

CURRENT COMMUNITY CONDITIONS: FUEL PRICES ACROSS ALASKA

JULY 2009 UPDATE

INTRODUCTION



In December 2008, the price of Alaska North Slope (ANS) crude dropped to \$37.70, its lowest price since June 2004. Since then, oil prices have risen; the price of ANS crude in June 2009 was \$69.80. Although higher than the price in December 2008, it was still markedly lower than the price in June 2008, when ANS crude oil reached a record average monthly price of \$133.78 per barrel (Figure 1).

The national average price of gasoline peaked at \$4.05 per gallon in mid-July 2008 and dropped to \$1.59 per gallon by the end of December 2008. The price has risen since then to \$2.48 on July

13, 2009. Nationally, average heating fuel prices reached an all-time high of 3.85 in March 2008 but had fallen to 2.16^1 per gallon by March 2009. Fuel prices in Alaska do not consistently follow the national trend. Due to transportation issues, many remote rural Alaska communities purchased most or all of this winter's fuel at peak prices during June and July 2008, and some communities, when surveyed, reported they were still selling this high-cost fuel. Only comunities with more frequent fuel deliveries have experienced lower fuel costs.

During June and July 2009, the Division of Community and Regional Affairs (DCRA) repeated a statewide survey of retail heating fuel and gasoline prices in a cross-section of 100 select Alaska communities, first initiated during 2005 (*Community Conditions: Fuel Prices Across Alaska*). This report, *Current Community Conditions: Fuel Prices Across Alaska*, July 2009 Update, summarizes fuel survey findings, discusses changes in fuel prices during the recent past, lists fuel prices in each community on the date of contact, and provides a current and historical perspective on fluctuating fuel prices.

Methodology

The DCRA Research and Analysis Section and Local Government Assistance Section developed a survey and selected a community sample during 2005. Communities were strategically selected to represent differing socioeconomic conditions and all Alaska regions, including the Interior, Gulf Coast, Northern, Northwest, Southeast, Southwest, and Western regions. Selected communities had also generally been recipients of an Alaska Energy Authority bulk fuel project.

To accurately and consistently track longitudinal changes in fuel prices, the 2005 survey and community sample were used to collect 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009 fuel information – the communities and core questionnaire items have remained the same since 2005.

DCRA Research and Analysis staff conducted the survey between June 29 and July 7, 2009. In total, local fuel retailers serving 100 communities were contacted (via telephone) and asked to provide current per gallon prices on heating fuel (#1) and gasoline (Figure 2). All fuel price quotes reflect prices at the vendors' pump stations. Survey results are one-time measurements and representative of retail fuel prices on the particular day of contact. Heating fuel and gasoline prices may have changed between the time of contact and the publication of this report.

JULY 2009

¹ Source: United States Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration. Note: Heating fuel prices are only recorded from October to March. Gasoline prices are recorded year-round.



DIVISION OF COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS (DCRA), RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS SECTION ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

JULY 2009

CURRENT FUEL PRICES ACROSS ALASKA

	Gulf Coast	Interior	Northern	Northwest	Southeast	Southwest	Western
High	\$6.21	\$10.00	\$2.00	\$8.45	\$8.00	\$8.11	\$8.71
Low	\$2.64	\$2.46	\$1.40	\$3.60	\$2.61	\$2.92	\$4.03
Average	\$3.78	\$5.16	\$1.64	\$6.96	\$3.50	\$5.06	\$6.59

Table 1. July 2009: Heating Fuel #1 Prices per Gallons across Alaska

Average heating fuel prices per gallon vary by region (Table 1). Alaskan communities in the Northwest Region reported the highest average heating fuel retail price at \$6.96 per gallon, while Northern communities reported the lowest average retail price at \$1.64 per gallon. Of noteworthy importance, the North Slope Borough (Northern Region) has village corporations that distribute fuel to residents throughout the Northern Region and charge only a delivery fee on a per gallon basis. The North Slope Borough does not subsidize heating fuel for commercial use. Consequently, the retail price of heating fuel for commercial entities is significantly higher than for residences (Table 2). Compared to other regions, excluding the Northern, Southeast communities experienced the lowest heating fuel prices that averaged \$3.50 per gallon.

