

12:04 09Sep2009 RTRS-POLL-U.S. NATURAL GAS INVENTORIES SEEN UP 73 BCF FOR WEEK ENDED SEPT 4

12:06 09Sep2009 RTRS-POLL-US natgas stocks seen up 73 bcf in weekly EIAs

NEW YORK, Sept 9 (Reuters) - U.S. natural gas storage levels are expected to rise by 73 billion cubic feet when weekly data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration is released early Thursday, according to a Reuters poll.

In the weekly survey of 23 industry traders and analysts, injection estimates for the week ended Sept. 4 ranged from 59 bcf to 100 bcf.

Stocks rose an adjusted 63 bcf for the same week last year, while the five-year average gain for that week is 67 bcf.

The median build in the survey was 71 bcf.

The EIA storage report will be issued at its usual day and time, Thursday at 10:30 a.m. EDT (1430 GMT), despite the U.S. Labor Day holiday on Monday.

The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said there were 46 cooling degree days last week, 15 fewer than the previous week, 5 less than normal and 17 less than the same week in 2008.

Degree days, a measure of departure in the mean daily temperature from 65 degrees Fahrenheit (18 degrees Celsius), are used to reflect demand for energy to heat or cool homes and businesses.

In the last report, overall storage rose 65 bcf, just below the Reuters survey estimate for a 66 bcf rise, but last week's report showed total domestic gas inventories climbed further into record high territory for this time of year, hitting 3.323 trillion cubic feet.

Stocks have grown to levels not normally seen until the third week of October, and seem on an easy track to hit all-time highs above 3.8 tcf.

Total inventories are 489 bcf, or 17 percent, above last year and 501 bcf, or 18 percent, above the five-year average. [ID:nPRWPI54]

EIA recently raised its estimate of aggregate peak natural gas storage capacity by 100 bcf, or 2.6 percent, to 3.889 tcf due to the addition of new facilities, capacity expansions at some existing facilities and greater use of existing facilities over the past year.

EIA also said total working gas design capacity, a measure based on the theoretical peak of each storage field, increased, climbing 177 bcf, or 4.3 percent, to 4.313 tcf.

NOAA said it expected 49 cooling degree days this week, 6 more than normal and 4 more than the same year-ago week.

Early injection estimates for next week's EIA report ranged from 61 bcf to 86 bcf, versus a 65 bcf adjusted increase for the same week in 2008.

If weekly injections match the five-year average for the remaining 9 weeks of the stock-building season, storage will begin next winter with a record high 3.879 tcf in the ground.

The following is a partial list of forecasters who participated in this week's survey. If forecasters provided a range, the midpoint was used. Numbers in billion cubic feet (bcf).

Caprock	+	66
CH Guernsey	+	76
Citi Futures	+	71
enerjay	+	69
FC Stone	+	66
FirstEnergy	+	71
First Enercast	+	59
Gelber & Assoc	+	78
Hencorp	+	63

IHS Global Insight	+	71
MF Global	+	83
PFGBest Research	+	70
Prestige Economics	+	100
Ritterbusch & Assoc	+	62
SMC Forecasting	+	77
Stephen Smith Energy	+	63
Strategic Energy	+	67
Summit Energy	+	84
Tradition Energy	+	74

(Reporting by Eileen Moustakis; Editing by Walter Bagley)
((eileen.moustakis@thomsonreuters.com; +1 646 223 6074;
Reuters Messaging: eileen.moustakis.reuters.com@reuters.net))
((For help: Click "Contact Us" in your desk top, click here
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