

COMMERCE

Office of the Secretary

Frederick H. Mueller Washington 25, D. C.
SecretaryFor immediate release
September 10, 1959

G-59-78

ADVANCE REPORT ON RETAIL SALES, AUGUST 1959

Total sales of retail stores in August were \$18.1 billion, the U. S. Department of Commerce announced today. This advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal factors and trading day differences was about 1 percent below July of this year and about 7 percent above August 1958.

The August 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 1,700 retail firms which, in total, operate some 35,000 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. The advance estimates are preliminary and subject to revision, but the revision of the total seldom exceeds 1½ percent.

The preliminary Census figures for August are shown in table 1 of this release. The Office of Business Economics noted that after adjustment for seasonal factors and trading day differences, sales in August were down about 1 percent from the July high point. Small declines occurred in most major lines of trade with advances shown only for food stores and for furniture and appliance stores. Final estimates for July indicate that seasonally adjusted retail sales were 1 percent above June.

(more)

Table 1. SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP

(NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal factors and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)		
	1959		1958
	August	July	August
Retail stores, total ¹	18,097	18,332	17,000
Durable-goods stores, total ¹	6,228	6,419	5,360
Nondurable-goods stores, total ¹	11,869	11,913	11,639
Food group.....	4,353	4,481	4,360
Grocery stores.....	3,871	3,999	3,870
Eating and drinking places.....	1,450	1,457	1,400
General merchandise group.....	1,878	1,701	1,768
Department stores.....	² 1,062	970	1,010
Apparel group.....	945	925	954
Furniture and appliance group.....	931	916	872
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. group..	1,415	1,465	1,279
Automotive group.....	3,429	3,579	2,789
Gasoline service stations.....	1,495	1,516	1,448
Drug and proprietary stores.....	569	579	539

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	Percentage change, Aug. 1959 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, July 1959 from--	
	July 1959	Aug. 1958	1959			1958	June 1959	July 1958
			Aug.	July	June	July		
Retail stores, total ¹	-1.1	+7.4	18,110	18,318	18,189	16,721	+1	+10
Durable-goods stores, total ¹ ...	-1.5	+16.3	6,062	6,155	6,162	5,221	0	+18
Nondurable-goods stores, total ¹ ...	-0.9	+3.5	12,048	12,163	12,027	11,500	+1	+6
Food group.....				4,289	4,300	4,216	0	+2
Eating and drinking places.....				1,325	1,312	1,247	+1	+6
General merchandise group.....				2,041	1,961	1,879	+4	+9
Apparel group.....				1,149	1,100	1,060	+4	+8
Furniture and appliance group.....				929	936	851	-1	+9
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group...				1,282	1,271	1,118	+1	+15
Automotive group.....				3,454	3,476	2,803	-1	+23
Gasoline service stations.....				1,404	1,388	1,306	+1	+8
Drug and proprietary stores.....				592	596	536	-1	+10

Source: Office of Business Economics

¹ Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.² Based on preliminary estimates supplied by Federal Reserve Board.