

Idaho's gas prices top national average by 61 cents a gallon.

[BY JOHN SOWELL](#)

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As of Tuesday afternoon, the price for regular unleaded was cheapest at Costco warehouse stores in Boise, Meridian and Nampa, where it sold for \$3.79 a gallon, according to Gas Buddy, an online tracking service.

Coeur d'Alene in North Idaho reported the cheapest gas, \$3.42 per gallon, followed by Lewiston at \$3.48. Pocatello was at \$3.77, with Idaho Falls a penny more. The Boise average was highest, at \$3.93, three cents more than Twin Falls.

The national average was \$3.18.

“It's not unheard of for Idaho's average price to be 20 or 30 cents higher than the national average, but 61 cents is a big gap by any standard,” AAA Idaho spokesperson Matthew Conde said in a news release.

Last month, the Gem State's average price for regular unleaded [surpassed \\$3.50 per gallon](#), a mark not seen since October 2014. In May 2020, a month and a half after the coronavirus pandemic began, gas prices averaged \$2.53 per gallon.

In 2008, gas prices in the Boise spiked to a record \$4.16 a gallon.

Utah (average \$3.88 per gallon) and Wyoming (\$3.54) are also reporting high prices, a result of high demand and low supply, Conde said. While Wyoming's price may seem cheap, it rose 25 cents over the past month.

Idaho, like neighboring Oregon, endures high gasoline prices in part because it contains no oil reserves and no refineries. Southern Idaho depends on one company's pipelines to deliver all the fuel we put in our cars and trucks.

Gasoline comes to Southern Idaho, including the Treasure Valley, through one of two 65-year-old, 8-inch-wide underground pipelines running in parallel from Salt Lake City. The second pipeline carries other fuels, including diesel, jet fuel and heating oil. The pipelines are owned by the Tesoro Corp.

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The cost of crude oil is the biggest single factor that goes into determining how much motorists pay at the pump. Crude oil prices are highly volatile. They are determined on a global basis driven by supply and demand.

Utah and Wyoming have five oil refineries each, Montana has four and Colorado two. The Utah refineries, which obtain crude oil from Utah, Colorado, Wyoming and Canada, supply about 70 percent of the gasoline and diesel consumed in Utah and Idaho.

The Rocky Mountain region's supply is under 6 million barrels, 1.5 million barrels less than a year ago.

Crude oil is selling for \$71 a barrel, he said. That's \$4 less than a month ago but \$30 more than a year ago. While the OPEC nations recently agreed to produce 400,000 more barrels a day this month, the increase was less than expected, Conde said.