

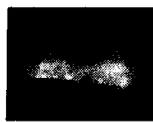


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# Average U.S. Electricity Prices Rise 3.9 Percent

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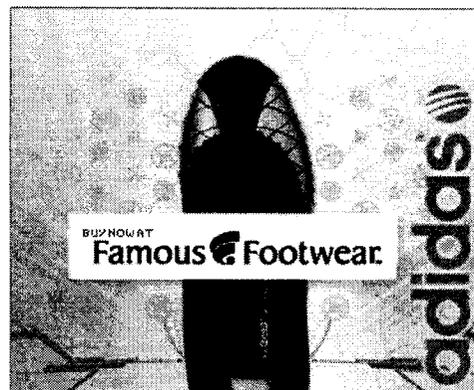
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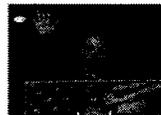


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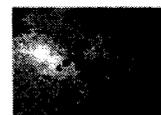
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PARK RIDGE, NJ, May 19 (MARKET WIRE) --

Following an increase of nearly 5 percent in 2007, the average price of electricity for industrial or large commercial entities in the United States rose another 3.9 percent over the past year.

The annual survey by an independent consulting company, NUS Consulting Group of Park Ridge, NJ, found the average price of electricity in the United States was 9.44 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) as of April 1, 2008 compared with 9.08 cents per kWh in April 2007. The survey samples 24 investor-owned electric companies in the country using a sample model of monthly usage totaling 450,000 kWh with a monthly demand of 1,000 kW. The survey model also assumes an operating power factor of 85 percent and customer-owned transformation equipment.

The study found customers in California, Illinois, New York and Texas pay some of the highest electricity prices in the country. The top five surveyed utilities in terms of price included Consolidated Edison (NY) at 18.07 cents/kWh, National Grid (NY) at 15.22 cents/kWh, Commonwealth Edison (IL) at 13.08 cents/kWh, Southern California Edison (CA) at 12.47 cents/kWh, and Reliant Energy (TX) at 12.34 cents/kWh.

The largest price escalation over the past year occurred in Maryland as Baltimore Gas & Electric Company's industrial customers saw their electricity costs increase by 18.5 percent. Other utilities with notable increases included Commonwealth Edison (IL) at 18.4 percent, Reliant Energy (TX) at 17.0 percent, Alabama Power (AL) at 15.5 percent and Progress Energy (FL) at 13.1 percent.

The survey found the lowest priced utilities included Duke Energy (NC) at 5.21 cents/kWh, Ameren UE (MO) at 5.26 cents/kWh, Dominion Power (VA) at 5.54 cents/kWh, Ohio Power at 5.84 cents/kWh, and Excel Energy (MN) at 6.94 cents/kWh. The largest price decreases over the past year were found with Excel Energy (MN) at 7.6 percent and Pennsylvania Power & Light at 5.5 percent.

As borne out in previous surveys, the highest power prices are usually found in those states that have deregulated their retail electricity markets. Once considered a means of lowering electricity costs, deregulation has yet to fulfill this central promise.

"While not as dramatic in its price rise as in the oil or gasoline sectors, the survey seems to confirm that higher electricity costs are here to stay," said Richard Soutanian, co-president of the NUS Consulting Group. "We fully expect this trend to continue as energy prices, both here in the US and abroad, continue their meteoric rise."

He concluded by saying, "Today's energy markets are more volatile than ever. The days of cheap power are now a distant memory and all businesses must learn to not only adjust, but survive, in this type of purchasing environment."

The survey was undertaken by the world's leading utility cost management consultants, NUS Consulting Group located in Park Ridge, New Jersey, providing energy and telecommunications cost audit, analysis and consulting services to industrial and commercial organizations. Additional information concerning the NUS Consulting Group can be obtained from their website at [www.nusconsulting.com](http://www.nusconsulting.com).

Contact:  
David Brown  
(201) 391-4300 ext. 105  
[dbrown@nusconsulting.com](mailto:dbrown@nusconsulting.com)

Jeanne Achille  
The Devon Group  
(732) 224-1000, ext. 11  
[jeanne@devonpr.com](mailto:jeanne@devonpr.com)

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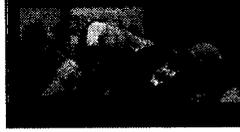
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