

EIA-Short-Term Energy Outlook – Highlights

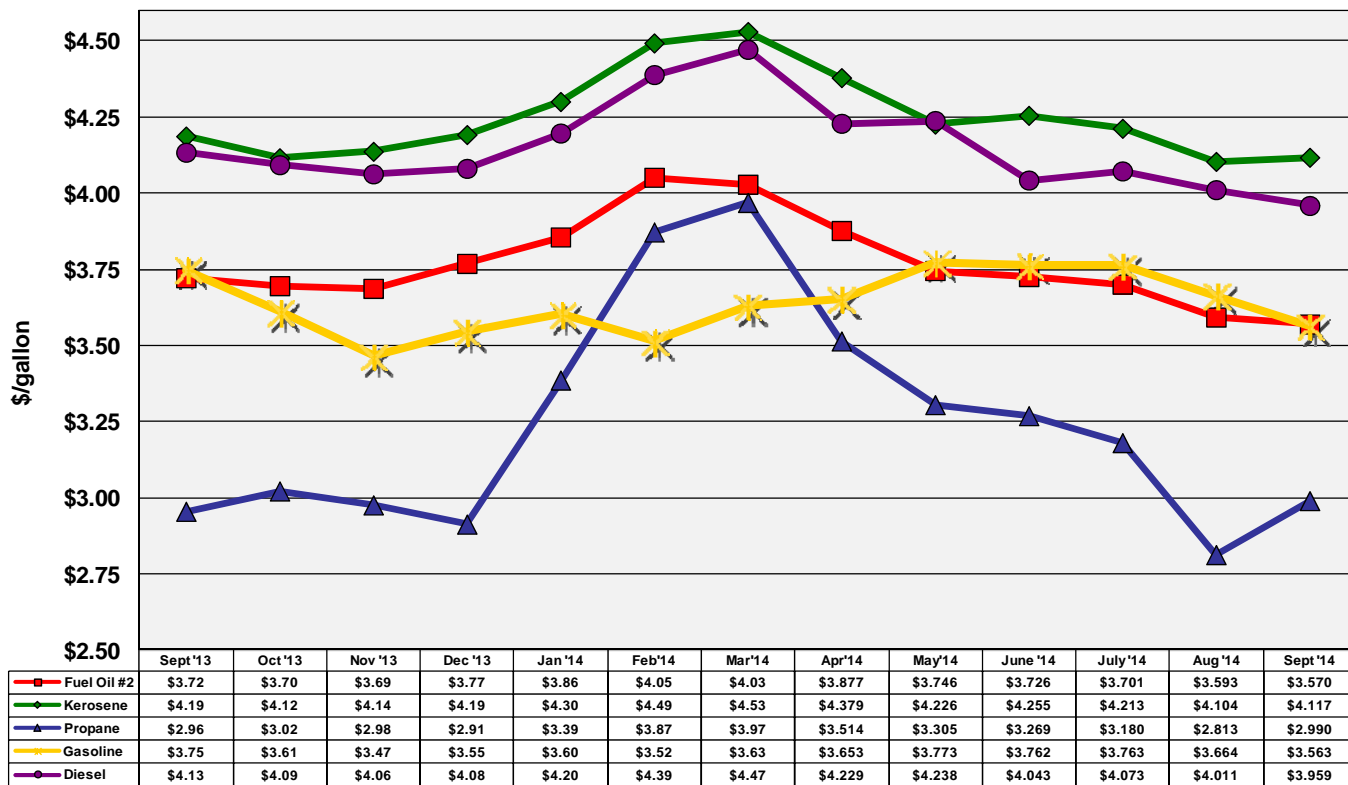
- Driven in large part by falling crude oil prices, U.S. regular gasoline retail prices fell to an average of \$3.49/per gallon (gal) in August, 12 cents below the July average and 21 cents below the average in June. U.S. regular gasoline retail prices are projected to continue to decline to an average of \$3.18/gal in December, 12 cents lower than projected in last month's STEO. EIA expects U.S. regular gasoline retail prices, which averaged \$3.51/gal in 2013, to average \$3.46/gal in 2014 and \$3.41/gal in 2015, 4 cents lower and 6 cents lower than last month's STEO, respectively.
- Weakening global demand and increased Libyan oil exports contributed to a drop in the North Sea Brent crude oil spot price to an average of \$102 per barrel (bbl) in August, \$5/bbl lower than the July average and \$10/bbl below the average in June. For the first time in 14 months, average [Brent spot prices fell outside the relatively narrow \\$5/bbl range between \\$107/bbl and \\$112/bbl](#). EIA projects that Brent crude oil prices will average \$103/bbl in fourth-quarter 2014 and \$103/bbl in 2015, \$5/bbl and \$2/bbl lower than forecast in last month's STEO, respectively. The WTI discount to Brent, which averaged \$11/bbl in 2013, is expected to average \$8/bbl in both 2014 and 2015.
- Total U.S. crude oil production averaged an estimated 8.6 million barrels per day (bbl/d) in August, the highest monthly production since July 1986. Total crude oil production, which averaged 7.5 million bbl/d in 2013, is expected to average 9.5 million bbl/d in 2015, 0.2 million bbl/d higher than projected in last month's STEO. If achieved, the 2015 forecast would be the highest annual average crude oil production since 1970. Natural gas plant liquids production increases from an average of 2.6 million bbl/d in 2013 to 3.1 million bbl/d in 2015. The growth in domestic liquids production has contributed to a significant decline in petroleum imports. The share of total U.S. petroleum and other liquids consumption met by net imports fell from 60% in 2005 to an average of 32% in 2013. EIA expects the net import share to decline to 21% in 2015, which would be the lowest level since 1968.
- Natural gas spot prices fell 15% from an average of \$4.59/million British thermal units (MMBtu) in June to \$3.91/MMBtu in August even as natural gas stock builds continued to outpace historical norms. Natural gas working inventories on August 29 totaled 2.71 trillion cubic feet (Tcf), 0.47 Tcf (15%) below the level at the same time a year ago and 0.50 Tcf (15%) below the previous five-year average (2009-13). Projected natural gas working inventories reach 3.48 Tcf at the end of October, 0.34 Tcf below the level at the same time last year. EIA expects that the Henry Hub natural gas spot price, which averaged \$3.73 per MMBtu in 2013, will average \$4.46/MMBtu in 2014 and \$3.87/MMBtu in 2015.