Community	Community Retailer	Community Retailer Residential Commu		
Anaktuvuk Pass	Nunamiut Corporation	\$1.55	\$7.00	\$7.50
Atqasuk	Atqasuk Corporation	\$1.40	\$4.10	\$4.10
Barrow	BUEC, Inc.	Natural Gas	Natural Gas	\$4.70
Kaktovik	Kaktovik Inupiat Corporation	\$2.00	\$6.95	\$4.90
Nuiqsut	Kuukpik Corporation	\$1.75	\$6.05	\$3.70
Point Hope	Tigara Corporation	\$1.64	\$6.41	\$5.95
Wainwright	Olgoonik Corporation	\$1.50	\$7.83	\$6.79

 Table 2. Northern Region Heating Fuel (#1) and Gasoline Retail Prices

To accurately summarize statewide heating fuel prices, it is appropriate to exclude Northern Region communities because of the North Slope Borough subsidy for residential use heating fuel. On average, excluding the 7 Northern communities, heating fuel retailed for \$5.36 per gallon across the remaining 93 surveyed Alaska communities. The Arctic Village Traditional

Council in Arctic Village (Interior Region) reported the highest heating fuel retail price at \$10.00 per gallon (see Appendix 1). In contrast, Delta Fuel in Delta Junction (also in the Interior Region) reported the lowest heating fuel retail price at \$2.46 per gallon.

	Gulf Coast	Interior	Northern	Northwest	Southeast	Southwest	Western
High	\$7.34	\$10.00	\$7.50	\$8.27	\$8.00	\$8.40	\$7.74
Low	\$3.19	\$2.94	\$3.70	\$4.40	\$2.71	\$3.08	\$4.78
Average	\$4.04	\$5.21	\$5.38	\$6.98	\$3.65	\$5.11	\$6.22

Table 3. July 2009: Gasoline Prices per Gallon across Alaska

As Table 3 illustrates, average gasoline prices per gallon also varied across Alaska by region. Communities in the Northwest Region reported the highest average gasoline retail price at \$6.98 per gallon, while Southeast Region communities reported the lowest average retail price at \$3.65 per gallon. Statewide retail prices indicated significant variation in gasoline retail price. Specifically, the Arctic Village Traditional Council in Arctic Village (Interior Region) reported the highest gasoline prices at \$10.00 per gallon. In contrast, Petro Marine in Petersburg (Southeast Region) reported the lowest gasoline retail price at \$2.20 per gallon. On average, gasoline retailed for \$5.37 per gallon across 99 Alaska communities.

Table 4.On the Road System and Off the Road System: Prices in the Gulf
Coast and Interior Regions

Gulf Coast	On Road System	Off Road System	Interior	On Road System	Off Road System			
Heating Fuel:			Heating Fuel:					
High	\$3.10	\$6.21	High	\$4.50	\$10.00			
Low	\$2.64	\$3.23	Low	\$2.46	\$4.92			
Average	\$2.93	\$4.21	Average	\$3.00	\$6.49			
Gasoline:			Gasoline:		· · <u>· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · </u>			
High	\$3.44	\$7.34	High	\$4.50	\$10.00			
Low	\$3.35	\$3.19	Low	\$2.94	\$4.75			
Average	\$3.40	\$4.41	Average	\$3.59	\$6.20			

Many rural Alaskan communities are located off the road system and so tend to be more isolated. This isolation contributes to higher fuel costs. Many of the communities in the Southeast and Southwest regions are more easily accessible and are thus serviced by barge for much of the year. In the Northern, Northwest, and Western regions, the main reason prices for gasoline and fuel are higher is that these communities are not located on the road system, and fuel must be flown or barged in, which can only be done once or twice a year. In the Gulf Coast and Interior regions, some communities are on the road system, and some are not. This causes prices to be very different between the two groups (Table 4). In both the Gulf Coast and the Interior regions,

the highest price of heating fuel, among communities on the road system, was lower than the lowest price of fuel among communities off the road system. In the Interior, the average cost of heating fuel for communities off the road system (\$6.49) was more than twice the average of communities on the road system (\$3.00).

