

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 *Federal Reserve Extends Comment Period for Debit Card Swipe Fee Changes*
 - 1-2 *SSDA-AT Signs Death Tax Repeal Support Letter*
 - 2 *Right to Repair Update*
 - 2 *Maine's Right-to-Repair Now Law, But Faces Long Road Aheads*
 - 2 *ASE Opens Registration for Winter Testing and Recertification*
 - 2-3 *Mitchell 1 Opens Automotive Technology Scholarship Applications*
 - 3 *Numbers: What Are You Working On?*
 - 3 *Ford F-150s Recalled for Risk of Rolling Away While Parked*
 - 3-5 *EV News*
 - 5-6 *Renewable Diesel Retail Station a First for New York City*
 - 6 *US Gasoline Price Index Rises After Two Months of Declines: Government Data*
 - 6 *Dollar Sales at US Gasoline Stations Down Three Straight Months*
 - 6 *Gas Prices Decrease as Demand Dips*
 - 6-7 *Gas Prices Expected to Fall in 2024*
 - 7 *Petroleum Futures Plunge on Saudi Price Cuts and Demand Worries*
 - 7-8 *NRF Sees Consumer Spending Slowing Down in 2024*
 - 8 *Number of US Convenience Stores with Fuel Up for Second Straight Year*
- And More*

Federal Reserve Extends Comment Period for Debit Card Swipe Fee Changes

There is more time to comment on proposed changes to debit card swipe fees.

The Federal Reserve Board announced on Jan. 22 that it will extend the public comment period on its interchange fee proposal to May 12. The additional time will allow the public more time to analyze the proposal and prepare their comments, according to the Board.

Comments on the proposal were originally due by Feb. 12.

The Board also published additional data related to the interchange fee cap in order to provide the public with additional information as they consider the proposal. The data is available here on the Federal Reserve website.

In October 2023, the Federal Reserve Board of Governors voted to open up proposed revisions to Regulation II's Interchange Fee Cap to a 90-day public comment period upon the proposal's publication in the Federal Register.

If adopted, the base component cap would decrease to 14.4 cents, the ad valorem component would decrease to 4 basis points, and the fraud-prevention adjustment would increase to 1.3 cents per transaction. With the three components taken into account, the maximum interchange fee for a \$50 debit card transaction will be 17.70 cents, down from the current value of 24.50 cents for the same transaction.

Numerous retail groups, including the National Retail Federation (NRF), the Retail Industry Leaders Association and the Merchants Payments Coalition, applauded the proposal but raised concerns that the revisions do not go far enough, as Convenience Store News previously reported.

"This is a significant reduction that will save money for retailers and their customers, and we welcome the progress that has been made," said NRF Chief Administrative Officer and General Counsel Stephanie Martz. "Nonetheless, it still doesn't get to the 'reasonable' level Congress sought and it isn't proportional to banks' falling costs."

SSDA-AT Signs Death Tax Repeal Support Letter

Dear Representatives Feenstra and Bishop:

On behalf of SSDA-AT, thank you for introducing the Death Tax Repeal Act of 2023 to permanently repeal the estate tax.

Historically, SSDA has supported increased estate tax exemption thresholds indexed for inflation, permanent lower

tax rates, and provisions for spousal transfer and stepped-up basis.

Additionally, SSDA supported the temporary estate tax relief in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA), which doubled the exemption to approximately \$12.9 million for tax year 2023 and indexed future increases for inflation through 2025.

These changes represent significant relief to family-owned businesses from the estate tax. However, without further Congressional action the temporary increase in the exemption amount will expire at the end of 2025, increasing uncertainty and planning costs.

While SSDA supports making the estate tax provisions of TCJA permanent, SSDA continues to believe that repeal is the best solution to protect all family-owned businesses from the estate tax.

Thank you for your continued efforts to support America's family-owned businesses and farms. We look forward to working with you to advance this important issue.
Sincerely,
SSDA-AT

Right to Repair Update

SSDA-AT supported right to repair efforts on the state and federal levels have made tremendous strides.

The REPAIR Act, which would give vehicle owners the right to repair their cars where and how they like, was unanimously approved by the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Innovation, Data, and Commerce.

SSDA-AT is now pushing for a full vote from the Energy and Commerce Committee. The REPAIR Act now has 48 co-sponsors. 24 Democrats and 24 Republicans. Recently, Maine voters overwhelmingly approved a SSDA-AT supported right to repair ballot initiative.

Maine voters decided "yes" to Question 4, allowing local repair shops and mechanics access to the same data as dealerships. A "yes" vote allows all mechanical information about a vehicle to be made available beyond dealerships regarding things like being able to diagnose and repair vehicles along with regular maintenance issues. Over 84% of voters supported the measure. SSDA-AT supported the efforts and will work towards enacting the new law.

Maine's Right-to-Repair Now Law, But Faces Long Road Ahead

Though Maine's right-to-repair law has gone into effect as of this year, it may still be a while before they see any fundamental changes, Portland Press Herald reports. Some groundwork will need to be laid before the law can fully take effect—namely, with the creation of a database for the advanced diagnostic repair data being received from manufacturers, and an independent oversight board to supervise the process.

Currently, the only immediate change is a fine of at least \$10,000 that will be dolled out to automakers for every failure they make to share their repair data. Auto shop

owners in Maine likely won't begin to see a difference until 2025, when the Office of the Maine Attorney General estimates to have an oversight board in place.

The Attorney General's staff has been meeting with many different figures within the automotive industry to discuss the law's implementation. Tommy Hickey, director of the Maine Right to Repair Coalition, has been one such figure, and said that it's necessary to collaborate with cybersecurity experts to lay out the best practices for storing and distributing the data.

ASE Opens Registration for Winter Testing and Recertification

Registration for National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) winter testing and recertification has now opened, according to a recent press release.

Those who register by March 31 will have 90 days to schedule an appointment for their selected ASE tests.

Registration can be completed by accessing ASE's website, creating an account and signing in, navigating to "orders," then "store," where they can locate their desired tests from a catalog and purchase them.

There are three ways the tests are offered: in-person testing, which is available for all tests on days, nights, and weekends throughout the year at over 450 Prometric test centers; ProProctor remote testing, available online for all recertification tests; and the ASE renewal app, which is available for recertification for those with unexpired automobile certifications (A1-A9).

Mitchell 1 Opens Automotive Technology Scholarship Applications

Mitchell 1 is now accepting applications for its annual Automotive Technology Scholarship, according to a recent press release.

Applications will be accepted on the [Automotive Aftermarket Scholarship Central website](#) through March 31, and are open to high school seniors and college students in the U.S. and Canada who are looking to enter the automotive industry.

The recipient of the Mitchell 1 scholarship will be awarded a \$2,500 scholarship, a check for \$500, and roundtrip airfare and accommodations for the winner and a guest to attend the North American Council of Automotive Teachers (NACAT) conference, taking place in Indianapolis, Indiana on July 22-25, 2024.

To be eligible for the scholarship, applicants must be current students majoring in automotive technology or auto shop repair coursework and must obtain a nomination from their NACAT instructor. Students must have a minimum overall 3.0 GPA, be a U.S. or Canadian citizen, and be already enrolled or planning to enroll in an accredited college or university.

