels, resulting in no reduction.

### **Bureau of the Census**

(estimated impact: \$112 million in specific program cuts and sequestration): In the *Economic Programs* area, the bureau has suspended work on two economic surveys and delayed production of many of the 2012 Economic Census products. They're also reducing planning and testing efforts for the *2020 Decennial Census*. A number of program areas provide testing and development in support of planning for the 2010 census, including the Geographic Support (Master Address File research), American Community Survey (test bed for the 2010 Census). They plan to shift \$2.25 million in funding for 2010 Census Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) file to support the 2012 Survey of Business Owners.

### **Bureau of Economic**

**Analysis:** BEA plans to focus on production of statistics that feed into the estimation of gross domestic product (GDP, the most commonly cited measure of overall economic activity), statistics required by law, and statistics required for the administration of federal programs. To support those activities, a number of other programs face funding cuts:

- Regional Input-Output Modeling System (RIMS): Elimination of RIMS II product, used to generate products on demand. Orders will be accepted and processed on a cost-recovery basis through the end of FY 2013.
- Local Area Personal Income Statistics: Elimination of publication of detailed statistics within the program. Reductions include 1) local area employment by industry, 2) production of data for "BEA Economic Areas," 3) detailed statistics on transfer payments, and 4) industry detail on compensation and earnings.
- Foreign Direct Investment Analytical Products: Elimination of analytical products related to Foreign Direct Investment.

## In the Spotlight



**Phil Ellsworth**

*"I'm a technology junkie..."*

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### **How long have you been involved in the world of LMI?**

I started with Research & Planning in December 2006. Before that, I was the opinion editor at the Casper Star-Tribune and had worked at newspapers for about 18 years.

### **What is your current job title?**

My actual title is Multimedia Specialist, but a more descriptive title would be publications and web editor.

### **What is your educational background?**

I have a bachelor's in photography from Sam Houston State University. My career shifted from photography to writing to editing over the years.

### **Are you originally from Wyoming?**

No, I've lived here since 1998. I moved here from Winter Park, Colo., but was born in Colorado, raised in Oklahoma, and schooled in Oklahoma and Texas.

### **What are your interests outside of work?**

I am a technology junkie, specifically addicted to gadgets. I probably have about 10 different devices attached to my TV at any given time. You wouldn't believe the mess of wires behind the TV. I also love traveling and spending time with my wife, Becky, my stepson, Grant, and our two Corgis. This fall, I'll be teaching three short courses at Casper College: Intermediate InDesign, Beginning Dreamweaver, and Blogging For Business.

### **What is the strangest job you have ever had?**

When I worked as a photographer for the USDA and Oklahoma State University, I would occasionally document via photography the work of animal

science experts who were studying reproduction. I'll just leave it at that. I was also "road manager" for Mauschovonian Love Beat. Yep.

### **What is the most rewarding aspect of your current job?**

My co-workers and I are constantly learning.

### **What is the most interesting or awe-inspiring place you have been to?**

Milford Sound, on New Zealand's south island. It's breathtaking.

### **Have you read any good books lately (personal or work related) that you would recommend to others?**

I mostly read "how-tos" but the last great books I read were *Shantaram* by *Gregory David Roberts* and *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by *Rebecca Skloot*.

### **Anything else we should know about you?**

After I answered some piece of trivia, my uncle told me, "You've got a head for junk." Do I ever!

