

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EST, Thursday, November 14, 1996

**ADVANCE MONTHLY RETAIL SALES
October 1996**

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for October adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$206.6 billion, an increase of 0.2 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from the previous month and up 5.2 percent ($\pm 1.0\%$) from October 1995. Total sales for the August through October period were 4.6 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) above the same period a year ago. The August to September 1996 percent change was revised from +0.7 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) to +0.8 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$).

Durable goods were unchanged from September but were 6.5 percent above last year. Automotive sales were up 6.5 percent from last year.

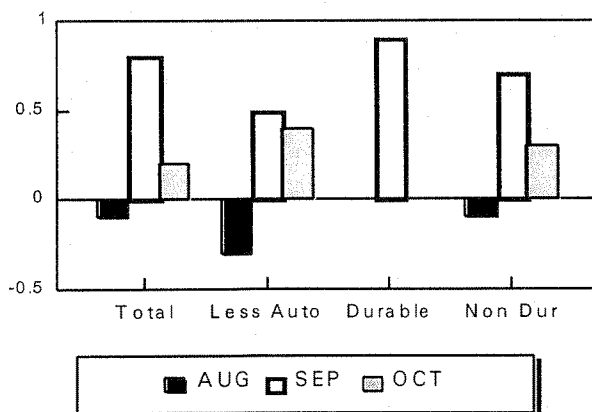
Nondurable goods increased 0.3 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from last month and were up 4.4 percent from last year. General merchandise sales were up 6.2 percent from October 1995.

The advance estimates are based on a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail sales sample. Estimates from the advance and the subsequent full survey can differ because of the earlier reporting in the advance and because of sampling variability present in both surveys.

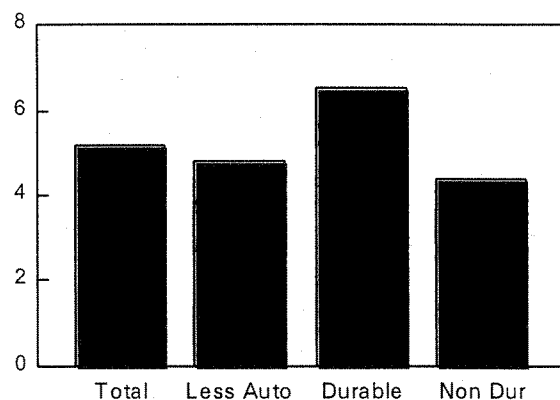
Percent Change in Retail Sales

(Data adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)

From Previous Month



From Previous Year



The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for November is scheduled to be released December 12, 1996 at 8:30 a.m.

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This report is available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's online Economic Bulletin Board. For information call (202) 482-1986. The data are also available on the internet - <http://www.census.gov/svsd/www/advtable.html>.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, By Kind of Business