CHANGE IN FUEL PRICES ACROSS ALASKA

Portions of Alaska have begun to realize fuel price relief (Figure 3). Excluding Northern communities, the statewide average per gallon heating fuel price decreased from \$5.60 in February 2009 to \$5.36 in July 2009. This \$0.23 per gallon average price change represented a four percent decrease in the statewide average heating fuel price per gallon. Prices in the Northern (-30%), Southwest (-9%), Western (-6%), Southeast (-6%), Northwest (-4%), and Interior (-1%) Regions decreased from February 2009 to July 2009 (Figure 4). The Gulf Coast Region experienced a slight increase of one percent in heating fuel price.



The statewide average gasoline price also decreased from February 2009 to July 2009, dropping from \$5.51 to \$5.37 per gallon (Figure 5). This \$0.14 per gallon average price decrease represents a three percent decrease in the statewide average price per gallon of gasoline. Prices in the Western (-6%), Southwest (-5%), Interior (-3%), Northwest (-2%), and Northern (-1%) regions all decreased from February to July. Gasoline prices per gallon in the Gulf Coast (5%) and Southeast (4%) regions both increased.



DIVISION OF COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS (DCRA), RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS SECTION ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SUMMARY

Last summer, heating fuel and gasoline prices peaked. Many rural communities, especially in the Western and Northern regions, received one shipment of heating fuel per year, during the summer. Therefore, many vendors were forced to buy their fuel last summer at record-high prices. A few vendors reported selling less fuel this past year, because the cost was too high for villagers to purchase. Currently, fuel prices have decreased, and vendors have been able to purchase fuel again at lower prices. However, vendors in some communities, especially those in the Western and Northwest regions, still hold fuel inventory bought at higher prices and must therefore charge higher prices for heating fuel.

From February 2009 to July 2009, the statewide average per gallon price of heating fuel decreased four percent from \$5.60 to \$5.36. Concurrently, the statewide average per gallon price of gasoline decreased five percent from \$5.51 to \$5.37. Overall, since November 2005, the statewide average cost of heating fuel has increased 54% from \$3.48; the statewide average cost of gasoline has increased 40% from \$3.83. However, current prices for heating fuel and gasoline are much lower than in October 2008, when they peaked at \$6.05 and \$5.97 and were 174% and 156% above the November 2005 level, respectively.

Appendix: Community Heating Fuel and Gasoline Survey – July 2009

Community	Region	Community Retailer: (entity selling fuel)	Heating Fuel #1 07/2009 Retail: (selling price per gallon - \$\$)	Percent Above/Below Statewide Heating Fuel Average (\$5.36*):	Percent change since 2/2009 Retail: (selling price per gallon)	Gasoline 07/2009 Retail Price: (selling price per gallon - \$\$)	Percent Above/Below Statewide Gasoline Average (\$5.37):	Percent change since 2/2009 Retail: (selling price per gallon)
Chenega Bay	Gulf Coast	Chenega Bay Utility	\$5.91	10%	6%	\$7.34	37%	29%
Chitina	Gulf Coast	Chitina Services (HF) Kenny Lake Mercantile (Gas)	\$3.10	-42%	8%	\$3.44	-36%	18%
Cordova	Gulf Coast	Hovers Mover	\$3.58	-33%	8%	\$3.80	-29%	9%
Glennallen	Gulf Coast	Crowley (HF) The Hub (Gas)	\$3.10	-42%	12%	\$3.42	-36%	22%
Homer	Gulf Coast	Homer Run Oil	\$2.64	-51%	27%	\$3.35	-38%	25%
Kodiak	Gulf Coast	Thompson (HF) Petro Marine (Gas)	\$3.23	-40%	4%	\$3.30	-39%	16%
Larsen Bay	Gulf Coast	City of Larsen Bay	\$6.21	16%	12%	\$5.93	10%	3%
Old Harbor	Gulf Coast	City of Old Harbor	\$3.71	-31%	7%	\$3.19	-41%	-17%
Ouzinkie	Gulf Coast	Ouzinkie Native Corporation	\$3.57	-33%	3%	-	-	-
Port Lions	Gulf Coast	Kizhuyak Oil Sales	\$3.90	-27%	-31%	\$3.75	-30%	-33%
Seldovia	Gulf Coast	Seldovia Fuel and Lube	\$3.57	-33%	-17%	\$3.58	-33%	-6%
Valdez	Gulf Coast	North Pacific (HF) Captain Joe's (Gas)	\$2.88	-46%	9%	\$3.37	-37%	18%
Alatna	Interior	Alatna Traditional Council	\$5.50	3%	0%	\$7.00	30%	0%