Those who complete the online application will also be considered for other scholarships they are eligible for. After

submission, applications may be updated until the March 31 deadline.

Numbers: What Are You Working On?

Auto repair shops come in all shapes, sizes, and specialties. Independent shop owners taking the 2023 Ratchet+Wrench Industry Survey reported an annual revenue between \$1 million and \$2.5 million. Below are the types of shops these operators run.

- Hybrid repair 30%
- EV repair 16%
- Transmission repair 27%
- Import repair 76%
- Diesel repair 32%
- Domestic repair 80%

Note: Respondents were asked to choose ‘all that apply.’

Ford F-150s Recalled for Risk of Rolling Away While Parked

A problem causing certain Ford F-150 pickup trucks to roll away while in park has prompted the automaker to issue a recall for nearly 113,000 vehicles, according to Kelley Blue Book.

The recall applies only to F-150 trucks from model years 2021 through 2023 that come with the Trailer Tow Max Duty package and a 9.75-inch heavy-duty (HD) axle.

Ford said that these vehicles are prone to a rear axle hub bolt breaking from fatigue, which in turn can cause splines to wear away from minor movements, preventing the axle from rolling while the truck is parked. Engaging the truck’s electronic parking brake will prevent the vehicle from moving while in park.

In the event of a rear axle bolt fracture, trucks with rear-wheel drive may lose all ability to move. 4-wheel drive trucks will only lose control over the rear wheels.

No remedy has been announced for the problem yet. Until a fix is decided on, drivers are instructed to visit a Ford or Lincoln dealer for a free, temporary fix if they notice signs of a damaged rear axle bolt. Owners of affected vehicles will be notified once the company figures out a sufficient repair.

Production of Ford F-150 Lightning Set to be Cut

Ford Motor has announced plans to reduce production of its electric F-150 Lightning pickup truck, Reuters reports. Starting April 1, Ford will be reducing production at its Michigan Rouge Electric Vehicle Center to one shift, following an announcement this past October that it would be temporarily suspending one of three shifts at the plant.

At its Michigan assembly plant, a third crew and almost 900 jobs will be added to advance production of the gas-powered Bronco SUV and Ranger pickup.

Roughly 1,400 workers at the Rouge EV Center will be affected by the reduction of shifts. Around 700 of them will

be transferred to the Michigan assembly plant, with the remainder being placed in various positions at the Rogue Complex and other Michigan facilities. Workers also have the option to enter into Ford’s special retirement program.

For those working at component plants for the F-150 Lightning, it’s predicted that a few dozen of them will be impacted by the change.

Ford has been displaying signs of slowing EV production for a while. In December, the automaker told suppliers that beginning in January, it would produce around 1,600 F-150 Lightning trucks per week—only about half of the 3,200 trucks Ford initially planned on producing.

Though Ford still expects EV sales to grow in 2024, it’s reevaluating how high that growth may be. In October, the company said it would be focusing its investments on its commercial vehicle unit and plans to increase gas-electric hybrid vehicle sales four-fold in the next five years.

White House Backs Standardization of Tesla Chargers

The Biden Administration is supporting a move to standardize the Tesla fast charger for electric vehicles nationwide.

A statement from the U.S. Joint Office of Energy and Transportation said that a move toward standardization “ensures that any vehicle or charging equipment supplier or manufacturer will be able to use, manufacture, or deploy the connector and expands charging access for current and future EV drivers across the country,” according to The Associated Press.

SAE International has already confirmed the Tesla North American Charging Standard connector, or NACS. This is a move toward using the connector style for all EVs.

Ford and General Motors have committed to providing adapters for EVs that use a different connector standard, The AP reports. Automakers will likely begin equipping new vehicles with the NACS standard by 2025.

US Transportation Department Awards Grants to Repair EV Chargers

The Department of Transportation announced Thursday that it is awarding about \$150 million in grants to 24 recipients in 20 states to repair or replace roughly 4,500 electric vehicle charging ports and to bring some of them up to code.

The grants are part of the \$5 billion National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Program designed to build out the EV charging infrastructure, the DOT said in a news release. The Biden administration aims to bring at least 500,000 public EV chargers online by 2030.

Under the program rules, 10% of the funds are to be distributed to states and localities for additional help deploying charging stations. This first round of funding focuses on improving the reliability and accessibility of the current network and complements larger-scale investments by government and private companies to build new charging stations, the release said.

Earlier in January, the Federal Highway Administration announced \$623 million in grants for the first round of the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) Discretionary Grant Program, funding 47 EV charging and alternative-fueling infrastructure projects in 22 States and Puerto Rico.

--Reporting by Donna Harris

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EV Battery Repairs Are Cutting Costs and Reducing Waste

As the industry sees more electric vehicles entering shops and roadways, many are working to figure out how to salvage damaged EV batteries, reports Yahoo.

Rich Benoit, owner of The Electrified Garage, has shops in Florida and Massachusetts that perform repair work on Teslas. In an interview with Grist, Benoit said that it can cost \$10,000 just to have the battery repaired. With new batteries costing around \$15,000, Benoit said that he sees many drivers simply disposing of the damaged vehicle and purchasing another car.

"It's getting to the point where [the car] is almost like a consumable, like a TV," Benoit told Grist.

Large EV batteries are comprised of cells and modules that are meant to last for years. Often, when an EV battery is damaged, only one of those components is damaged, and those pieces could be replaced to preserve the battery for longer, as explained by Magnus Karlsson of BatteriRetur, a Norwegian company that recycles EV batteries.

BatteriRetur is one example of companies that are recognizing the potential in training technicians to work on EV batteries. European company Reneos helps preserve the use of damaged power packs by first having batteries tested and diagnosed before enlisting high-voltage specialists to perform repairs on them.

In the States, Cox Automotive has been working to repair EV batteries since 2014 and has saved enough to prevent 17,000 new EVs from being trashed.

A longer lifespan for EV batteries would not only save costs but would help reduce the air pollution and materials needed for the creation of a new battery. According to Cox employee Tyler Helps, a refurbished power pack is typically only half the price of a new one.

EVs Accounted for More Than 1 in 10 New Car Sales in Q3 2023: Trade Group

More than one in 10 new U.S. light-duty vehicle sales in the third quarter of 2023 were electric vehicles, marking the first time that EV quarterly sales rose above the 10% threshold, auto industry group Alliance for Automotive Innovation said Tuesday.

In Q3 2023 alone, sales of EVs comprising battery, plug-in hybrid and fuel cell accounted for 10.1% of new light-duty vehicles - which include passenger cars, SUVs and small pickup trucks - up from 7.1% in Q3 2022 and

9.1% sequentially higher than in Q2 2023, the trade group said in its latest report.

Through the first three quarters of 2023, more than 1 million EVs were sold, representing 9.3% of all light vehicle sales, up from 6.5% during the same period in 2022, the group said. While EVs' market share continued to rise, that for internal combustion engine vehicles decreased by 5.1 percentage points during the first three quarters of 2023 versus a year ago.

The cost of a new EV averaged about \$52,000 in Q3 2023, while the average of all light-duty vehicles was \$48,200. Year on year, EV prices dropped by more than \$13,000 from Q3 2022 while the average cost of all new light vehicles was mostly unchanged during that time, according to the group.