(In Millions of Dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted ¹				
		1996			1995		1996			1995	
		Oct. ² (a)	Sept. (p)	Aug. (r)	Oct.	Sept.	Oct. ² (a)	Sept. (p)	Aug. (r)	Oct. (r)	Sept. (r)
	Retail trade, total	208,175	197,351	214,001	193,987	192,776	206,577	206,196	204,599	196,289	196,597
	Total (excl. auto group)...	156,523	147,872	160,469	147,165	145,489	155,849	155,305	154,577	148,675	149,369
	Durable goods, total.....	85,348	81,577	88,511	77,791	78,241	84,271	84,300	83,536	79,157	78,759
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers....	12,281	11,467	12,172	11,058	10,838	11,277	11,204	11,161	10,472	10,355
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores....	(*)	8,858	9,474	8,695	8,368	(*)	8,600	8,605	8,058	7,962
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,133	1,232	1,135	1,144	(*)	1,180	1,173	1,137	1,139
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	51,652	49,479	53,532	46,822	47,287	50,728	50,891	50,022	47,614	47,228
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	48,373	46,468	50,209	43,749	44,292	47,658	47,856	46,968	44,642	44,292
551	Motor vehicle (franchised).....	(*)	40,810	43,362	38,347	38,500	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	3,011	3,323	3,073	2,995	(*)	3,035	3,054	2,972	2,936
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	11,344	10,929	11,596	10,857	10,753	11,367	11,485	11,511	11,067	11,065
571	Furniture and home furnishings....	(*)	5,466	5,872	5,567	5,527	(*)	5,583	5,635	5,496	5,510
5722,31,4	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores.....	(*)	4,636	4,855	4,483	4,376	(*)	5,012	4,959	4,684	4,641
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	682	758	691	695	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	122,827	115,774	125,490	116,196	114,535	122,306	121,896	121,063	117,132	117,838
53	General merchandise group stores...	25,807	23,537	26,129	23,969	23,059	26,111	25,928	25,922	24,592	25,001
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts).....	19,977	18,378	20,395	18,617	17,948	20,322	20,240	20,173	19,153	19,466
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) ³	(*)	18,709	20,777	18,939	18,275	(*)	20,570	20,503	19,554	19,765
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	607	691	619	588	(*)	675	691	639	645
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	4,552	5,043	4,733	4,523	(*)	5,013	5,058	4,800	4,890
54	Food stores.....	35,686	34,076	36,800	33,634	33,875	35,885	35,638	35,248	34,463	34,281
541	Grocery stores.....	33,863	32,343	34,914	31,837	32,146	34,067	33,796	33,379	32,653	32,471
554	Gasoline service stations.....	13,308	12,971	14,023	12,389	12,419	13,022	13,010	12,960	12,158	12,296
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	9,524	9,019	10,314	8,880	9,171	9,477	9,510	9,420	9,052	9,279
561	Men's and boy's clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	777	795	817	782	(*)	863	848	838	842
562,3	Women's clothing, specialty stores.....	(*)	2,610	2,718	2,784	2,838	(*)	2,744	2,680	2,809	2,878
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	3,388	3,920	3,207	3,230	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,509	2,004	1,430	1,593	(*)	1,549	1,601	1,541	1,557
58	Eating and drinking places.....	20,050	19,485	21,430	19,766	19,653	19,812	19,822	19,697	19,609	19,653
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	7,482	7,006	7,394	6,922	6,711	7,581	7,509	7,499	7,092	7,102
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,791	2,087	1,828	1,886	(*)	1,913	1,982	1,900	1,903
5961	Total mail order.....	(*)	3,782	3,495	4,330	3,736	(*)	4,071	4,008	3,908	3,937
53,56,57 594	GAF(4).....	(*)	50,506	56,196	50,240	49,672	(*)	54,947	54,986	52,119	52,736

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

NA Not available. (a) Advance estimates. (p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

- (1) Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-11 program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publications. Factors and explanatory material are contained in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-96-09
- (2) Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.
- (3) Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.
- (4) GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise (general merchandise, apparel, furniture, and miscellaneous shopping goods stores).

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

Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, by Kind of Business

(Adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)

SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change					
		Oct. 1996 Advance from --		Sept. 1996 Preliminary from --		Aug. 1996 through Oct. 1996 from --	
		Sept. 1996 (p)	Oct. 1995 (r)	Aug. 1996 (r)	Sept. 1995 (r)	May 1996 through July 1996	Aug. 1995 through Oct. 1995
	Retail trade, total	+0.2	+5.2	+0.8	+4.9	+0.4	+4.6
	Total (excl. automotive group)	+0.4	+4.8	+0.5	+4.0	+0.1	+4.2
	Durable goods, total	0.0	+6.5	+0.9	+7.0	+0.4	+6.1
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers	+0.7	+7.7	+0.4	+8.2	-0.6	+7.9
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-0.3	+6.5	+1.7	+7.8	+1.3	+6.0
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	-0.4	+6.8	+1.9	+8.0	+1.5	+6.1
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-1.0	+2.7	-0.2	+3.8	+0.5	+3.8
	Nondurable goods, total.....	+0.3	+4.4	+0.7	+3.4	+0.4	+3.7
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+0.7	+6.2	0.0	+3.7	+0.8	+4.9
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	+0.4	+6.1	+0.3	+4.0	+0.9	+5.0
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ¹	(NA)	(NA)	+0.3	+4.1	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	+0.7	+4.1	+1.1	+4.0	+1.2	+3.6
541	Grocery stores.....	+0.8	+4.3	+1.2	+4.1	+1.4	+3.7
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+0.1	+7.1	+0.4	+5.8	-2.1	+5.8
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-0.3	+4.7	+1.0	+2.5	-0.2	+3.7
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.1	+1.0	+0.6	+0.9	+0.4	+0.7
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+1.0	+6.9	+0.1	+5.7	+2.2	+6.5

