

Gas prices down 6.6 cents in Kentucky since last week

Tom Latek
Kentucky Today

FRANKFORT, Ky. (KT) — The nation's average price of gasoline has fallen 6.6 cents over the last week and stands at \$4.45 per gallon, according to GasBuddy data from more than 12 million individual price reports covering over 150,000 gas stations nationwide.

The national average is up 41.0 cents from a month ago and is \$1.32 per gallon higher than a year ago. The national average price of diesel fell 4.0 cents in the last week and stands at \$5.571 per gallon.

Kentucky's average regular gas price is a bit lower at \$4.17 as of midday on Wednesday, but like the national average, is still more than \$1.50 per gallon higher than at the beginning of March.

"Average gasoline prices declined in 40 states over the last week as falling oil prices helped

offset earlier price cycling in many markets, bringing relief to motorists after several states had already seen sharp increases," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy. "Much of the decline came after renewed optimism surrounding a potential U.S.-Iran agreement pushed oil prices lower, easing geopolitical pressure on energy markets. In many states, that drop created breathing room after recent price cycles and allowed pump prices to fall again."

De Haan added, "While oil continued drifting lower over the weekend on hopes of a deal, new CENTCOM reports involving U.S. defensive strikes highlight how quickly the outlook could change. For now, motorists may continue to see some relief, but it remains too early to know how long the decline will last."

The U.S. Energy Infor-

mation Administration (EIA) Weekly Petroleum Status Report for the week ending May 15, 2026, showed U.S. oil inventories fell by 7.9 million barrels and are about two percent below the seasonal average for this time of year, while the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) fell 9.9 million barrels to 374.2 million barrels.

Gasoline inventories fell by 1.5 million barrels and are about 5% below the five-year seasonal average, while distillate inventories rose by 0.4 million barrels and are about nine percent below the five-year seasonal average. Refinery utilization fell 0.1 percentage points to 91.6 percent, while implied gasoline demand, the EIA's proxy for retail demand, rose 14,000 bpd to 8.767 million barrels per day.

You can check gas and diesel prices near you, by going to KentuckyGas-Prices.com.

KSP adds bulletproof Rook vehicle to fleet

Tom Latek
Kentucky Today

FRANKFORT, Ky. (KT) — Kentucky State Police (KSP) has added a specialized "Rook" armored vehicle to its fleet, enhancing the agency's ability to respond to calls while prioritizing the safety of both troopers and the public.

"Our brave law enforcement officers put themselves in harm's way to make our communities safer," Gov. Andy Beshear said. "Providing them the resources they need not only boosts public safety, but also helps ensure they can return home safely to their family at the end of each shift."

The Rook is a versatile tactical vehicle designed to protect officers in complex law enforcement operations, including hostage situations, barricaded subjects, riot response and natural

disaster scenarios. Its compact design allows it to operate in confined spaces where the use of traditional armored vehicles may be limited.

Interchangeable attachments, such as a hydraulic fork for removing obstacles and an armored personnel cage for a protected approach, allow troopers to intervene in dangerous situations. KSP's Rook is the only such vehicle in the state and one of only 108 in the nation. The vehicle was purchased in December 2025 using asset forfeiture funds, which are funds seized from criminal activity that are in turn used to enhance public safety at no additional cost to Kentucky taxpayers.

"The Kentucky State Police is committed to providing our troopers with the best equipment available to safely resolve critical incidents," KSP

Commissioner Phillip Burnett Jr., said. "This purchase is the direct result of successful investigative efforts by our troopers, turning funds that were derived from criminal activity into tools that help us combat crime and protect Kentuckians."

The positive impacts of the Rook have already been proven. Since its acquisition, KSP's Special Response Team has deployed the Rook eight times, and it has proven to be a life-saving tool, helping breach barricades and protect troopers while serving high-risk warrants.

By investing in advanced tools like the Rook, the KSP says this helps them continue their mission to protect and serve the people of Kentucky while ensuring troopers are equipped to meet evolving public safety challenges.

Former Murray police detective arraigned in Calloway, Trigg sex-crime cases

Jessica Paine
The Murray Sentinel

CADIZ, Ky. — Wearing shackles and jail-issued flip-flops, Justin Swope, former Murray Police Department detective sergeant who was arrested Wednesday, was arraigned Thursday in Trigg County District Court in two separate but related cases — one filed in Trigg County and the other in Calloway County.

Swope, 44, of Almo, who resigned from MPD after his arrest, is currently lodged in the McCracken County Jail and being held on cash bonds totaling \$70,000 — \$50,000 in Trigg County and \$20,000 in Calloway County. While the charges in both counties — one count

of third-degree sodomy and two counts of third-degree rape — are identical, the uniform citations shed light on the discrepancy between the two bond amounts.