Editor's Note: Data presented in the *Vermont Fuel Price Report* as in the past, is collected on the first Monday of the month.

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Vermont Fuel Prices -One-Year Trend



Vermont Average Retail Petroleum Prices (per gallon)

	Sept '14	Aug '14	%change	Sept '13	%change
No. 2 Fuel Oil	\$3.570	\$3.593	-0.64%	\$3.722	-4.09%
Kerosene	\$4.117	\$4.104	0.32%	\$4.187	-1.67%
Propane	\$2.990	\$2.813	6.30%	\$2.955	1.19%
Reg. Unleaded Gasoline	\$3.563	\$3.664	-2.76%	\$3.748	-4.95%
Diesel	\$3.959	\$4.011	-1.30%	\$4.134	-4.23%

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Comparing the Cost of Heating Fuels						
Type of Energy	BTU/unit	Typ Effic	\$/unit	\$/MMBtu	High Efficiency	\$/MMBtu
Fuel Oil, gallon	138,200	80%	\$3.57	\$32.29	95%	\$27.19
Kerosene, gallon	136,600	80%	\$4.12	\$37.68		
Propane, gallon	91,600	80%	\$2.99	\$40.80	93%	\$35.10
Natural Gas, therm	100,000	80%	\$1.52	\$18.96 *	95%	\$15.97
Electricity, kWh (resistive heat)	3,412	100%	\$0.15	\$43.46		
Electricity, kWh (cold climate heat pump)	3,412		\$0.15		240%	\$18.32
Wood, cord (green)	22,000,000	60%	\$ 227.14	\$17.21 *		
Pellets, ton	16,400,000	80%	\$294.00	\$22.41 *		
* The natural gas price is based on the rate effective 8/7/14. *Wood green and Pellets updated 9/19/14.						