DIVISION OF COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS (DCRA), RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS SECTION Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development July 2009

Community	Region	Community Retailer: (entity selling fuel)	Heating Fuel #1 07/2009 Retail: (selling price per gallon - \$\$)	Percent Above/Below Statewide Heating Fuel Average (\$5.36*):	Percent change since 2/2009 Retail: (selling price per gallon)	Gasoline 07/2009 Retail Price: (selling price per gallon - \$\$)	Percent Above/Below Statewide Gasoline Average (\$5.37):	Percent change since 2/2009 Retail: (selling price per gallon)
Anderson	Interior	Nenana Heating	\$2.84	-47%	12%	\$3.46	-36%	25%
Anvik	Interior	Deloyges, Inc.	\$5.25	-2%	0%	\$5.50	2%	0%
Arctic Village	Interior	Arctic Village Traditional Council	\$10.00	87%	5%	\$10.00	86%	11%
Circle	Interior	Steese (HF) HC Company Store (Gas)	\$2.66	-50%	8%	\$3.95	-26%	10%
Delta Junction	Interior	Delta Fuel (HF) Buffalo Service (Gas)	\$2.46	-54%	4%	\$3.16	-41%	17%
Eagle	Interior	Telegraph Hill Services	\$4.50	-16%	-9%	\$4.50	-16%	-18%
Fairbanks	Interior	Alaska Petroleum	\$2.71	-49%	22%	\$2.94	-45%	19%
Galena	Interior	Crowley Marine Services	\$4.92	-8%	-22%	\$5.28	-2%	-12%
Grayling	Interior	AYL Grayling Fuel Company	\$7.00	31%	0%	\$4.95	-8%	-18%
Healy	Interior	Fisher Fuel (HF) Keith's Healy Service (Gas)	\$3.00	-44%	8%	\$3.08	-43%	10%
Holy Cross	Interior	Holy Cross Oil Company	\$7.66	43%	0%	\$7.28	36%	0%
Hughes	Interior	Hughes City Council	\$8.55	60%	0%	\$7.00	30%	-18%
Huslia	Interior	Huslia Gas and Oil	\$7.00	31%	0%	\$5.95	11%	-15%
Kaltag	Interior	Kaltag Cooperative	\$5.50	3%	0%	\$4.75	-12%	-17%

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McGrath	Interior	Crowley	\$6.30	18%	-8%	\$5.88	9%	-7%
Minto	Interior	North Fork Store	\$2.85	-47%	0%	\$4.00	-26%	18%
Nenana	Interior	Nenana Heating	\$2.95	-45%	21%	\$3.60	-33%	25%
Nulato	Interior	City of Nulato	\$5.40	1%	0%	\$5.75	7%	0%
Ruby	Interior	Dinega Fuel Corporation	\$6.15	15%	0%	\$5.70	6%	0%
Tanana	Interior	Tanacon Fuel	\$5.10	-5%	-12%	\$5.59	4%	-13%
Anaktuvuk Pass	Northern	Nunamiut Corporation	\$1.55	-100%	0%	\$7.50	40%	15%
Atqasuk	Northern	Atqasuk Corporation	\$1.40	-74%	0%	\$4.10	-24%	0%
Barrow	Northern	Eskimo, Inc.	Natural gas	-	-	\$4.70	-12%	0%
Kaktovik	Northern	Kaktovik Inupiat Corporation	\$2.00	-63%	0%	\$4.90	-9%	0%
Nuiqsut	Northern	Kuukpik Corporation	\$1.75	-67%	-31%	\$3.70	-31%	-25%
Point Hope	Northern	Tigara Corporation	\$1.64	-69%	-1%	\$5.95	11%	0%
Wainwright	Northern	Olgoonik Corporation	\$1.50	-72%	0%	\$6.79	26%	-4%
Brevig Mission	Northwest	Brevig Mission Native Store	\$7.21	35%	3%	\$7.00	30%	3%