The uniform citations filed in Trigg and Calloway counties largely mirror each other, with the only material differences being the location of the alleged incident and the victim's age at the time.

Both citations note that KSP made contact with the alleged victim, who had disclosed having a sexual relationship with Swope that started in 2018, when she was 15 years old. According to the filings, the victim "provided numerous photos, screenshots and videos documenting their sexual relationship

over the years," which occurred when she was under the ages of 16 and 18 years old.

The Trigg County filing cites a specific incident that allegedly occurred in May 2019 when Swope took the victim — who was 15 years old at the time — to Land Between the Lakes, located in Trigg County. The crimes alleged in Calloway County occurred in May 2021, when the victim was 17 years old. According to that citation, Swope met the victim at her home.

Both citations also note that the investigation is ongoing, and that additional charges are anticipated.

After Calloway District Judge Randall Hutchens recused from

the Calloway County case, 56th Judicial District Judge Matt Schalk was appointed special judge. Schalk, whose regular district covers Caldwell, Livingston, Lyon and Trigg counties, presided over Thursday's arraignments in both the Calloway and Trigg cases.

Trigg County Attorney Randy Braboy stood in as prosecutor in the Calloway case. After the hearing, he told The Sentinel that he agreed to serve as special prosecutor after Calloway County Attorney Bryan Ernstberger recused himself. Braboy noted, however, that he had not yet been officially appointed by the Kentucky Attorney General's Office, though he said he anticipated

the appointment would be made in the coming days.

Unlike arraignments in Calloway District Court, where Hutchens generally handles requests for court-appointed counsel through written financial forms, Schalk placed Swope under oath Thursday and questioned him in open court about his finances to determine whether he qualified for a public defender.

Swope told the court that he has no income, about \$500 in his checking account and no money owed to him by others. He also testified that the home he owns with his wife has some equity, but there is a mortgage on the property. Schalk found Swope indigent and appointed

the Department of Public Advocacy to represent him in both cases, assessing a \$100 representation fee in each case.

Swope is scheduled to return to Trigg District Court for a preliminary hearing Tuesday, May 26, at 8:30 a.m. (CDT). His preliminary hearing in the Calloway case is scheduled for 2 p.m. on Wednesday, May 27, in Calloway District Court. Transport orders were filed in both cases to ensure that, in the event he does not post bond, he will be physically present for both hearings.

Individuals charged with crimes are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Looking back to May 28, 2018

Written by Christy Hoots

The following information was entered into the May 28, 2018, edition of

The Ledger Independent: — **Students help disabled veterans** — BROOKSVILLE —

Fifth grade students at Taylor Elementary School donated money to the Disabled American Veterans organization on Friday.

The money was collected from a lemonade war held between all of the fifth grade classes.

Dan Clare, a representative with the DAV, visited Mandy Davenport's fifth grade class on Friday in order to accept the money from the students.

While there, Clare discussed how the money would be used by the organization.

"When you donate money to a charity, it's a good idea for you to

know what the money will be used for," he said.

According to Clare, the DAV helps veterans transition when they return from active duty.

"Imagine if you drove a tank in the military and you return home from active duty-what kind of job are you going to get?" he said. "So, we help veterans find jobs they can do. We even held a job fair recently and your money could go somewhere like that."

Clare said the students donated \$153 between all of the fifth grade classes.

"DAV helps people get their benefits and for every dollar invested in

service programs, \$40 goes back to help veterans," he said. "So, 40 times 153-can you tell me what that equals? That will total more than \$6,000."

Clare said he was pleased to have the children help with donations to the DAV.

"They did something really substantial for veterans and their families," he said.

Natalie Cummins came up with the idea to donate the money to the DAV.

"We sold lemonade and we could pick the charity we wanted to give the money to and we chose the DAV," she said. "We raised \$51 with our class, so we won the lemonade wars and we got to choose the place to donate the money."

Cummins said she chose the DAV because of the work they do to help veterans.

"Since veterans sacrificed for us to be able to go to school and do

the things we wanted I thought this would be the best place to give the money," she said. "I thought it was a great way to honor our veterans."

Nash Jefferson said he was happy to be able to give to the DAV.

"I feel really good because we're helping veterans," he said. "I hope this can help some of the veterans. It was nice that we were able to do this. We've donated to them before and our class felt it was important to help them out."

Superintendent Jeff Aulick said he was proud of the work his students put into raising the money.

"I'm very proud of our students taking initiative to make a difference in a disabled veteran's life," he said. "As we honor our heroes this Memorial Day weekend, I hope we all take a moment to thank those who protected our freedom."

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