The *Comparing the Cost of Heating Fuels* table now includes two additional columns “High Efficiency” and \$/MMBTU HF. The new furnaces which are manufactured to meet higher efficiency standards can result in savings on energy for the customer. If you are in need of or thinking of replacing your current system contact your dealer for information on high efficiency systems.

Since the Fuel Price Report’s *Comparing the Cost of Heating Fuels* section began including information on heat pumps, the Department has received a number of comments and suggestions concerning the value of the Coefficient of Performance (COP) for air source heat pumps (ASHP). A COP over 1 means that occupants of a home receive more heat than is contained in the electricity delivered to run the ASHP.

$$\text{Heat Pump Efficiency} = \frac{\text{Quantity of heating or cooling delivered}}{\text{Electricity required by the heat pump}}$$

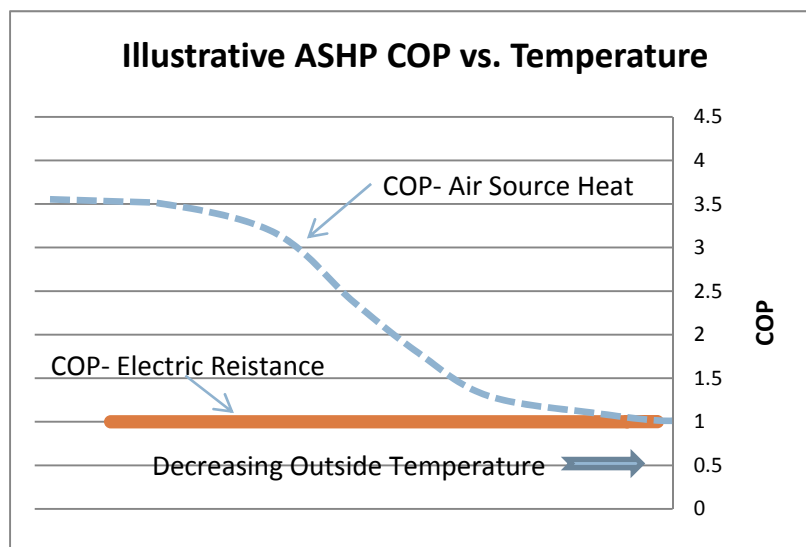
Historically, the use of heat pumps has been concentrated in areas with temperate climates which rarely see temperatures much below freezing. This is because the performance of these systems tended to decline significantly at temperatures below freezing. These systems’ COPs remain high as temperature varies through cool, but not cold, weather. As ambient temperatures begin declining from the optimal operation range the operational efficiency begins to decline as well. At some point, depending on the refrigerant and configuration of the heat pump, the COP = 1 which is the same as for electric resistance heating. At that level the heat pump alone cannot supply enough heat to

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maintain a comfortable interior temperature and requires that a supplemental source of heat be available.

In recent years manufacturers have developed air source “cold climate” heat pumps which have improved performance over a larger temperature range, due in part to the introduction of new refrigerants and more advanced compressors. These ASHPs have the potential to displace other heating sources down to zero F or below, resulting in displacement of a significant fraction of Vermont winter heating. Here in Vermont several programs are currently in the process of collecting actual operational data from ASHPs; their goal is to determine real world annual COP under Vermont’s annual temperature range of over 120 degrees. The average yearly heating COP is expected to lie some at some value between 1 and 3 with 2.4 being a reasoned guesstimate based on average winter temperatures and product specifications. As information becomes available we will update the table accordingly.