In 2024, 19 EV models including those made by Tesla, Rivian and the Big Three are eligible for the federal new clean vehicle tax credit of up to \$7,500, according to the Internal Revenue Service.

Auto makers have been offering more electric SUV models, eclipsing passenger cars which once dominated the EV market. Sales of light trucks, which include SUVs, minivans and pickups, comprised 74% of the EV market in Q3, up from 67% in the year-earlier period, the report shows.

A total of 111 EV models were sold in Q3, of which more than half were SUVs, the report showed. The 111 EV models were overwhelmingly battery-powered (61) and plug-in hybrid (48), with only two models being fuel cell EVs.

Five U.S. states had higher-than-average shares of new car sales as EVs in Q3 2023. They were California (28.1%); Washington (21.7%); District of Columbia (19.3%); Colorado (17.9%) and Oregon (16.3%), the trade group said.

However, Alliance for Automotive Innovation said the installation of U.S. public chargers is not keeping up with current and projected EV sales. For example, while almost 380,000 new EVs were sold in Q3, only 7,800 new public chargers were added, which is equivalent to 48 new EVs for every new public port, it said.

The trade group also said that EV mandates from governments alone do not move EV sales, as other factors such as average income, population density and geographic locations also play a key role.

According to the group, one third of states that have adopted California's

Advanced Clean Cars II regulation, or ACC II, to mandate 100% zero-emission new auto sales by 2035 have an EV market share below the national average of 9.28% for the first three quarters of 2023. However, EV market shares for non-ACC II states including Washington, D.C., and Nevada were in the teens for Q3, higher than many states that have adopted the mandate, the report said.

--Reporting by Frank Tang

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High EV Repair Costs Cause Hertz to Sell a Third of its Electric Fleet

Hertz is selling off a third of its electric vehicle fleet—mostly consisting of Teslas—citing high repair costs as the reason, Tech Crunch reports.

The company first announced plans to 100,000 EVs from Tesla back in 2022. Though the announcement helped Tesla surpass \$1 trillion in value, Hertz only ended up purchasing 35,000 as of this past October. Its total fleet of EVs amounted to around 50,000 vehicles.

In addition, the company had also made plans to purchase up to 175,000 EVs from General Motors and 65,000 from Polestar but hasn't said whether the decision to sell a third of its fleet will affect those plans.

Hertz began selling its EVs last month and will continue to sell them throughout 2024, with many of them being heavily discounted. Shortly before announcing the sale of its EVs, Hertz's global CEO Stephen Scherr stated that high repair costs for them were becoming a problem for the company.

Indeed, while EVs don't require as much maintenance, in the event of a repair, the costs typically outdo that of an internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicle, as Autoblog reports. According to an assessment from Kelley Blue Book, while maintenance costs for EVs over five years will cost \$337 less than an ICE vehicle, the same doesn't hold for repair costs. For EVs, repairs average \$1,712 compared to \$1,695 for ICE vehicles.

"The frequency of repairs may go down, but the costs for repair will go up," explained Bill Newman, head of auto at SAP North America.

Ownership Costs for EV Can Go Toe-to-Toe with Gasoline Vehicles in US: Study

Owning an EV can be as competitive as having a gasoline-powered vehicle across some of the largest U.S. cities after considering important factors such as fuel costs, maintenance and repairs, according to a University of Michigan study.

The study, published in the Journal of Industrial Ecology on Wednesday, found that while gasoline vehicles are generally less expensive to purchase, EVs are less expensive over time through lower maintenance, repair and fuel costs.

"Whether or not the EV will break even with a similar gas vehicle depends on where the vehicle is operated, how the vehicle is charged and driven, and the size and range of the vehicle," the study said.

The study, conducted by researchers at U-M School for Environment and Sustainability, analyzed the cost of owning three different types of vehicles, namely traditional gasoline, hybrid and EV, in 14 U.S. metropolitans including New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Houston.

The study found that the cumulative recurring costs for a midsize SUV across those three vehicle types are higher in some cities after factoring into ownership expenses

including financing, annual fees, insurance, maintenance, repairs and fuel costs.

In addition, the study evaluated how each cost component of vehicle ownership changes with vehicle size, powertrain, location, use patterns and over time.

The study found that the cost of owning an EV midsize SUV can vary from city to city by as much as \$52,000 over the vehicle's lifetime. For example, while New York City and Detroit have the highest insurance costs, refueling is much more expensive in San Francisco and Los Angeles compared to Houston and Dallas. For EVs, charging also costs the most in California compared with other cities.

Other key factors that could affect ownership costs include charging behaviors, vehicle and battery size, as well as federal, state and municipal incentives, according to the study.

"In addition to charging cost advantages for electric vehicles over gasoline fueling costs, there are lower maintenance and repair costs," said Gregory Keoleian, U-M professor of environment and sustainability and a senior author of the study.

The study found that EVs should become even more cost competitive as battery efficiency and manufacturing processes improve and if gasoline prices continue to escalate faster than electricity prices.

--Reporting by Frank Tang

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US EV Range Reaches New High

The top range for an electric vehicle in MY2023 was 516 miles on a single charge for the Lucid Air, and the median range for all EV models increased to a new high of 270 miles, the U.S. Department of Energy said in a report Tuesday.

The median range is still about two-thirds of the median range for a gasoline-powered vehicle, which is slightly above 400, according to DOE data.

MY2016 was the first year the median range for EVs exceeded 200 at 218. From MY2016 to 2022, the median range has fluctuated from a low of 194 in 2017 to a high of 259 in 2020, DOE figures show. In MY2022, the top range for a single model was 520 miles and the median range was 257.

The DOE also said the number of models and their ranges have "greatly increased" since modern EVs made their debut in 2011, when there were just four models available with ranges from 63 to 94 miles per charge.

--Reporting by Donna Harris

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Renewable Diesel Retail Station a First for New York City

A partnership between Sprague Operating Resources and Sonomax gave New York City a leap forward in

environmental sustainability with the grand opening of the city's first retail fuel station dispensing renewable diesel.

The drop-in fuel solution could create immediate reductions in greenhouse gases and harmful emissions, providing better air quality for city residents, the organizations said.

As transportation remains a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, renewable diesel could provide a workable replacement for conventional fossil fuel diesel, which would potentially deliver significant environmental and public health benefits without sacrificing performance.

With that in mind, Sprague stated it plans to continue to expand its supply of renewable diesel across the Northeast to serve both the transportation and home heating markets.

US Gasoline Price Index Rises After Two Months of Declines: Government Data

The U.S. gasoline price index rose by 0.2% in December, following a 6% decrease in November and a 5% decline in October, according to data released Thursday by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Before a seasonal adjustment, gasoline prices, however, were down 5.8% in December and over the past 12 months the gasoline index has dropped by 1.9%, BLS said. Gasoline prices fell three times over the last eight months, with the last decrease of 5.6% in May, the data showed.

The energy index rose 0.4% in December but was 2% lower year to year. The index for electricity increased 1.3% in December and 3.3% over the past year, while natural gas fell 0.4% month-to-month and 13.8% year to year and fuel oil fell 5.5% in December and 14.7% over the past 12 months.