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Deering	Northwest	Deering IRA	\$8.45	58%	7%	\$8.27	54%	6%
Gambell	Northwest	ANICA (Gambell Native Store)	\$7.88	47%	0%	\$7.26	35%	0%
Golovin	Northwest	Golovin Public Utilities	\$5.32	-1%	0%	\$5.30	-1%	0%
Kiana	Northwest	Kiana Traditional Council	\$6.64	24%	0%	\$7.21	34%	0%
Kotzebue	Northwest	Crowley (HF) EZ Market (Gas)	\$6.35	18%	0%	\$7.15	33%	-1%
Koyuk	Northwest	Koyuk Native Corporation	\$5.54	3%	-31%	\$5.58	4%	-28%
Noorvik	Northwest	Morris Trading Post	\$7.65	43%	2%	\$7.36	37%	2%
Saint Michael	Northwest	Saint Michael Fuel Company	\$8.06	50%	0%	\$7.80	45%	0%
Savoonga	Northwest	ANICA (Savoonga Native Store)	\$7.65	43%	-3%	\$7.05	31%	-3%
Shishmaref	Northwest	Shishmaref Native Store	\$7.75	45%	-2%	\$7.39	38%	-2%
Stebbins	Northwest	Tapraq Fuel Company	\$7.96	49%	0%	\$8.24	53%	7%
Teller	Northwest	Teller Native Fuel Business	\$6.45	20%	-7%	\$7.00	30%	5%
Unalakleet	Northwest	Unalakleet Native Corporation	\$6.81	27%	0%	\$6.97	30%	0%
Wales	Northwest	Wales Native Store	\$7.98	49%	0%	\$7.73	44%	0%

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White Mountain	Northwest	White Mountain Native Store	\$3.60	-33%	-43%	\$4.40	-18%	-27%
Angoon	Southeast	Angoon Oil and Gas	\$3.43	-36%	-7%	\$3.18	-41%	-10%
Craig	Southeast	Petro Marine	\$2.65	-51%	-4%	\$2.91	-46%	7%
Gustavus	Southeast	Gustavus Dray - Gustavus Propane	\$2.74	-49%	-4%	\$2.90	-46%	6%
Hoonah	Southeast	Hoonah Trading	\$3.34	-38%	-5%	\$3.63	-32%	26%
Juneau	Southeast	Delta Western (HF) Fred Meyer (Gas)	\$2.99	-44%	-1%	\$2.74	-46%	31%
Kake	Southeast	Kake Tribal Fuel	\$3.40	-37%	-6%	\$3.63	-32%	9%
Pelican	Southeast	Pelican Fuel Dock	\$3.50	-35%	-18%	\$3.90	-27%	-2%
Petersburg	Southeast	Petro Marine	\$2.61	-51%	0%	\$2.71	-50%	3%
Point Baker	Southeast	Point Baker Trading Post	\$8.00	49%	-9%	\$8.00	49%	-9%
Thorne Bay	Southeast	Petro (Craig - HF) Bayview (Gas)	\$2.65	-51%	-4%	\$3.15	-41%	8%
Wrangell	Southeast	Wrangell Oil - Fennemore's Service	\$3.24	-40%	2%	\$3.44	-36%	7%
Akutan	Southwest	City of Akutan	\$3.65	-32%	0%	\$3.25	-39%	-26%
Atka	Southwest	Atka Native Store	\$7.99	49%	0%	\$5.99	12%	18%

