

**12:04 07Oct2009 RTRS-UPDATE 1-POLL-US natgas stocks seen up 62 bcf in weekly EIAs
(Adds weather data, background, table)**

NEW YORK, Oct 7 (Reuters) - U.S. natural gas storage levels are expected to rise by 62 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 20 industry traders and analysts, injection estimates for the week ended Oct. 2 ranged from 48 bcf to 72 bcf.

Stocks rose an adjusted 87 bcf for the same week last year, while the five-year average gain for that week is 70 bcf.

The median build in the survey was 64 bcf.

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

The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said there were 37 heating degree days last week, 25 colder than the previous week, 2 colder than normal and 15 colder than the same week last year.

NOAA also said there were 21 cooling degree days last week, or 22 cooler than the previous week, 1 cooler than normal and 6 cooler 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 64 bcf, above the Reuters estimate of 61 bcf but below last year's gain of 82 bcf and the five-year average increase for that week of 68 bcf.

Last week's EIA report showed that total domestic gas inventories climbed to an all-time high of 3.589 trillion cubic feet, eclipsing the previous record of 3.565 tcf set in 2007, with five more weeks left in the stock-building season.

Most analysts expect total storage to hit new highs above 3.8 tcf by winter, and some expect stocks this year to test EIA's revised limits of working gas capacity of 3.9 tcf.

Total inventories are 491 bcf, or 16 percent, above last year and 481 bcf, or 15 percent, above the five-year average.

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Storage provides about 25 percent of the gas used to heat homes and businesses, and the huge cushion means there should be no supply shortfalls, even if winter turns out to be cold.

Eastern stocks gained 38 bcf in the last report, but eased to 6 percent above last year's levels.

Consuming Region West storage rose 7 bcf for the week, but slipped to 16 percent above the same year-ago week.

Stocks in the West stand at a record 489 bcf, surpassing the previous regional high of 478 bcf from 2007.

Inventories in the Producing Region climbed 19 bcf to a new all-time high of 1.145 tcf, but fell to 38 percent above the same week in 2008.

A total build Thursday at the Reuters estimate would trim the storage surplus to last year to 466 bcf.

In the previous four reports, total stocks rose 266 bcf, or 67 bcf per week, versus a 264 bcf adjusted gain for the same one-month period last year and a 286 bcf five-year average build for that period.

NOAA said it expected 46 HDDs this week, about normal for the period but 6 colder than the same week last year. NOAA also predicted 17 CDDs this week, also about normal for the period

but 1 warmer than the same year-ago week.

Early injection estimates for next week's EIA report ranged from 42 bcf to 65 bcf, versus an 81 bcf adjusted increase for the same week in 2008.

If weekly builds match the five-year average for the remaining 5 weeks of the stock-building season, storage will begin this winter with a record high 3.859 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.

Caprock	+ 48
CH Guernsey	+ 50
Citi Futures	+ 50
enerjay	+ 64
FirstEnergy	+ 65
First Enercast	+ 64
Hencorp	+ 72
IHS Global Insight	+ 64
JPMorgan	+ 72
MF Global	+ 56
PFGBest	+ 66
Prestige Economics	+ 58
Raymond James	+ 59
Ritterbusch & Assoc	+ 59
SMC Forecasting	+ 56
Stephen Smith Energy	+ 70
Tradition Energy	+ 72

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