The Consumer Price Index for all goods increased 0.3% in December after the seasonally adjusted number rose by 0.1% in November, the bureau said. Over the past year, the CPI increased 3.4% before seasonal adjustment.

--Reporting by Donna Harris

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Dollar Sales at US Gasoline Stations Down Three Straight Months

Dollar sales at U.S. gasoline stations declined month to month in December, after two straight months of declines, according to Census Bureau data updated Wednesday.

The agency said December dollar sales declined to \$53.169 billion from \$53.861 billion in November and \$55.783 billion in October. December's sales were down 6.2% from \$56.942 billion a year ago.

The numbers are adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, the bureau said.

The sales figures remain close to highs seen in 2022, when retail fuel prices rose to record levels. Retail fuel station sales broke the \$50 billion threshold for the first time

in October 2021 and the \$60 billion level for the first time in March 2022, the agency's data showed. The record high was set in June 2022, when dollar sales exceeded \$68 billion.

In 2022, dollar sales surpassed \$60 billion for seven months, the updated figures show, but the sales total has been in the \$50 billion range throughout 2023, according to the agency's data.

The last time dollar sales exceeded \$60 billion was in autumn 2022. Dollar sales declined eight straight months from November 2022 through June 2023, then increased three months from July through September 2023.

--Reporting by Donna Harris

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Gas Prices Decrease as Demand Dips

Lessening demand for fuel after the peak of holiday road travel could be responsible for a general decline in gas prices.

The national average for a gallon of regular gas fell 3 cents last week to \$3.09. This is 15 cents less than a month ago and 17 cents less than a year ago, reported AAA.

"January is a bit of blah time of year, and gas prices are in the doldrums as well," said Andrew Gross, AAA spokesperson. "Barring some unexpected shock to the global oil market, gas prices will likely shuffle up and down a few cents for a while."

The 10 states that saw the largest weekly decreases in their average gas prices are Ohio (14 cents per gallon), Indiana (10 cents), Florida (9 cents), Delaware (8 cents), Michigan (8 cents), Maryland (7 cents), Wyoming (7 cents), Tennessee (6 cents), Idaho (6 cents) and Nebraska (6 cents).

The current top 10 most expensive markets in the country are California (\$4.71 per gallon), Hawaii (\$4.66), Washington (\$4.11), Nevada (\$3.94), Oregon (\$3.76), Alaska (\$3.62), Pennsylvania (\$3.38), New York (\$3.34), Arizona (\$3.33) and Vermont (\$3.28).

Gas demand plummeted from 9.17 million to 7.95 million barrels per day over the last week, according to new data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration. At the same time, total gasoline stocks increased significantly, rising from 10.7 million barrels to 237 million barrels.

The combination of weak gas demand and increased supply has pushed pump prices lower, but rising oil prices have limited price decreases, according to AAA. If gas demand stays weak, prices at the pump will likely trickle downward.

At the close of the formal trading session on Jan. 3, West Texas Intermediate (WTI) increased by \$2.32 to \$72.70. WTI oil is another benchmark used by oil markets, representing oil produced in the United States.

Gas Prices Expected to Fall in 2024

After two years of above average gas prices, 2024 will bring relief at the pump for drivers. GasBuddy, a PDI

company, expects the yearly national average will drop from \$3.51 per gallon this year to \$3.38 in 2024.

"As 2023 fades away, I'm hopeful those \$5 and \$6 prices for gasoline and diesel will also fade into memory. The global refining picture continues to improve, providing more capacity and peace of mind that record-setting prices will stay away from the pump in 2024," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis for GasBuddy.

"Offsetting OPEC+'s production cuts is contributing to the rise of U.S. oil production, which now stands at record levels. Combined with Canada, North American oil production could further stabilize countries that have decided to curb oil production," he added.

Gas prices still could fall below a national average of \$3 per gallon this winter before potentially rising, getting close to \$4 per gallon as summer approaches.

Drivers in some West Coast cities could again briefly see prices above \$6 per gallon, although most major U.S. cities will see prices peak near \$4 per gallon in 2024.

Americans are expected to spend a combined \$446.9 billion on gasoline in 2024. Average yearly spending per household will fall to an estimated \$2,407, down 2% from 2023, and more than 12% from 2022.

Electric vehicles (EVs) and the 2024 presidential election have the potential to impact fuel prices in the year ahead, with a potential slowdown in the EV transition at stake.

Memorial Day will be the priciest 2024 holiday at the pump, with the national average price of gasoline expected to be \$3.56 to \$4.04 per gallon on the holiday.

Additionally, the outlook forecasts the highest prices will be seen at the peak of the summer driving season in May, with the national average potentially rising as high as \$3.89 per gallon. More uncertainty is expected with hurricane season in late summer. Diesel prices are also predicted to fall incrementally from 2023, peaking at \$4.13 per gallon in March 2024.

2024-01-08 09:40:48 EST

Petroleum Futures Plunge on Saudi Price Cuts and Demand Worries

Worries about typically shaky January demand have combined with the rebalancing of large commodities funds to send crude and refined products sharply lower Monday morning.

The trigger for a selling spree came when Saudi Arabia aggressively cut official sales prices for customers, suggesting to analysts that they recognize poor demand.

Crude has moved sharply lower, and it has dragged down values for gasoline and diesel as well. February West Texas Intermediate was off \$2.97 at \$70.84/bbl while March Brent slipped \$2.87 to \$75.89/bbl. The drops precede rebalancing in the BCOM and GSCI commodity indices. Late in 2023, analysts at Citigroup concluded that some \$3 billion in investment length in WTI could depart those indices.

Meanwhile, atmospheric rivers of moisture on the West Coast and winter storms in the rest of the U.S. are pinning down gasoline demand. There are worries that this week's Energy Information Administration report could see another gasoline demand figure of less than 8 million b/d. High run rates for refiners could then lead to another sizeable build in gasoline inventories.

February RBOB was down 8cts as morning trading hit its stride, putting the prompt contract at \$2.0255/gal. February ULSD slipped 5.69cts to \$2.5516/gal despite reports of the first significant blast of winter weather for heating states.

Cash prices were in some cases showing more damage than futures. Chicago gasoline was particularly unwanted with sellers still willing to move barrels for 44cts under futures. That put the Chicago price for conventional blendstock barely above \$66.50/bbl.

The greatest weakness, however, occurred on the West Coast where inclement weather was the most severe. Los Angeles CARBOB was the only venue in the country that saw spot prices above futures, but the basis premium was just 8cts/gal. San Francisco gasoline was pegged even with CME RBOB, thanks to the lowest demand in more than a year.

--Reporting by Tom Kloza

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NRF Sees Consumer Spending Slowing Down in 2024

Consumers spent more than expected in 2023 amid high inflation and high interest rates, however, spending growth is likely to slow in 2024.

According to the report, 2023 spending was supported by a tight labor market, a "wealth effect" from a rise in equity and home prices, and savings built up during the pandemic.

Inflation-adjusted gross domestic product grew a "solid" 2.3% over 2022, December's unemployment rate of 3.7% was one of the lowest in decades, and the 4.5% year-over-year increase in wages surpassed the year-end 2.6% rate of inflation as measured by the Personal Consumption Expenditures Price Index followed by the Federal Reserve.