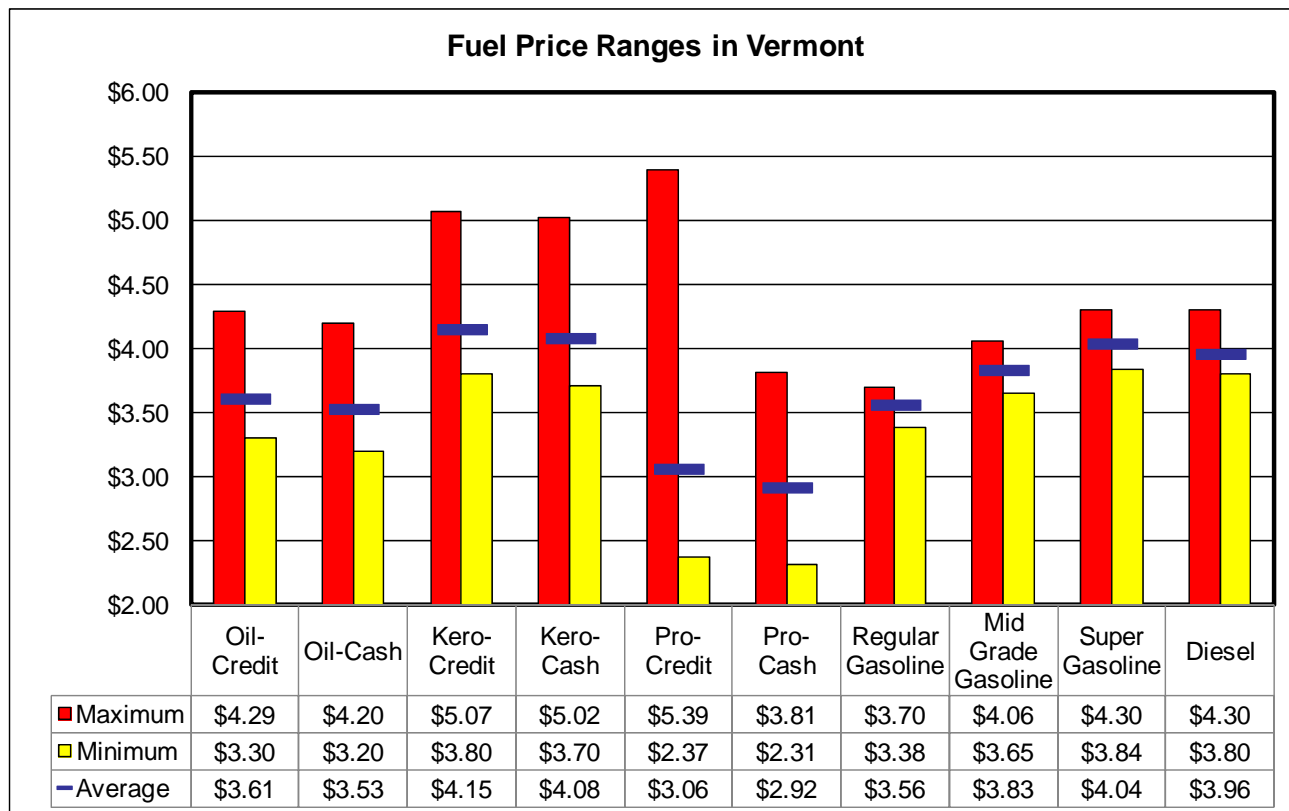
The figure below is for illustrative purposes only and does not represent actual operational data.



