

AAA: S.C. gas cheapest in nation

Price down 8 cents
from just a week ago

By Bruce Smith
The Associated Press

As the first busy travel weekend of the summer season approaches, there was good news for South Carolina motorists Monday as AAA Carolinas reported that gas in the state was the cheapest in the nation.

The statewide average for a gallon of unleaded was \$3.35 a gallon, said Tom Crosby, a spokesman for the motor club based in Charlotte, N.C. That price is down about 8 cents from a week ago, 13 cents from a month ago and 29 cents from last Memorial Day.

The motor club will compile its pre-Memorial Day gas report Tuesday, and Crosby said that might show that the price in the state has moved up a penny or two.

Many stations raise prices heading into a busy travel weekend, he said.

"They think they are going to get some extra traffic leading into the holiday. But it's usually just a small bump," he said. "Usually there is not a huge increase of a nickel or so."

Earlier this year, tourism officials were worried gas might be more than \$4 a gallon in the state by the time the summer travel season started. But for a number of reasons, that hasn't happened.

Worries about Iran interrupting oil supplies from the Middle East have eased; the Chinese economy, which had sent demand up, has cooled a bit; and challenges to the euro and concern about European debt has also eased speculation in oil futures.

Earlier this year, oil was selling for \$105 a barrel, Crosby said.