Unadjusted for inflation, consumer spending was up 5.2% year over year in October and November, boosted by a 7% year-year-over increase in disposable personal income. Core retail sales — excluding automobile dealers, gas stations and restaurants — were up 3.7% year over year for the first 11 months of 2023.

Despite the rise, job openings fell to 8.79 million in November, the lowest level since March 2021. Additionally, while the U.S. Labor Department reported nonfarm payroll growth of 216,000 jobs in December, the net growth in private-sector jobs was only 68,000 after accounting for downward revisions to previous months' job growth, NRF found.

Pandemic savings that boosted spending last year are shrinking, revolving debt has risen to pre-pandemic levels,

and consumer confidence has risen but remains low. Recent surveys show consumers are worried by a number of factors, such as:

- The outlook for income;
- Business and job market conditions slowing because of higher interest rates;
- Ongoing inflation; and
- Political stress.

As Kleinhenz posed, a key question in the outlook is what the Fed will do with interest rates. The central bank has indicated that rate hikes are likely over and that the benchmark federal funds rate — currently 5.25% to 5.5% — could be cut to 4.6% by the end of the year.

Number of US Convenience Stores with Fuel Up for Second Straight Year

Both the number of U.S. convenience stores overall and the number of c-stores offering fuel rose in 2023, NACS reported Tuesday in a news release.

Fuel stations fare better with a full-size convenience store. The number of fuel kiosks fell 2.2% year to year to 13,065, according to the 2024 NACS/NIQ Convenience Industry Store Count.

The numbers are based on stores in operation as of Dec. 31, 2023.

Convenience stores sell about 80% of the fuels retailed in the U.S. The number of c-stores selling fuel rose for the second straight year to 120,061, a 1.2% increase from a year ago, NACS said.

In 2022, the number of fuel outlets rose by 1.7% year to year. But in 2021 and 2020 the number of c-stores selling fuel declined, and the total had declined four straight years before holding steady in 2019.

There are 152,396 convenience stores in the United States, up 1.5% year to year, NACS reported. The c-store count increased six out of the last 10 years, NACS said.

With the U.S. population at an estimated 336 million, according to the Census Bureau, there is one convenience store for every 2,204 people.

About every state saw an increase in convenience store count, including Texas, which continues to have the most c-stores (16,304 stores), or more than 1 in 10 stores in the United States. After losing 53 stores in 2023, California added 177 to its store count. Seven states saw a reduction in store count: Alaska, Iowa, Idaho, Louisiana, Maine, Oklahoma and Vermont.

The industry continues to be dominated by small operators. Operators of one to 10 stores run 63.1% of the stores, and 91,799 are single-store operators, up slightly from 90,423 stores in 2023.

The largest networks of 501 units or more operate 21.6% of the stores, networks of 11 to 50 units run 6.0% of the stores, networks of 51 to 200 units represent 5.9% and those running 201 to 500 units represent 3.4% of total U.S. stores.

Besides convenience stores and c-stores selling fuels, dollar stores represent the only retail channel studied that expanded year to year. The dollar store count rose 3.7% from a year ago. The grocery channel dipped by 0.7% and the drugstore channel dropped by 0.6%, NACS reported.

--Reporting by Donna Harris

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Average US Gasoline Station Hourly Wage Dips in November: Government Data

The average hourly wage for U.S. retail fuel stations and stations with convenience stores slipped a few cents from October, but remained near recent record highs, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics figures updated on Friday. In November, year-to-year wage inflation for retail fuel stations and those with c-stores was about half the 12-month inflation rate reported for October.

Annual wage inflation in October was 4.8% for gasoline stations and 5% for stations with c-stores. In November 2022, the average fuel station was 2.4%, or 39cts lower, at \$16.51/hour, and the average wage for stations with c-stores was 2.8% or 46cts lower, at \$16.30/hour, the data showed.

The average hourly wage for nonsupervisory workers at gasoline stations was \$16.90 in November, down 6cts from October and the average hourly wage for nonsupervisory workers at stations with c-stores was \$16.76, down from \$16.79 in October. For both categories, the average wage in October was adjusted 1ct higher, BLS said.

The average gasoline station wage for nonsupervisory workers hit a record of \$16.95/hour in October and the average for stations with c-stores matched a record of \$16.78/hour set in July.

The average hourly wage across retail businesses dipped 7cts month to month in November to \$20.56. The December figures, which are available for the broad retail category, showed wages were up 2cts month to month in December, at \$20.58.

Across retail, annual wage inflation was 3.1% in October, 2.8% in November, and 3.8% in December, the figures showed.

--Reporting by Donna Harris

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Texas Won't Require Vehicle Safety Inspections Starting Next Year

Beginning in 2025, the state of Texas will no longer require annual vehicle safety inspections, News Channel 6 KAUZ reports. House Bill 3297 received approval from Sen. Drew Springer, who said that the decision will remove a burden imposed on Texans and that it's what residents of the state have been wanting to see happen.

In response, some have voiced concerns over how the change will impact road safety—but Springer isn't worried.

“We think that is such a small number that gets caught on that one day once a year. Look, people drive with tires they should replace,” Springer stated. “Please, check your tires, check your windshield wipers check your horn and all those other things, but to catch it on the day of that it went bad, they probably had been driving six months with it already, you know, out of compliance.”

Some auto repair professionals in the area don't have the same confidence, such as Cole Salsman, owner of Veteran Auto Repair in Wichita Falls. He asserted that safety inspections require drivers to have things inspected that wouldn't be looked at otherwise, preventing potentially hazardous scenarios.

“States that don't have it, I mean you can see a clear difference when you look at the condition of vehicles on the road,” Salsman added. “I mean there's vehicles on the road that are far older and in worse shape that might have no business being on the road still.”

The change will not take effect until Jan. 2025, making 2024 the last year Texans will need to have their vehicles inspected.

Truck Engine Manufacturer Cummins Pays Out Nearly \$1.65 Billion for Defeat Devices

Cummins, a truck engine manufacturer, has agreed to a record-breaking settlement of around \$1.65 billion with the U.S. Justice Department and California due to selling engines equipped with defeat devices, reports Reuters.

In a lawsuit filed Wednesday by the Justice Department and the state of California, Cummins allegedly had engines equipped with what are called 'defeat devices:' technology that allows vehicles to bypass emissions tests by manipulating components such as emission sensors and onboard computers.

According to the lawsuit filed, defeat devices were found on 630,000 model year 2013-2019 RAM 2500 and 3500 pickup truck engines. It also alleges that Cummins sold auxiliary emission control devices on 330,000 2019 to 2023 RAM 2500 and 3500 pickup truck engines.

This past December, Cummins had agreed in principle with the settlement, according to the Justice Department. Cummins has stated that the lawsuit filed is aligned with what was agreed upon.

Cummins will pay \$1.48 billion to the federal government and \$164 million to California, but the company will have to pay higher penalties if at least 85% of the 960,000 vehicles recalled for the defeat devices do not receive software updates. The Justice Department called it the largest civil penalty issued for a Clean Air Act violation to date.

Attorneys General Unite in Call for Federal Menthol Ban as White House Review Continues

A coalition of 21 attorneys general submitted a comment letter to the White House Office of Management and Budget, urging the Biden Administration to complete its

review and implementation of a plan to prohibit the sale of menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars.