NA Not available. (p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

(1) Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

Reliability of Data

The Advance estimates are based on a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail sales sample. Estimates from the Advance and the subsequent full survey can differ because of the earlier reporting in the Advance and because of sampling variability present in each survey. The margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is a 90% confidence interval. If, for example, the trend estimate is +1.2% and the standard error is 0.9%, then the margin of sampling error is $\pm 1.65 \times 0.9\%$ or $\pm 1.5\%$, and the 90% confidence interval is -0.3% to +2.7%. If the interval contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. For monthly level, the coefficient of variation (CV) is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated value $\pm 1.65 \times CV \times$ (the estimated value).

Estimates of sampling variability are given in Table 3. They are based on two components. The first component is a measure of the average

difference between the Advance and the Preliminary estimates. The second reflects the variability of the Preliminary estimate. Additionally, both the Advance and the full survey are subject to nonsampling errors. Such errors can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, and response errors, among others. Precautionary steps are taken to minimize these errors, but their magnitude is not directly measured.

Preliminary estimates for the current month and final estimates for the previous month based on the full sample are published next month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report. This report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and additional measures of sampling variability. It will also present a description of revisions and the techniques used in developing the estimates, and an explanation of confidence intervals and sampling variability (Appendix B, Reliability of Data).

Table 3. Measures of Variability of and Revision to Advance Estimates for Level and Trend

SIC code	Kind of Business	Level of sales: Estimated CV ¹ for Current Mo. (x 100)	Trend (percent change): Estimated standard error ¹ for			Revision for month- to-month change ²	
			Current Mo. to Previous Mo.	Current Q tr. to Previous Q tr.	Current Mo. to Current Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	Retail trade, total.....	1.0	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.2
	Total (excl. auto)	0.9	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.2
	Durable goods, total	1.5	0.8	0.6	1.1	0.2	0.4
52	Building materials, group stores	3.5	2.2	1.2	2.8	0.5	1.5
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers	2.0	1.4	0.9	1.8	0.3	0.9
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers	2.2	1.6	1.0	2.0	0.3	1.0
57	Furniture, home furn, and equipment stores	2.0	1.0	0.7	1.5	0.1	0.2
	Nondurable goods, total	1.1	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.3
53	General merch. group, total.....	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.5	-0.1	0.2
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.) ...	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.3	-0.2	0.2
54	Food stores	1.2	0.2	0.3	0.7	0.0	0.2
541	Grocery stores	1.2	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.0	0.2
554	Gasoline service stations	2.2	1.3	1.4	1.3	0.1	0.8
56	Apparel and accessory stores	1.6	0.8	0.6	1.2	0.2	0.8
58	Eating and drinking places	4.7	1.1	1.2	2.3	-0.2	0.9
591	Drug and proprietary stores	1.6	0.5	0.4	1.0	0.3	0.5

(1) The coefficients of variation (CVs) for level of sales and the standard errors for trends are medians based on estimates for the preceding 12 months.

(2) These columns measure the difference between the Advance/Preliminary ratio and the Preliminary/Final ratio estimates -- i.e., the difference between estimates of trend for the same pair of data months. The revisions for Retail trade total are based on the latest 12 months of data while all other kinds of business are based on the preceding 12 months.