## CPI *continued from page 1*

This variable's contents describe four dimensions of the data: index version (CPI-U vs. CPI-W), items included (all items), base period (current (1982-84) and prior (1967)), and whether the data are seasonally adjusted. Expanding the use of this variable to include the nearly 6,000 item-area combinations for which there are indexes in a typical month (SOURCE: [The Consumer Price Index](#)) was not judged to be a viable option. The following fields were added to the table to delineate the various dimensions of the data:

Variable Name	Type	Description
inde	char(1)	Indicates the index represented: U=All urban consumers W=Urban wage earners and clerical workers
basis	char(1)	A unique code that identifies the index base year(s) for the CPI measure
cpitem	char(1)	Code that identifies market basket items included in the index (All items, Energy, Food, etc.)
NOTE: all three variables are contained within the table's primary key		

It's important to note that the base period for individual indexes is not always the same as that for the overall index. The composition of the market basket changes over time, and as items are added to the index or changed significantly, their base period reflects the date of their addition. For example the base period for item SATCLTB, Transportation commodities less motor fuel is December 2009.

The National Crosswalk Service Center has populated the draft structure for this table, called CPIPLUS. The structure document and monthly content updates are available on the [Non-Standard Tables](#) page of the Crosswalk Center website.

The initial content consists of the following components for all levels of geography: all items, food, energy, all items less food and energy. These items are most frequently used in simple analysis of changes in the index at the national level. Additional items of interest for specific areas may be added over time upon request. However, as additional items are added, the file has the potential to become quite large. A ten-year series for all indexes for all level of geography would have over 700,000 records.

For more information, or to discuss the addition of additional items, feel free to contact the NCSC at [NCSC.ARC@iowa.gov](mailto:NCSC.ARC@iowa.gov).

The Workforce Information Database is a normalized, relational database structure developed for the storage and maintenance of labor market, economic, demographic and occupational information. The Analyst Resource Center is responsible for the Workforce Information Database structure development, update, and maintenance. Members included Minnesota (lead), Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina, Wisconsin, Texas, Wyoming, and ETA, along with the support from the National Crosswalk Service Center.

## WID *continued from page 1*

A: The content generally falls into two main categories. First, you'll find databases, some made up of tables from the WID and some containing ancillary information. Content of these tables is updated more frequently than the database structure changes, and rather than keeping content of a variety of database versions and software formats up to date, this page is used to provide those updates. An example of the first type of content is the Department of Defense crosswalk file that links military occupations to their civilian counterparts. This file is updated quarterly, and the most recent release, formatted for the WID, can always be found on this page. A database containing ancillary information is the O\*NET Database, with content from several versions posted here. Rather than include the nearly 40 tables found there in the WID database, a separate database, updated annually, is maintained that can easily be used with contents from the WID. The second type of table found on the page includes structures and contents of new or enhanced tables

possibly destined for inclusion in a new version of the WID. States DBAs should feel free to use these structures with their database and notify the ARC Structure Committee of any issues or questions that arise.

Q: Where do all of the ideas for new or enhanced tables for use in a future database version come from?

A: The ideas behind a number of these tables come from members of the ARC Structure Committee. They incorporate ideas for content enhancement of an existing table or develop table structures and content for new data. State database administrators have also suggested content and furnished table structures they use in current applications. Tables originating within the structure committee frequently include prototype content, while those originating with states may or may not have content.

Q: Are the non-standard tables with content updated regularly?

A: Tables with content furnished by the ARC are updated following the release of new content. These include O\*NET databases, military crosswalks, national

employment projections, population demographics and lookup tables, such as the SOCCODE table, for which new information that has not been included in the WID becomes available.

Q: We've added tables to our version of the WID and we've found them to be very useful. How can I share these modifications with my fellow DBAs?

A: Having information about your modifications posted on the non-standard table page is a good start. See the section on adding a new table to the WID structure on the third page of the [ARC Policies and Procedures Document](#) for more information.

Got more questions? Send them to [ncsc.arc@iowa.gov](mailto:ncsc.arc@iowa.gov)



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If you have questions regarding the ARC eNews or would like to contribute information, please contact Steve Rosenow at 515-242-5034 or Email: [Steve.Rosenow@iowa.gov](mailto:Steve.Rosenow@iowa.gov) or Barbara Ledvina at 515-242-5036 or via Email: [Barbara.Ledvina@iowa.gov](mailto:Barbara.Ledvina@iowa.gov)