

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF  
COMMERCE**

**Office of the Secretary**

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ADVANCE REPORT ON RETAIL TRADE, MARCH 1955

Total sales of retail stores in March were \$14.6 billion, the U. S. Department of Commerce announced today. This advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal factors and trading day differences, was 1 percent above February of this year and 8 percent over March a year ago.

The March sales figures are based on the Advance Report on Retail Trade, a monthly survey of the Bureau of the Census conducted in cooperation with a representative cross-section of about 1,800 retail firms which, in total, operate some 37,000 stores in the United States. The firms which are cooperating in the early reporting of sales are part of a larger group which furnishes figures at a later date. Therefore, the advance estimates are preliminary and subject to revision.

The preliminary Census figures are shown in table 1 on the reverse side. The Office of Business Economics noted that, after allowance for seasonal variations, retail sales in March tended upward in most major trades, with motor-vehicle dealers registering the most appreciable sales gain,

(more)

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES REPORT--PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES FOR MARCH 1955

Table 1.--SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUPS  
(NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal factors and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)		
	1955		March 1954
	March	February	
Retail stores, total <sup>1</sup> .....	14,633	12,762	13,539
Food group.....	3,535	3,253	3,340
Grocery stores.....	2,964	2,742	2,799
Eating and drinking places.....	1,017	950	1,004
General merchandise group.....	1,432	1,171	1,330
Department stores <sup>2</sup> .....	776	611	724
Apparel group.....	820	602	715
Furniture and appliance group.....	770	682	690
Lumber, building, hardware group <sup>3</sup> .....	1,045	822	1,006
Automotive group.....	3,297	2,707	2,771
Gasoline service stations.....	943	873	870
Drug and proprietary stores.....	409	394	401

See footnotes below table 2.

Source: Bureau of the Census

Table 2.--SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP  
(ADJUSTED for seasonal factors and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)			Percent change, February 1955 from	
	1955		February 1954	January 1955	February 1954
	February	January			
Retail stores, total <sup>1</sup> .....	14,765	14,864	13,972	-1	+6
Durable goods stores, total <sup>1</sup> .....	5,209	5,143	4,745	+1	+10
Nondurable goods stores, total <sup>1</sup> ....	9,556	9,722	9,228	-2	+4
Food group.....	3,577	3,560	3,396	0	+5
Eating and drinking places.....	1,085	1,092	1,099	-1	-1
General merchandise group.....	1,584	1,654	1,528	-4	+4
Apparel group.....	870	889	878	-2	-1
Furniture and appliance group.....	810	805	779	+1	+4
Lumber, building, hardware group <sup>3</sup> ....	1,043	1,102	1,091	-5	-4
Automotive group.....	2,990	2,844	2,502	+5	+20
Gasoline service stations.....	998	1,023	916	-2	
Drug and proprietary stores.....	412	425	416	-3	-1

Source: Office of Business Economics

<sup>1</sup> Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

<sup>2</sup> Based on preliminary estimates supplied by Federal Reserve Board.

<sup>3</sup> Includes farm equipment dealers..