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Chignik	Southwest	City of Chignik (HF) Trident (Gas)	\$2.92	-46%	-24%	\$3.50	-35%	6%
Clarks Point	Southwest	City of Clarks Point	\$6.00	12%	0%	\$6.00	12%	0%
Dillingham	Southwest	Delta Western	\$4.73	-12%	-23%	\$5.59	4%	-3%
Goodnews Bay	Southwest	Mumtram Pikkai Village Corporation	\$6.32	18%	3%	\$6.91	29%	3%
King Cove	Southwest	Peter Pan Seafood	\$3.02	-44%	-35%	\$3.44	-36%	-25%
Kokhanok	Southwest	Kokhanok Tribal Council	\$8.11	51%	0%	\$8.40	56%	0%
Nelson Lagoon	Southwest	Nelson Lagoon Enterprises	\$4.22	-21%	-29%	\$4.58	-15%	-20%
New Stuyahok	Southwest	New Stuyahok Village Corporation	\$5.97	11%	-10%	\$5.57	4%	-12%
Nondalton	Southwest	City of Nondalton	\$5.51	3%	3%	\$6.49	21%	9%
Saint George	Southwest	Delta Fuel Company	\$6.50	21%	0%	\$5.96	11%	-10%
Sand Point	Southwest	TDX Services (HF) Trident (Gas)	\$3.78	-29%	4%	\$3.45	-36%	12%
Togiak	Southwest	Togiak Village Corporation	\$3.95	-26%	-33%	\$4.46	-17%	-19%
Unalaska	Southwest	Delta Western	\$3.27	-39%	-5%	\$3.08	-43%	3%
Akiak	Western	Kokarmiut Corporation	\$6.45	20%	0%	\$7.00	30%	12%

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Atmautluak	Western	Atmauthluak Limited	\$5.20	-3%	-11%	\$5.29	-1%	-11%
Bethel	Western	Crowley	\$4.54	-15%	-19%	\$5.24	-2%	-4%
Emmonak	Western	Emmonak Corp. Tank Farm	\$8.71	63%	0%	\$6.07	13%	-16%
Hooper Bay	Western	Crowley Marine	\$7.36	37%	0%	\$7.45	39%	4%
Kotlik	Western	Kotlik Yupik Enterprises	\$8.02	50%	3%	\$5.22	-3%	-31%
Kwigillingok	Western	KWIK Marina, Inc.	\$6.70	25%	0%	\$5.75	7%	0%
Marshall	Western	Maserculiq, Inc.	\$7.11	33%	-1%	\$6.21	16%	0%
Mountain Village	Western	Azachorak Fuel	\$6.94	29%	-1%	\$6.42	20%	-1%
Nunapitchuk	Western	Nunapitchuk, Ltd.	\$6.15	15%	-7%	\$6.18	15%	-6%
Pilot Station	Western	Pilot Station Native Corporation	\$7.42	38%	0%	\$6.81	27%	2%
Quinhagak	Western	Qanirtuuq Corporation	\$7.02	31%	0%	\$6.22	16%	0%
Russian Mission	Western	Russian Mission Corporation	\$6.15	15%	0%	\$5.99	12%	-1%
Scammon Bay	Western	Askinuk Corporation	\$7.04	31%	0%	\$6.93	29%	0%
Sleetmute	Western	Henry Hill Store	\$5.40	1%	-30%	\$6.10	14%	-21%

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Toksook Bay	Western	Nunakauiak Yupik Corporation	\$7.86	47%	0%	\$7.74	44%	0%
Tuntutuliak	Western	Qinarmiut Corporation	\$4.03	-25%	-41%	\$4.78	-11%	-28%
Upper Kalskag	Western	City of Upper Kalskag	\$6.50	21%	0%	\$6.50	21%	0%

Heating fuel average does not include Northern communities, whose residential fuel is subsidized by the North Slope Borough.

** Petro Alaska closed its Thorne Bay location in 2008. Heating fuel deliveries for Thorne Bay residents are now being provided by Petro Alaska in Craig.



The Community Fuel Survey was conducted by the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, Division of Community and Regional Affairs (DCRA). If you have any questions or comments regarding the survey or this report, please contact: Brigitta Windisch-Cole, Research Analyst (907) 269-4521, brigitta.windisch-cole@alaska.gov

Previous editions of *Current Community Conditions: Fuel Prices Across Alaska* may be found on DCRA's website: http://commerce.alaska.gov/dcra/researchanalysis/RApublications.htm

DIVISION OF COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS (DCRA), RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS SECTION ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT JULY 2009