

**By Jan Rahn**

*Managing Editor*

Gas prices fell slightly prior to the Memorial Day holiday when 34.9 million Americans were projected to travel 50 miles or more from home.

That figure, according to AAA, is an increase of 0.2 percent, or 100,000 travelers, over the number of people traveling one year ago.

Gas prices have jumped significantly over the last year, but the prediction of costs actually going down possibly played a role in luring travelers to hit the road. Gas prices have shot up about 90 cents since the first of the year, the national average was hovering around \$3.81 on May 25. Prices at the pumps in March were in the \$3.60-\$3.62 range.

Analysts predict prices will drop as much as 40-50 cents per gallon by mid June.

If that holds true, costs still won't be within the range they were one year ago when the national average was \$2.78.

According to Fred Rozell, retail pricing director at the Oil Price Information Service, this summer's price decline should be gradual, yet steady.