

**11:58 22Apr2009 RTRS-UPDATE 1-POLL-US natgas stocks seen up 43 bcf in weekly EIAs**

(Adds weather data, background, table)

NEW YORK, April 22 (Reuters) - U.S. natural gas storage levels are expected to rise 43 billion cubic feet when weekly data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration are released early Thursday, according to a Reuters poll.

In the weekly survey of 23 industry traders and analysts, injection estimates for the week ended April 17 ranged narrowly from 29 bcf to 49 bcf.

Stocks rose an adjusted 25 bcf for the same week last year, while the five-year average gain for that week is 35 bcf.

The median build in the survey was 44 bcf.

The EIA storage report will be issued Thursday at 10:30 a.m. EDT (1430 GMT).

The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said there were 93 heating degree days last week, 19 warmer than the previous week but 12 colder than normal and 3 colder than the same week last year.

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

In the last report, overall storage climbed 21 bcf, in line with the Reuters survey estimate of 20 bcf, last year's adjusted build of 21 bcf and the five-year average gain for that week of 20 bcf.

Despite a fairly cold winter this year, storage withdrawals often fell short of expectations, slowed by a weak economy that has sharply cut industrial and power generation demand.

Adjusting for weather differences, analysts estimate there was about 5 bcf per day, or 6 percent, more gas around this past heating season due to recession-related cuts in demand and still-strong first quarter production.

Last week's EIA report showed that total domestic gas inventories of 1.695 trillion cubic feet stood at 438 bcf, or 35 percent, above last year

and 311 bcf, or 22 percent, above the five-year average. [ID:nPRWPI54]

Eastern stocks were up 4 bcf in the last report but slipped to about 12 percent above last year's levels.

Consuming Region West storage, which rose 5 bcf for the week, held at 64 percent above the same year-ago week, while inventories in the Producing Region added 12 bcf and edged up to about 51 percent above the same week in 2008.

A build Thursday at the Reuters estimate would widen the storage surplus to last year to about 456 bcf.

In the previous four reports, total stocks rose 44 bcf, or 11 bcf per week, versus a 68 bcf adjusted drop for the same one-month period last year and a 39 bcf five-year average decline for that period.

NOAA said it expected 62 HDDs this week, 17 warmer than normal but 8 colder than the same year-ago week.

Early injection estimates for next week's EIA report range from 62 bcf to 90 bcf versus a 77 bcf adjusted increase for the same week in 2008.

In mid-November, storage peaked at 3.488 tcf, its second highest level ever and just shy of the all-time high of 3.545 tcf hit in early November 2007, according to EIA data.

U.S. gas inventories ended the heating season at about 1.66 tcf, just below the 1.695 tcf record high from 2006 but about 22 percent above normal and a comfortable level to start the April-through-October stock building season.

If weekly stock builds through October match the five-year average pace, inventories will begin next heating season with 3.689 tcf in the ground, a new record high.

The following is a partial list of forecasters who participated in this week's survey. If forecasters provided a range, the midpoint was used.

<b>Caprock</b>	<b>+ 47</b>
CH Guernsey	+ 30
Citi Futures	+ 40
enerjay	+ 47
FC Stone	+ 43

First Enercast	+ 42
FirstEnergy	+ 47
Gelber & Assoc	+ 29
Global Insight	+ 41
Hencorp	+ 46
JPMorgan	+ 44
MF Global	+ 46
Raymond James	+ 44
Ritterbusch & Assoc	+ 37
SMC Forecasting	+ 44
Stephen Smith Energy	+ 47
Strategic Energy	+ 46
Summit Energy	+ 43
Tradition Energy	+ 46

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