In the letter, the coalition specifically highlights calls by civil rights and public health groups to remove menthol tobacco products from the marketplace in order to protect public health and address the unequal impact of these products on minority communities and other vulnerable populations, including young people, the letter said.

The latest broadside joins a growing number of competing and often contradictory voices weighing in on the potential ban. C-store industry associations like NACS and the Convenience Distribution Association have criticized the potential new rule, while tobacco companies continue to push a lobbying effort that would either delay or prevent implementation altogether, as reported by The Hill.

Tobacco companies add menthol to cigarettes and cigars as a flavor enhancer. According to a release from Brown's office, the flavoring often attracts young smokers and can make it much easier for them to develop an addiction to nicotine. Menthol cigarette use is also higher, when compared to other groups, among LGBTQ+ smokers, smokers with mental health problems and socioeconomically disadvantaged populations.

Menthol cigarettes are also in heavy use in Black communities, with approximately 81% non-Hispanic Black adult smokers using menthol cigarettes. The Hill noted that both the Congressional Black Caucus and the African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council have come out in strong support of the ban.

In light of the ongoing debate, the coalition letter urged the Biden Administration to finalize its review of the FDA's proposed rules while also fighting back against what the attorneys general view as unproven claims that the proposed menthol ban will increase illegal trade or criminalize individual purchases, possession, or use of menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars.

Regardless of the ultimate outcome of this particular administrative action, the fight over tobacco regulation will likely continue, with California's ban on flavored tobacco products now coming into full effect and the crackdown against illegal e-cigarette and vape products continuing.

FDA Issues Marketing Decisions on Several Vapor Products

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued several marketing denial orders (MDOs) covering multiple products by various companies, including Bidi Vapor, Shenzhen Youme Information Technology Co., Fontem US and Shenzhen IVPS Technology Co.

The rejected products include:

- The Bidi Stick Classic E-Cigarette
- Suorin Air Refillable E-Cigarette
- Suorin Air Empty Cartridge
- The blu PLUS+ Battery
- Seven blu PLUS+ prefilled e-liquids
- Twenty-two SMOK brand e-cigarette products

After reviewing the companies' PMTAs, the FDA determined that the applications lacked sufficient evidence to demonstrate that permitting the marketing of the products would be appropriate for the protection of public health, which is the standard legally required by the 2009 Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act.

As a result of the MDOs, neither Bidi nor any of the other companies will be allowed to market or distribute the above list of products in the United States without risking an FDA enforcement action. The FDA may also enforce compliance by distributors or retailers, a duty it has taken seriously as it has ramped up its enforcement on illegal tobacco products in the last few years.

Virginia Gasoline Station Operators Convicted of Using Forced Labor

A federal jury convicted a couple operating a North Chesterfield, Va., gasoline station and convenience store of several forced labor charges, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia said Monday in a news release.

After a two-week trial, the jury found Harmanpreet Singh, 30, and Kulbir Kaur, 43, guilty of forcing Singh's cousin to work long hours at Singh's store for minimal pay and subjected him to physical and emotional abuse, the release said.

"The defendants engaged in an egregious bait-and-switch, luring the victim with false promises of an education in the United States and instead subjecting him to grueling hours, degrading living conditions and a litany of mental and physical abuse," U.S. Attorney Jessica Aber, for the Eastern District of Virginia, said in the announcement.

Federal authorities said that in 2018, the defendants encouraged the victim, who was then a minor, to travel to the U.S., promising to help enroll him in school. But after he arrived, they took his immigration documents and put him to work.

At times, the defendants made the victim sleep in a back office, limited his access to food, refused to provide medical care or education and used surveillance equipment to monitor him at the store and in their home. They pulled his hair, slapped and kicked him when he tried to leave or asked for his immigration documents, and on three occasions threatened him with a revolver, the release said.

Sentencing before a federal district court judge is set for May 8, authorities said. Singh and Kaur each face up to 20 years in prison, up to five years of supervised release, fines of as much as \$250,000 and mandatory restitution.

--Reporting by Donna Harris

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Your Inspection License May be Worth Money

Depending on where you are located, it may be possible to sell your license. Before merely turning it in, contact the association for further information.

DMV Record Retrieval

DMV record retrieval is available to association members and affiliates at a cost of \$12 per record. Additionally, you may order DMV certified paper abstracts of driver's license, vehicle registration, and vehicle title records for an additional fee of \$2 per abstract. Please call 516-371-6201

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ASK THE EXPERT

Empowering Technicians: Safety Protocols and Training Essentials for Working on Electric Vehicles



JAKE SORENSEN

*Master Technician,
NAPA*

Removing the fear of working on electric vehicles

As electric vehicles (EVs) continue to grow in popularity, the need for certified EV technicians is increasing. With this new technology comes new safety protocols. Ratchet & Wrench sat down with technician Jake Sorensen to discuss the key safety measures for handling high-voltage vehicles in the shop to mitigate concerns or fear of working on EVs.

Sorensen, an award-winning master technician, is passionate about training new technicians, working as an AutoTech instructor, and paving the way for the development of the NAPA Apprenticeship program. When he is not training, Sorensen works as a technician at McNeil's Auto Care in Sandy, Utah.

What safety precautions are important when technicians work on EVs or hybrids in the bay?

For me, the all-time most important step is training. Regardless of what equipment, safety area, or PPE you have, it's not going to protect you if you don't know how to use it properly. I don't think anyone who hasn't received some training should be working on these vehicles. We have one trained EV specialist at each location, but everyone else in the shop needs to know what's going on that day. They need to know that when there's a barricade around that vehicle, they should not cross it. It's there to keep them out of a harmful environment.

How are these vehicles' high voltage systems different from a typical ICE vehicle, and what precautions should be taken?

So, there are a lot of similarities. I think any technician who is competent and experienced with electrical on regular ICE vehicles will do well working on hybrid electric vehicles. Especially on the low voltage side, it's very similar. When you get into the high voltage side, obviously, these things are different. The safety element is a big one, but the cost of repairs is typically significantly higher. The biggest difference that technicians coming from the ICE world will realize is that we have far fewer repairs being made and more replacements. Most parts on EVs can't be repaired; they have to be replaced. There are no safe, long-term repairs.

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Why are PPE and isolation essential when working on EV components, and what type of PPE is needed?

The most obvious answer is technician safety. The conversation around EVs always circles around safety, and some people use fear tactics to scare people away. There certainly is danger, but if we use the right equipment and the right PPE and have the training, it's very safe to work on. I try to move the conversation away from the fear part. One important element is insulated gloves, which need to be inspected for every use and replaced every six months. You can't just buy a set of gloves and have those for the rest of your career.

Another important step is barricading the area. You need to make sure that others in the shop are aware that they shouldn't be coming into that area. There's arc flash protective clothing that is needed when we get into high-voltage repairs, and safety glasses are important when working on any vehicle. Tooling is another big part of PPE. A lot of people aren't familiar with the importance of insulated tools to prevent making an accidental connection.

In 2023, NAPA announced a brand-new line of Insulated Mechanics Hand Tools under the [Carlyle Tools](#) brand. These tools have been designed for maintaining and repairing Electric Vehicles and other tasks that require work around high voltage applications.