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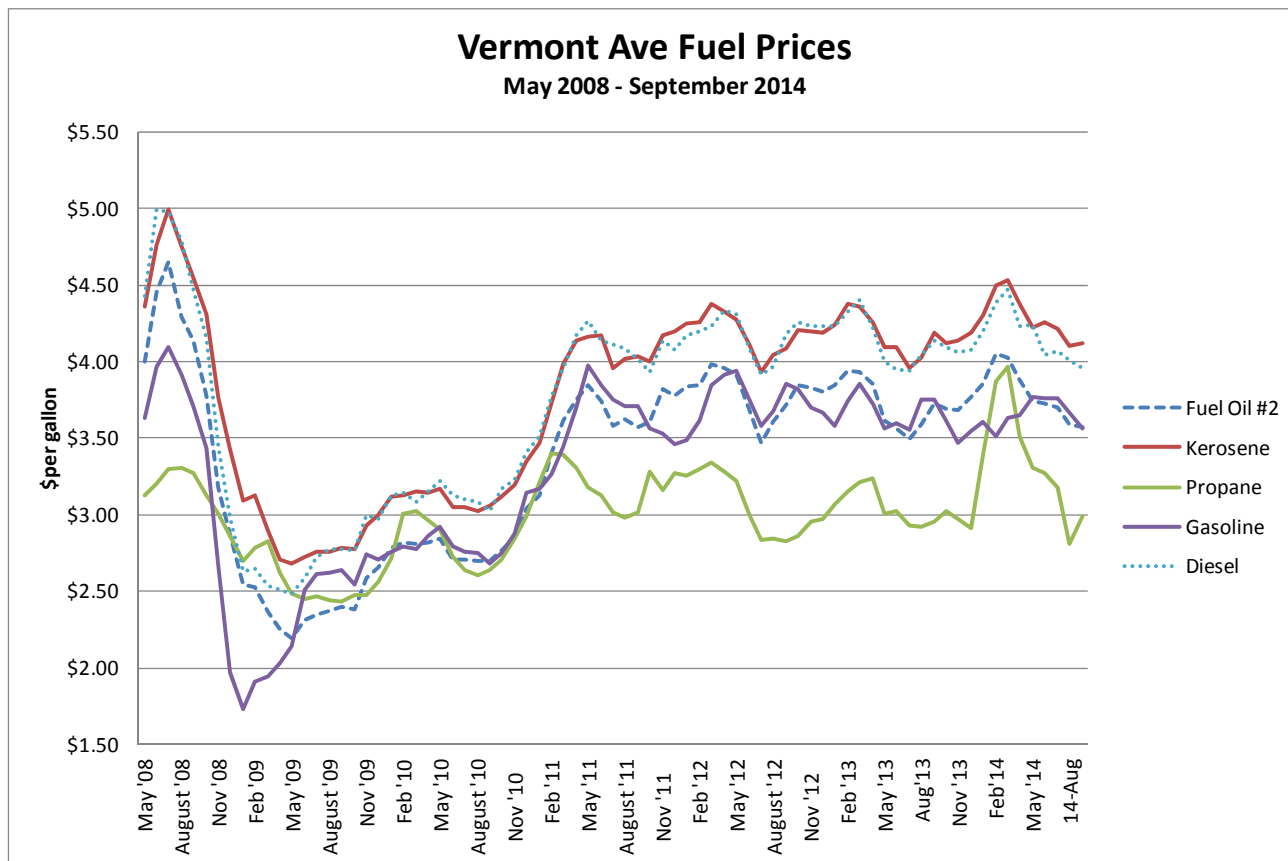
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Fuel Price Ranges in Vermont

	<u>Oil-Credit</u>	<u>Oil-Cash</u>	<u>Kero-Credit</u>	<u>Kero-Cash</u>	<u>Pro-Credit</u>	<u>Pro-Cash</u>	<u>Regular Gasoline</u>	<u>Mid Grade Gasoline</u>	<u>Super Gasoline</u>	<u>Diesel</u>
Stan.Dev \$	\$0.19	\$0.17	\$0.28	\$0.28	\$0.71	\$0.40	\$0.26	\$0.94	\$0.24	\$0.42
Stan.Dev%	5.28%	4.87%	6.79%	6.97%	23.06%	13.79%	2.05%	5.88%	1.93%	2.22%

