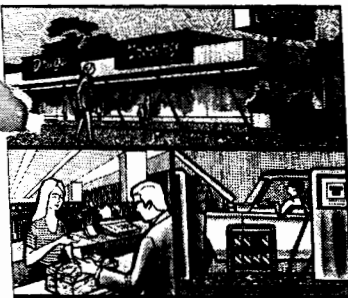


Advance Monthly Retail Sales



March 1981

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 2:30 P.M. EST, MONDAY, APRIL 13, 1981

CB-81-65

SEE "NOTICE OF REVISED RETAIL SALES ESTIMATES" BELOW TABLE 1 ON PAGE 2. THE SALES COMPARISONS IN THIS REPORT ARE BASED ON REVISED DATA.

The Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, announced today that total sales of retail stores in March, after adjusting for seasonal variations and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were estimated at \$86.9 billion. This adjusted figure was little changed from February but 12 percent higher than March a year ago. The adjusted March estimate excluding the automotive group was also little changed from February but 10 percent above March last year.

Adjusted sales of both durable and nondurable goods stores were little changed from February. Compared with sales for March 1980, durable goods stores increased 18 percent while nondurable goods stores increased 9 percent.

The revised estimate of retail sales for February based on preliminary results from a full sample of retail stores was about \$86.9 billion, \$0.2 billion above the February advance estimate published earlier. Seasonally adjusted preliminary sales for February were 2 percent above January and 10 percent over February 1980. Excluding the automotive group, retail sales were unchanged from January and 11 percent above February 1980. For nondurable goods stores, adjusted February sales were unchanged from January 1981 and 11 percent above the same month a year ago. For durable goods stores, adjusted sales for February were about 5 percent above January and 9 percent above February 1980.

The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting of sales by a small subsample of the Bureau's retail survey panel. Because of the early reporting, the advance estimates can differ from the subsequent estimates which are based on monthly reports obtained from the full sample of retail stores. In addition, sampling variability between the subsample used for the advance estimates and the full sample can cause a difference. For most months, such differences have been reduced by modifying the advance estimates prior to publication on the basis of the relationship between the advance and full-sample data for previous months.

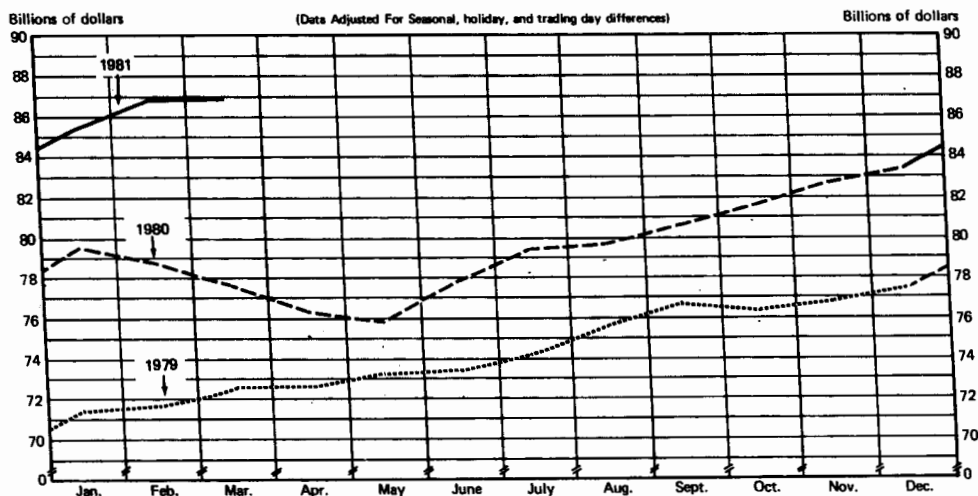
Percentage differences between advance and full-sample preliminary estimates of month-to-month percentage change in seasonally adjusted total retail store sales have ranged from approximately -1.1 percent to +1.6 percent with the absolute average about 0.7 percent for the past 12 months. For individual kind-of-business groups, these differences tend to be higher.

Revised preliminary estimates for February 1981 and final estimates for January 1981 based on the full sample will be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for February (BR-81-2). The complete report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and will present a description of the sample design, the basis and methodology used in developing revisions, and the techniques used in developing the estimates. In addition, the completed report will include approximate measures of sampling variability.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for April is scheduled to be released May 12, 1981, at 2:30 p.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES FOR THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 1979-MARCH 1981



Inquiries concerning this report should be addressed to Mr. Faran Stoetzel, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233. Telephone (301) 763-7288



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The Advance Monthly Retail Sales report, the Monthly Retail Trade report, and the Annual Retail Trade report are available on a single subscription from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, at \$25 per year. Add \$6.25 for each subscription to a foreign address. Postage stamps not acceptable; currency submitted at sender's risk. Remittances from foreign countries must be by international money order or by a draft on a U.S. bank. Single copies of the Advance Monthly Retail Sales report are for sale by Subscriber Services (Publications), Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233, at 70 cents each.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kind of Business for the United States

(Sales in millions of dollars)

