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Local cost of living down in third quarter

According to the Cost of Living Index, published by Council for Community and Economic Research in Arlington, VA, the cost of living in Cochise County was down relative to the national average in the third quarter (July through September) compared to the third quarter last year. The COLI report, released in October, provides comparative data for 267 urban areas across the United States.

The COLI measures relative price levels for consumer goods and services in participating areas. It includes separate weighted sub-indices for grocery items (meats, dairy products, produce, bakery products, and other miscellaneous items), housing (new home prices, mortgage rates, and apartment rentals), utilities (electricity, other home energy, and telephone service), transportation (gasoline and tire balancing), health care (optometrist visits, doctor visits, dentist visits, and prescription and non-prescription medications) and miscellaneous goods and services (a wide range of categories, including food away from home, personal care items, apparel, household operations items, reading material, entertainment, and alcoholic beverages).

Cochise County's cost of living in the third quarter 2017 was 7.3 percent lower than the average of all participating places nationwide (down from 5.4 percent lower than the national average in the third quarter last year). The decrease was due to lower relative prices locally in the third quarter this year (compared to the same period last year) for grocery items, housing, and miscellaneous goods and services. Local costs for utilities, transportation, and health care increased from the third quarter last year to the third quarter this year (relative to national averages).

The cost of living in Cochise County in the third quarter this year was 2.3 percent lower than Tucson and 2.5 percent lower than Phoenix.

Grocery items, health care, and miscellaneous goods and services were less expensive in Cochise County than both Tucson and Phoenix in the third quarter. Utilities and transportation costs were more expensive in Cochise County than both Tucson and Phoenix. Cochise County's costs for housing were lower than Phoenix but higher than Tucson.

The lower overall cost of living locally than nationwide in the third quarter was due to lower local costs for groceries, housing, health care, and miscellaneous goods and services. Costs for utilities and transportation were higher locally than nationally.

Local grocery costs were 5.3 percent below the national average in the third quarter (down from 3.9 percent above the national average in the third quarter last year).

The cost of housing in Cochise County was 16.6 percent below the national average in the third quarter (down from 11.7 percent below the national average in the third quarter last year).

Health care costs were 4.7 percent below the national average in the third quarter (up from 4.9 percent below the national average in the third quarter 2016).

Local costs for miscellaneous goods and services were 8.3 percent below the national average in the third quarter (down from 8.2 percent below the national average in the third quarter last year).

The local cost of utilities was 2 percent above the national average in the third quarter (down from 1.3 percent above the national average in the third quarter last year).

Transportation costs locally were 9.1 percent above the national average in the third quarter (up from 1.6 percent above the national average in the third quarter last year).

Statewide, there were seven places participating in the COLI in the third quarter. In addition to Cochise County, other participating areas were Bullhead City, Lake Havasu City, Phoenix, Surprise, Tucson, and Yuma. Of those, only Bullhead City had an overall cost of living lower than Cochise County.

The highest cost of living in Arizona in the third quarter was Lake Havasu City, which was 5.8 percent above the national average, driven largely by the host of housing, which was 12.9 percent higher than nationally.

COLI data for Cochise County are collected by Cochise College Center for Economic Research and submitted to Council for Community and Economic Research for inclusion in the index.

COST OF LIVING INDEX (3rd QUARTER 2017)

	<i>Composite Index</i>	<i>Grocery Items</i>	<i>Housing</i>	<i>Utilities</i>	<i>Transportation</i>	<i>Health Care</i>	<i>Misc. Goods & Services</i>
Bullhead City	90.4	99.7	78.5	89.2	102.4	97.0	92.6
Lake Havasu City	105.8	96.4	112.9	96.7	109.4	99.5	106.1
Phoenix	95.1	96.1	94.4	98.2	93.3	96.2	94.6
Surprise	99.0	101.7	88.1	131.2	108.0	83.8	96.6
Sierra Vista-Douglas*	92.7	94.7	83.4	102.0	109.1	95.3	91.7
Tucson	94.9	104.5	76.0	95.8	96.5	100.3	104.6
Yuma	93.9	100.1	84.9	127.8	93.5	96.9	88.6

* The Sierra Vista-Douglas Metropolitan Area is a statistical area designation for all of Cochise County. *Note.* The average for all participating places nationwide equals 100; each participant's index is read as a percentage of the average for all places. Source: Council for Community and Economic Research, Cost of Living Index

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