



The U.S. Department of Commerce announced today that total sales of retail stores in May were estimated at \$24.7 billion. Statistics prepared by the Department's Bureau of the Census show that this advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal and holiday variations and trading day differences, but not for price changes, was about 2 percent below the April 1966 level but almost 5 percent above May 1965.

The Office of Business Economics noted that, after adjustment, sales by durable-goods stores in May were down about 6 percent from April, while those at nondurable-goods stores were relatively unchanged from the April rate. The dip in sales of durable-goods stores was due primarily to the decline in automotive sales. Based on the full sample, the total U.S. unadjusted sales estimate for April was \$25.6 billion; slightly less than the \$25.7 billion published earlier in the April Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report released on May 10, 1966. The seasonally adjusted sales for April 1966 as revised were down 2 percent from March.

The May 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 estimates subsequently derived from the full sample.

The revision of the total seldom exceeds 1.5 percent and for the past year has averaged 1.0 percent. For individual kind-of-business groups, revisions have been greater, ranging on the average from 0.9 percent for drug and proprietary stores to 3.9 percent for the lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.

(more)

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES FOR MAY 1966

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)		
	1966		1965
	May ¹	April ²	May
Retail stores, total ³	24,711	25,552	23,820
Durable-goods stores, total ³	8,040	8,439	8,144
Nondurable-goods stores, total ³	16,671	17,113	15,676
Food group.....	5,684	6,103	5,496
Grocery stores.....	5,210	5,578	5,010
Eating and drinking places.....	1,987	1,892	1,831
General merchandise group.....	2,997	3,085	2,809
Department stores.....	1,943	2,016	1,836
Apparel group.....	1,359	1,463	1,256
Furniture and appliance group.....	1,133	1,109	1,044
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. group	1,446	1,485	1,537
Automotive group.....	4,835	5,204	5,006
Gasoline service stations.....	1,986	1,917	1,844
Drug and proprietary stores.....	802	819	751

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)

Kind-of-business group	Percentage change, May 1966 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, April 1966 from--	
	Apr. 1966	May 1965	1966			1965	Mar. 1966	Apr. 1965
			May ¹	Apr. ²	Mar.	Apr.		
Retail stores, total ³	-2	+5	24,424	25,020	25,536	22,849	-2	+10
Durable-goods stores, total ³ ..	-7	-2	7,479	8,001	8,649	7,454	-8	+7
Nondurable-goods stores, total ³ .	0	+8	16,945	17,019	16,887	15,395	+1	+11
Food group.....				6,009	5,917	5,451	+2	+10
Eating and drinking places.....				1,915	1,935	1,746	-1	+10
General merchandise group.....				3,199	3,225	2,839	-1	+13
Apparel group.....				1,395	1,377	1,242	+1	+12
Furniture and appliance group.....				1,215	1,249	1,104	-3	+10
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group....				1,419	1,544	1,287	-8	+10
Automotive group.....				4,638	5,121	4,472	-9	+4
Gasoline service stations.....				1,946	1,907	1,792	+2	+9
Drug and proprietary stores.....				838	816	762	+3	+10

¹Advance sample estimates.

²Preliminary estimates of full sample.

³Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.