ALL Carlyle Insulated Hand Tools are tested, and rated, to 1,000V AC/DC and every single tool is certified to the following standards.

- ASTM F1505
- VDE/IEC 60900-2018
- GS Safety Tested

What risks are associated with electric and hybrid vehicles and their batteries, and how can technicians make the work environment safer?

The primary thing that most of us think of would be shock or electrocution. That's certainly a major concern, but again, with the right training and PPE, these vehicles are safe to work on. Another common risk is fire. When you have a vehicle in good working order, that's a pretty low risk, but when two vehicles are in a collision, the risk of fires greatly increases. Training is incredibly important because it can explain how to prevent fires, what may lead to a fire, and the proper precautions to take to avoid a fire.

Are there specific training requirements for technicians working on EVs, and how can they stay updated on safety protocols and technology?

Dealerships may have specific requirements for technicians, but for the independent world, there are no current requirements in the U.S. I think as shop owners or technicians, it's important to know that regardless of a requirement, it's good to make sure we have certifications and training to understand these systems. ASE is a great source for certification for electric vehicles; however, finding the proper training can take some extra work. NAPA is offering a solution with the NexDrive Powered by NAPA training program. NexDrive will provide a one-stop shop for all EV training across the board and remove the guessing game from where to find top-quality training programs.

If you are interested in becoming NexDrive certified, please register with NAPA Autotech today to learn more. [Signup today.](#)

For more information on NexDrive Visit: <https://nexdrive.com/en/about-nexdrive>

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NYVIP MESSAGE No. 297

DATE: 12/28/2023

TO: ALL INSPECTION STATIONS

FROM: NYS DMV

SUBJECT: BLUE STOCK MUST BE USED FOR INSPECTIONS IN 2024

****PRINT THIS MESSAGE AND DELIVER IT TO THE PERSON WHO MAINTAINS THE INSPECTION CERTIFICATE INVENTORY****

This notice is to **!!!Alert You!!!** that your **BLUE 2025 "Print on Demand"** sticker stock **MUST BE** entered into inventory on your NYVIP3 Unit/s and the appropriate type (Internal or External) properly loaded into the sticker printer prior to performing your first inspection in 2024.

For any Unused **RED 2024** DMV supplied pre-printed inspection certificates or OPUS Inspection supplied "Print on Demand" Sticker Stock please refer to NYVIP Message# 296 for proper return procedures.

*Reminder: 2025 (expiration) sticker stock is **BLUE**; 2024 (expiration) sticker stock is **RED**.*

OVERVIEW

NYVIP3 sticker stock is wrapped in fanfold packets containing 100 blank stickers that can be used for official inspections. There is one additional label in each packet which shows the serial number range of valid stickers in each packet, as well as the Job# and Pack#. There are also three (3) labels marked "Void" in each packet (at the beginning and end) which are not valid for official inspections; they are used to help align the stock in the sticker printer.

There are two (2) types of sticker stock used in NYVIP3:

- Internal stock (below left) – used for inspections performed on a vehicle with a windshield (safety/emissions, LD safety-only, HD safety-only, etc.).
- External stock (below right) – Used for inspections on motorcycles, heavy-duty trailers, and semi-trailers.



NOTE: The sticker stock you need is determined by the type of inspections your station is licensed by DMV to perform (safety, emissions, diesel, motorcycle, trailers, etc.).

Entering Sticker Stock Serial Numbers into NYVIP3 UNIT

Serial numbers on inspection stickers contain ten (10) digits. The first two (2) digits are the sticker/certificate expiration year.

NOTE: If your inspection station has more than one (1) CVIS, you must decide which stock is assigned to each CVIS. Once a book is assigned, it CANNOT be re-assigned.

***DO NOT PHYSICALLY LOAD 2025 STOCK (BLUE) INTO THE CVIS STICKER
PRINTER PRIOR TO JANUARY 1, 2024.***

Prior to physically loading sticker stock into the printer, the serial number range for each packet must be entered into the database, through your Computerized Vehicle Inspection System (CVIS), by authorized personnel (typically a manager or his/her designee). Steps are below:

- a. From Main Menu, select Station/Facility menu (or press 3).
- b. Select the User ID of the authorized person performing this process and enter Password.
- c. Press Enter or select Continue.
- d. Select Inventory Management (or press 2).
- e. Select Add/Remove Sticker Inventory (or press 1). The CVIS will contact the VID and perform a Data File Refresh; once complete, a screen opens to enter new sticker stock.
- f. Ensure the Status window indicates "Load", and the Type window indicates the type of stock you are entering into the system (use the arrow to the right of the window to change selection).
- g. Scan the QR barcode on the label which shows the serial number range or manually enter the first sticker number in the packet (10 digits) in the Starting # field. The system will auto-populate the ending number (each packet contains 100 usable stickers).
- h. Verify the Sticker Type, Expiration year and Starting and Ending numbers are correct. If not, repeat this process. If still incorrect, contact Opus (1-866-OB-D-TEST) for assistance.
- i. If Sticker Type, Expiration year and Starting and Ending numbers are correct, press the Commit button. A dialogue box with the sticker serial number range will open and ask if you want to Continue. Select Yes if the serial number range is correct.
- j. The sticker serial numbers will be entered in the system and the Next Expected Sticker number will appear. Confirm this number matches the first sticker number in the range.
- k. If only entering one type of sticker, press the Close button to continue.
- l. If entering another type of sticker stock, select the correct type from the Sticker Type window and perform the process described above once again.
- m. Once complete, click on the Close button to return to the previous menu.
- n. The Current Stickers window in the upper left of this menu will show the number of stickers (expiration year and type) entered into the system and available for inspections.

Determining which pack of Sticker Stock should be Loaded into Sticker Printer

- a. From Main Menu, select Station/Facility menu (or press 3).
- b. Authorized users need to scan or select their credentials and enter their Password.
- c. Press Enter or select Continue.
- d. Select Inventory Management (or press 2).
- e. Select Add/Remove Sticker Inventory (or press 1).
- f. Select the Type (Internal or External) you are looking to load into the sticker printer.
- g. Top left side of the screen will display what number ranges of stock have been loaded to the unit's inventory.
- h. The book shown with the status of "Active", is the pack of sticker stock to be loaded in the sticker printer.
- i. The Starting number shown for the Active book will also be shown as the "Next Expected Sticker Stock Number"

*****TO PREVENT UNNECESSARY WASTE YOU SHOULD CHECK THIS SCREEN AT THE END OF EACH BOOK TO ENSURE YOU ARE LOADING THE CORRECT NEXT PACK OF STOCK. *****

The screenshot shows the NYVIP (State of New York Vehicle Inspection Program) interface. At the top, it displays the logo, version (23.03.01), and date/time (12/22/2023 18:20:58). The main area is titled "Add new or remove/modify existing sticker stock inventory ranges". It contains a table with the following data:

Starting #	Ending #	Count	Status
2500490201	2500490300	100	Active
2500491901	2500492000	100	Load

Below the table is a form with fields for Status (Load), Type (Internal), Year (2025), Starting #, Ending # (may NOT be modified), and Total. A "Commit" button is also present. The summary section shows:

- Total Sticker Stock Remaining: 200
- Next Expected Sticker Stock Number: 2500490201
- Last Sticker Stock Number Used: 2500490200

Yellow arrows point to the "Active" status in the table and the "Next Expected Sticker Stock Number" field. At the bottom, there are buttons for "Close", "Installation Instructions", and "Help".

