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The U. S. Department of Commerce announced today that total sales of retail stores in August were estimated at \$21.6 billion. Statistics prepared by the Department's Bureau of the Census show that this advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal variations and trading day differences, but not for price changes, was about 7 percent above August 1963 and 1 percent above the July 1964 level.

The Office of Business Economics noted that after adjustment, sales of nondurable goods stores moved to a new high as increases in general merchandise and apparel stores offset declines in other lines of trade. The durable goods increase of 2 percent was attributable largely to the advance in automotive dealer sales. Based on the full sample, seasonally adjusted sales of all retail stores in July were 1 percent above June 1964.

The August sales figures are based on a monthly survey of the Bureau of the Census conducted in cooperation with a representative cross-section of about 2,500 retail firms which, in total, operate some 48,000 stores in the United States. The firms which are cooperating in the early reporting of sales are part of a larger sample group which furnishes figures at a later date. The advance estimates are subject to revision by the estimates subsequently derived from the full sample.

The revision of the total seldom exceeds 1.5 percent and for the past year has averaged 0.6 percent. For individual kind-of-business groups, revisions have been greater, ranging on the average from 0.8 percent for the food group to 3.4 percent for the lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.

(more)

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES FOR AUGUST 1964

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

(NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal variations or trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)		
	1964		1963
	August <sup>1</sup>	July <sup>2</sup>	August
Retail stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	21,593	22,172	21,018
Durable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	6,867	7,417	6,556
Nondurable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	14,726	14,755	14,462
Food group.....	5,229	5,455	5,318
Grocery stores.....	4,731	4,949	4,828
Eating and drinking places.....	1,832	1,810	1,698
General merchandise group.....	2,626	2,381	2,444
Department stores.....	1,523	1,392	1,408
Apparel group.....	1,198	1,121	1,167
Furniture and appliance group.....	1,074	1,098	992
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. group	1,330	1,508	1,462
Automotive group.....	3,792	4,162	3,529
Gasoline service stations.....	1,805	1,836	1,730
Drug and proprietary stores.....	711	705	680

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 variations and trading day differences<sup>4</sup>)

Kind-of-business group	Percentage change, Aug. 1964 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, July 1964 from--	
	July 1964	Aug. 1963	1964			1963	June 1964	July 1963
			Aug. <sup>1</sup>	July <sup>2</sup>	June	July		
Retail stores, total. <sup>3</sup> .....	+1	+7	22,115	21,964	21,773	20,719	+1	+6
Durable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> ....	+2	+10	7,191	7,076	7,002	6,773	+1	+4
Nondurable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup>	0	+6	14,924	14,888	14,771	13,946	+1	+7
Food group.....				5,234	5,202	5,030	+1	+4
Eating and drinking places.....				1,655	1,623	1,497	+2	+11
General merchandise group.....				2,689	2,620	2,415	+3	+11
Apparel group.....				1,319	1,322	1,214	0	+9
Furniture and appliance group.....				1,106	1,108	979	0	+13
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.....				1,301	1,339	1,262	-3	+3
Automotive group.....				3,992	3,885	3,940	+3	+1
Gasoline service stations.....				1,716	1,683	1,602	+2	+7
Drug and proprietary stores.....				725	721	674	+1	+8

<sup>1</sup> Advance sample estimates.

<sup>2</sup> Preliminary estimates of full sample.

<sup>3</sup> Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

<sup>4</sup> Data adjusted for seasonal variations and trading day differences.