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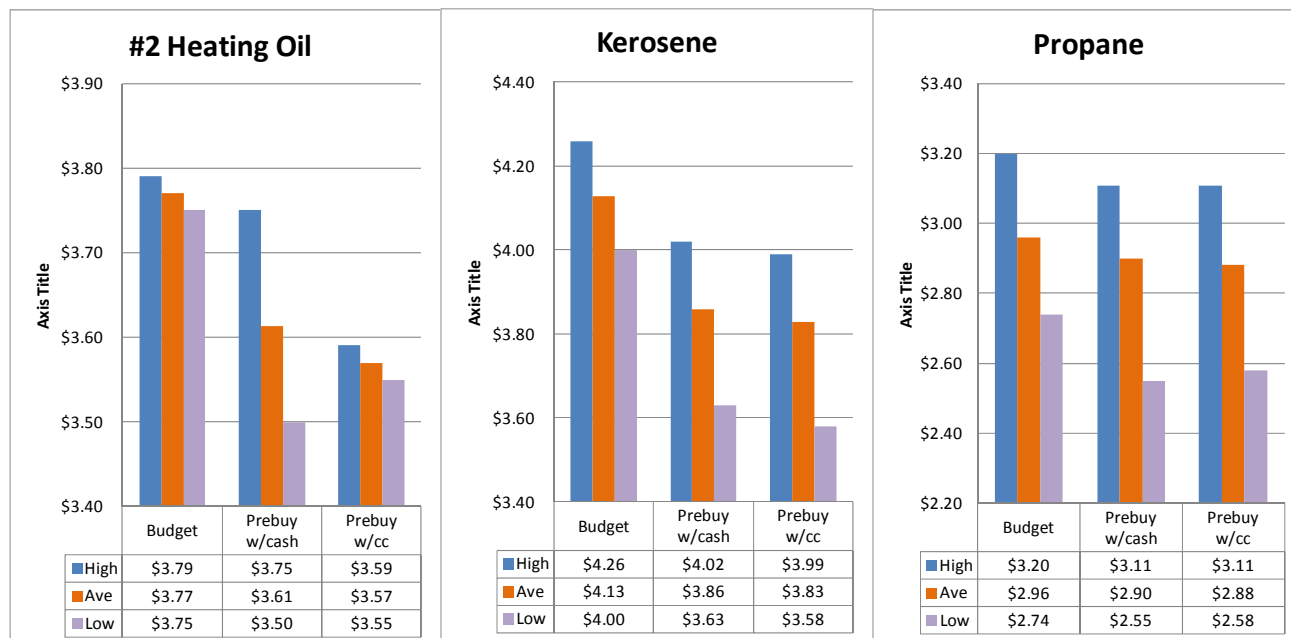


PRICE PROTECTION PROGRAMS

This past winter's combination of colder weather and supply constraints resulted in pretty significant spikes in prices. Here are some suggestions for mitigating some impact caused by the spikes. Around this time of the year many fuel dealers offer their customers "price protection" programs. Such as "Pre-Buy" programs, in which participating customers can purchase a specified volume of fuel at a discounted price by paying for the heating season's fuel in advance. In "Fixed Price" programs, a pre-determined price per unit is set for all of the fuel delivered during the heating season. In "Cap" programs, the fuel price will not exceed a pre-determined value and may go down based on market conditions at time of delivery. Cap and Fixed Price programs may be part of "Budget" programs, in which the customer agrees to make equal monthly payments, often for 10 to 12 months. Price protection programs can be beneficial, as they provide a degree of certainty, and customers are better able to budget their finances and thus are not caught short during the heating season. However, price protection programs don't guarantee savings, so consumers need to consider their options carefully.

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Below is a sampling of dealer's offerings for price protection programs.. Contact your Dealer for up to date terms and conditions of their "price protection" programs.



Vermont Historical Weather and Degree Day Data

CDD's are used during summer months to compare the current day's average temperature against the 65°F standard to determine the energy demands of cooling your home through air conditioning or fans. For example, if the current day's high is 85°F and the low is 65°F, the day's average temperature will be 75°F. Since 75°F-65°F is 10°F, this day would have 10 cooling degree days. Adding the degree days together for the whole month provides a way to compare previous months or years.

HDD's are used the same way during winter months to determine the energy demands of heating your home. The 65°F standard still is used; however, the day's average temperature is subtracted instead of added to the standard. For example, if the current day's high is 30°F and the low is 10°F, the day's average temperature will be 20°F. Since 65°F-20°F is 45°F, this day would have 45 heating degree days.