1972 SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted ¹				
		1981			1980		1981			1980	
		Mar. ² advance	Feb. prelim.	Jan. final	Mar. ²	Feb.	Mar. ² advance	Feb. prelim.	Jan. final	Mar.	Feb.
	Retail trade, total.....	83,894	74,294	77,361	75,998	70,621	86,943	86,851	85,463	77,603	78,899
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	66,349	59,883	64,010	61,517	56,851	70,410	70,487	70,498	64,086	63,781
	Durable goods stores, total.....	28,319	24,003	23,239	24,160	22,837	28,457	28,506	27,075	24,127	26,139
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	3,984	3,368	3,351	3,532	3,200	4,417	4,607	4,596	3,917	4,214
521,3	Building materials and supply stores.....	(*)	2,333	2,360	2,409	2,219	(*)	3,196	3,246	2,719	2,920
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	553	565	566	500	(*)	759	731	630	654
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	17,545	14,411	13,351	14,481	13,770	16,533	16,364	14,965	13,517	15,118
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous auto- motive dealers.....	(*)	13,022	11,926	13,125	12,549	(*)	14,615	13,355	12,119	13,640
551	Motor vehicle dealers (franchised).....	(*)	11,728	10,726	11,536	11,172	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	1,389	1,425	1,356	1,221	(*)	1,749	1,610	1,398	1,478
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	3,676	3,394	3,616	3,406	3,268	3,886	3,939	4,016	3,568	3,618
571	Furniture and home furnishings stores....	(*)	2,031	2,152	2,092	2,007	(*)	2,332	2,404	2,148	2,196
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores	(*)	978	1,074	973	935	(*)	1,166	1,201	1,056	1,061
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	434	503	495	455	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	55,575	50,291	54,122	51,838	47,784	58,486	58,345	58,388	53,476	52,760
53	General merchandise group stores.....	8,980	7,183	7,279	8,320	6,887	10,312	10,339	9,994	9,369	9,447
531	Department stores.....	7,325	5,792	5,873	6,723	5,532	8,429	8,394	8,078	7,579	7,641
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	571	566	652	553	(*)	790	775	729	734
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.	(*)	820	840	945	802	(*)	1,155	1,141	1,061	1,072
54	Food stores.....	18,653	17,439	19,195	17,550	16,560	19,329	19,071	19,072	17,664	17,161
541	Grocery stores.....	17,191	16,050	17,830	16,325	15,428	17,870	17,541	17,601	16,457	15,954
554	Gasoline service stations.....	8,318	7,621	8,047	7,433	6,841	8,549	8,602	8,497	7,624	7,452
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	3,436	2,890	3,279	3,281	2,723	3,936	3,993	3,945	3,582	3,588
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	477	565	546	479	(*)	658	642	635	631
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	1,139	1,258	1,276	1,057	(*)	1,554	1,549	1,366	1,373
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	569	644	641	547	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	528	614	626	483	(*)	752	728	654	653
58	Eating and drinking places.....	7,546	6,742	7,065	6,913	6,261	7,836	7,876	7,885	7,069	7,035
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	2,742	2,563	2,722	2,447	2,411	2,812	2,804	2,815	2,523	2,519
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,194	1,275	1,273	1,231	(*)	1,403	1,390	1,385	1,383
53,56,57, 594,5961 (pt.)	GAF ³ plus mail-order houses (department stores mdse.).....	(*)	15,882	16,696	17,456	15,169	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57, 594	GAF.....	(*)	15,486	16,308	17,002	14,796	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)

NOTE: Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

*Advance estimates are not available from the subsample panel for these kinds of business.

NA Not available.

¹Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-81-2.)²Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.³GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise. Data for mail-order catalog desks located within department stores of some mail-order firms are included in the department store estimates.

NOTICE OF REVISED RETAIL SALES ESTIMATES - The adjusted and unadjusted monthly estimates of retail sales from January 1977 to February 1981 have been revised utilizing the results from the 1977 Census of Retail Trade and the 1978 and 1979 Retail Trade Surveys. The revised estimates and a description of the methodology are contained in the Revised Monthly Retail Sales and Inventories-January 1971-December 1980 (BR-13-80S).

Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kind of Business for the United States

(Adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences)

1972 SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change					
		Mar. 1981 advance from--		Feb. 1981 preliminary from--		Jan. 1981 through March 1981	
		Feb. 1981 preliminary	Mar. 1980 final	Jan. 1981 final	Feb. 1980 final	Oct. 1980 through Dec. 1980	Jan. 1980 through March 1980
	Retail trade, total.....	0	+12	+2	+10	+5	+10
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0	+10	0	+11	+3	+10
	Durable goods stores, total.....	0	+18	+5	+9	+9	+10
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	-4	+13	0	+9	+8	+8
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+1	+22	+9	+8	+11	+10
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-1	+9	-2	+9	+5	+9
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0	+9	0	+11	+3	+10
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0	+10	+3	+9	+2	+8
531	Department stores.....	0	+11	+4	+10	+2	+9
54	Food stores.....	+1	+9	0	+11	+2	+10
541	Grocery stores.....	+2	+9	0	+10	+1	+9
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-1	+12	+1	+15	+5	+15
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-1	+10	+1	+11	+5	+9
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-1	+11	0	+12	+6	+10
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	0	+11	0	+11	+2	+12

Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales of Group II Companies by Kind of Business for the United States: February 1981

(Sales in millions of dollars)

1972 SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted ¹		
		Feb. 1981 preliminary	Jan. 1981 final	Feb. 1980	Feb. 1981 preliminary	Jan. 1981 final	Feb. 1980
	Retail trade, total.....	23,697	25,080	22,209	29,104	28,474	25,937
53	General merchandise group stores.....	6,276	6,314	5,997	9,088	8,761	8,257
531	Department stores.....	5,499	5,564	5,245	7,970	7,696	7,225
533	Variety stores.....	419	414	405	589	572	543
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	358	336	347	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	9,197	10,281	8,607	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	9,048	10,153	8,497	9,889	9,810	8,760
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	924	979	861	1,384	1,328	1,232
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	382	384	354	570	538	504
566	Shoe stores.....	233	251	219	339	317	302
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	1,229	1,317	1,140	1,393	1,395	1,231

Note: The Group II component of the sample consists of companies which had 11 or more retail establishments according to the most recent update of multi-establishment files and which were selected with certainty (i.e., their sales size exceeded specified dollar volume cutoffs which vary by kind of business).

¹Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-81-2.)

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