Loading Sticker Stock into Printer

DO NOT PHYSICALLY LOAD 2025 STOCK (BLUE) INTO THE CVIS STICKER PRINTER PRIOR TO JANUARY 1, 2024.

NOTE: The printer may eject up to four (4) stickers during the initialization phase, when the print head is lifted and lowered and/or the power to the printer is turned off and on. These stickers will need to be voided and retained for DMV auditing Purposes.

- a. Open the cover using two (2) buttons on front side of cover.
- b. Open the ribbon/print housing by pressing on the top of the two (2) locking tabs on the front of the housing.
- c. Place the pack you are loading into the rear of the printer (below left) with “New York State” facing toward the front of the printer (below middle). From underneath the print housing carefully pull the first sticker toward the front of printer and place between two orange guides (adjust width of guides to fit snugly but not restrict sticker feeding). Pull the first sticker edge to the front of the printer (below right) and close the ribbon/print housing, ensuring both tabs lock securely.



- d. Close printer cover.
- e. Carefully tear off all unused stickers, void any stickers which have serial numbers, and securely store for auditing by DMV.
- f. The printer status light will be solid green when the printer is ready for operation.
- g. The sticker stock ejected during this process will need to be removed from the current sticker stock inventory. Only stickers which have been entered into the system can be properly removed (voided).
- h. From the Main Menu, select Station/Facility menu (or press 3).
- i. Select the User ID of the authorized person performing this process and enter Password.
- j. Press Continue.
- k. Select Inventory Management (or press 2).
- l. Select Add/Remove Sticker Inventory (or press 1). The CVIS will connect to the Vehicle Inspection Database and perform a Data File Refresh. Once complete, a screen will open for managing sticker stock.
- m. Select the reason for voiding the sticker stock from the status pulldown menu.
- n. In the Starting # field, enter the 10-digit serial number of the sticker stock you want to void (the same number will be populated in the Ending Number field).
- o. To void a single sticker, press the Commit button.
- p. To void a range of sticker stock numbers, enter the first number of the range in the Starting Number field and the last number in the range in the Ending Number field; press the Commit button.



Department of Motor Vehicles

NYVIP MESSAGE No. 296

DATE: 12/20/2023

TO: ALL INSPECTION STATIONS

FROM: NYS DMV

SUBJECT: 2024 DMV CERTIFICATE AND OPUS STICKER STOCK RETURN

****PRINT THIS MESSAGE AND DELIVER IT TO THE PERSON WHO MAINTAINS THE INSPECTION CERTIFICATE INVENTORY****

This notice is to provide all information needed for the return of unused 2024 Certificates that you purchased from DMV and any unused "Print on Demand" sticker stock that was supplied to you by OPUS Inspection Inc.

Per Commissioner's Regulation Part 79.10 (c), "Every inspection station owner must return to the department all unused inspection certificates from the previous year" and "Refunds or credits will be allowed for such unused or defective certificates of inspection upon receipt..."

As such, if you have any unused 2024 inspection certificates, or unused 2024 sticker stock, regulation requires that you **return them by March 1, 2024**.

To return the unused certificates/sticker stock:

- Please use secure and durable shipping containers (e.g., cardboard boxes or reinforced envelopes). We recommend you mail all packages with tracking; and
- Include the appropriate completed "Return Form" (enclosed):
 - The form for DMV Certificates to be returned to DMV and/or
 - The form for Print on Demand Sticker Stock to be returned to Opus Inspection Inc.

You may have to use more than one of each form to completely list all your returns.

******DO NOT SEND PRINT ON DEMAND STICKER STOCK TO DMV******

******DO NOT SEND PRE-PRINTED INSPECTION CERTIFICATES TO OPUS******

Once the returned DMV certificates are logged into the DMV system, a Credit Letter will be sent to the Facility. Upon receipt of your credit letter, verify the return certificate numbers indicated and the amount credited. If any discrepancies are found, please contact us immediately.

Questions regarding this procedure for DMV certificates can be directed to DMV at 518-474-2398

Questions regarding this procedure for OPUS "Print on Demand" sticker stock can be directed to OPUS Inspection at 866-623-8378.

Questions regarding DMV sticker credits should be directed to DMV Accounting at 518-474-5913

IMPORTANT: Prior to performing inspections in 2024, you must install your 2025 BLUE sticker stock into the sticker printer. If the individual that would normally perform this will be unavailable, you need to plan ahead to ensure a seamless transition into the new year.



****THIS FORM IS FOR NYVIP3 PRINT ON DEMAND STICKER STOCK RETURNS ONLY****

Please complete all sections of this form and return it and any **unused** sticker stock in a secure, durable shipping container (e.g. reinforced envelope, cardboard box, etc.) to the address below.

Seven (7) Digit DMV Facility Number: _ _ _ _ _

Inspection Station Name: _____

Inspection Station Address: _____

Name of Contact Person: _____
Please Print

Contact Phone Number: _____

Reason for Return (mark with X): Not Used Out of Business Wrong Type Other

STICKER TYPE (Interior/Exterior)	YEAR	BEGINNING NUMBER	ENDING NUMBER	TOTAL # UNUSED STICKERS

Return **only unused** NYVIP3 sticker stock to:
*****IMPORTANT*****
All Damaged and Voided Stock needs to be retained at the facility for DMV Review

Opus Inspection
7 Kripes Road
East Granby, CT 06026
Attn: Sticker Fulfillment

If returning stickers for multiple facilities, please use a separate form and separate shipping containers.



Department of Motor Vehicles

VEHICLE SAFETY & CLEAN AIR

6 EMPIRE STATE PLAZA – ALBANY, NY 12228

****THIS FORM IS FOR DMV PRE-PRINTED CERTIFICATES ONLY****

INSPECTION CERTIFICATE RETURN FORM

Please place this form and any unused certificates in a secure and durable shipping container (e.g., a cardboard box or reinforced envelope) and include the following information with your shipment:

Seven Digit DMV Facility Number: _ _ _ _ _

Inspection Station Name: _____

Inspection Station Address: _____

Name of Contact Person: _____

Contact Phone Number: _____

Reason for Return: _____

<u>CERTIFICATE TYPE</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>BEGINNING NUMBER</u>	<u>ENDING NUMBER</u>	<u>TOTAL CERTIFICATES</u>

United States Postal Service

Bureau of Consumer & Facility Services
Accounting Unit
PO Box 2700
Albany, NY 12220-0700

All Other Carriers

Vehicle Safety, Accounting Unit
6 Empire State Plaza, Room 220
Albany, NY 12228

Important: If you are returning certificates for multiple facilities, please use a separate form and place the certificates in separate shipping containers. **Do not place a new certificate order or requisition in the shipping container with your certificate returns. There are no more DMV certificates available to order.** Once the returns are logged into our system, a Credit Letter will be sent to the Facility. Upon receipt of your credit letter, verify the return certificate numbers indicated and the amount. If any discrepancies are found, please contact DMV immediately.