Just like cooling degree days, heating degree days may be added together for the entire month to compare to previous months or years.¹

¹ <http://www.consumersenergy.com/content.aspx?id=4582>

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The primary online source for historical weather and degree day data is the available from the NOAA - National Climatic Data Center (NCDC) web site at:
<http://www7.ncdc.noaa.gov/CDO/CDODivisionalSelect.jsp#>

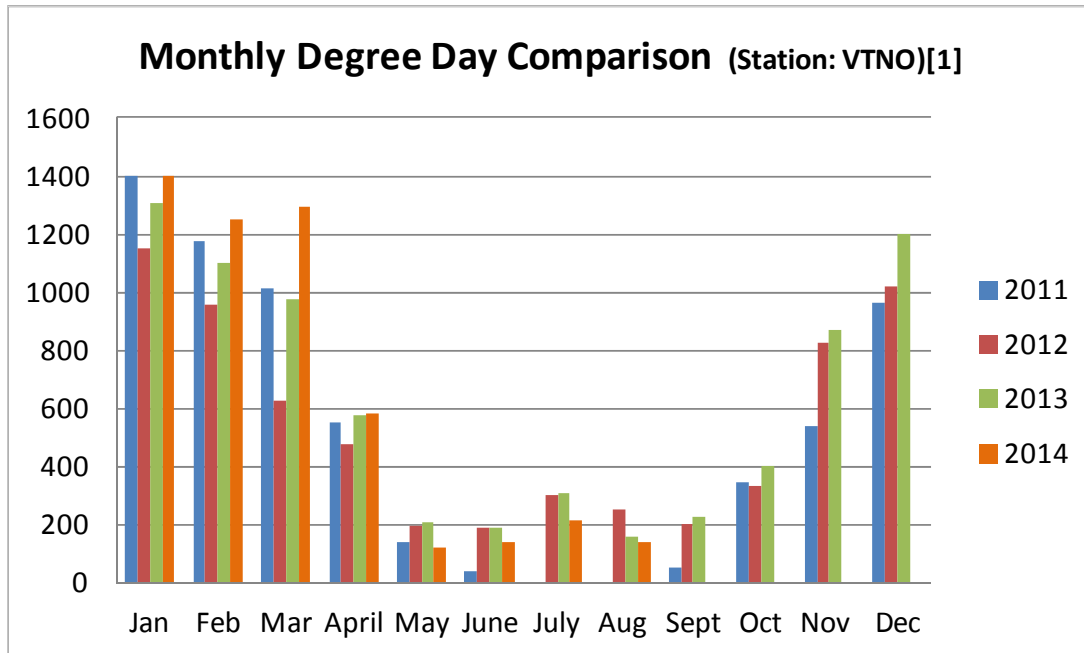
NCDC maintains the world's largest climate data archive and provides climatological services. Records in the archive range from paleoclimatic data to centuries-old journals to data less than an hour old.

Another source is the Weather Data Depot web site. The data collection is not as extensive as the NOAA collection only covering the years from 1993 forward. But the site is more user friendly.
http://www.weatherdatadepot.com/?pi_ad_id=8426228665&gclid=CIaZvMf8krQCFQqk4AodFRYArQ

A negative percentage means the Comparison Year was milder than the Base Year. A positive percentage means the Comparison Year was more severe than the Base Year. When the monthly degree days in either the base year or the comparison year are less than 30, a percentage comparison is not calculated. However, the Annual Total comparison percentages include all heating and cooling degree days.

Monthly Degree Day Comparison (Station: VTNO)									
Month	Base Year (2013)			Comparison Year (2014)			Comparison Percentages		
	HDD	CDD	TDD	HDD	CDD	TDD	HDD	CDD	TDD
January	1307	0	1307	1398	0	1398	7%		
February	1102	0	1102	1253	0	1253	13%		13%
March	976	0	976	1294	0	1294	32%		32%
April	574	2	576	580	0	580	1%		0%
May	178	31	209	197	23	120	10%		5%
June	61	130	191	28	109	137		-0.16%	-0.28%
July	2	303	305	1	212	214		-30%	-30%
August	13	145	158	8	128	136		-11%	-13%
September	167	59	226						
October	400	0	400						
November	867	0	867						
December	1200	0	1200						
Annual Total	6847	670	7517	4759	472	5231	13%	-23%	9%

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