

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. ET, Thursday, January 13, 2000

**ADVANCE MONTHLY RETAIL SALES
DECEMBER 1999**

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for December adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$259.6 billion, an increase of 1.2 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from the previous month and up 9.7 percent ($\pm 0.9\%$) from December 1998. Total sales for the 12 months of 1999 were \$3.0 trillion, up 8.9 percent ($\pm 0.3\%$) from the 1998 total. The October to November 1999 percent change was revised from +0.9 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) to +1.1 percent ($\pm 0.2\%$).

Durable goods increased 1.1 percent ($\pm 1.4\%$) from November and were 10.2 percent above last year. Automotive sales were up 10.9 percent from December a year ago, while building materials sales were up 8.2 percent from last year.

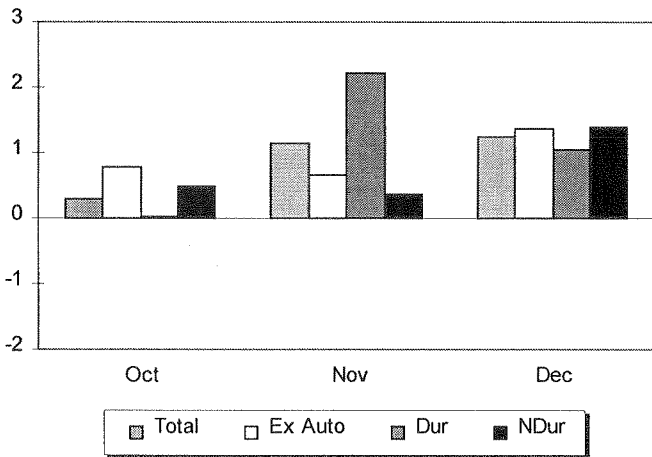
Nondurable goods increased 1.4 percent ($\pm 0.6\%$) from November and were up 9.4 percent from December 1998. Gasoline sales were up 21.9 percent from December a year ago, while drug store sales were up 11.7 percent from last year.

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.

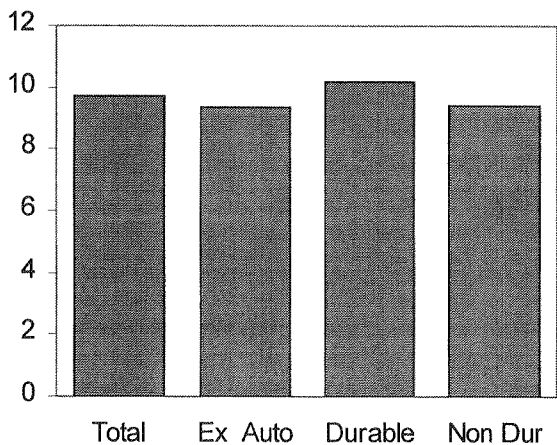
Percent Change in Retail Sales

(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 January is scheduled to be released February 11, 2000 at 8:30 a.m.

Address inquiries concerning this report to Scott Scheleur, Service Sector Statistics Division, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC 20233. Telephone: 301-457-2713 or 301-457-2666.

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 and Annual Percent Change)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted							Adjusted ¹				
		12 month total		1999			1998		1999			1998	
		1999	Change from 1998	Dec. ² (a)	Nov. (p)	Oct. (r)	Dec.	Nov.	Dec. ² (a)	Nov. (p)	Oct. (r)	Dec. (r)	Nov. (r)
	Retail trade, total	2,991,684	8.9	310,502	257,653	250,825	281,619	232,852	259,645	256,442	253,548	236,609	234,462
	Total (excl. auto dealers).....	2,245,560	8.1	251,346	198,814	189,711	228,459	181,899	194,674	192,050	190,767	178,012	176,961
	Durable goods, total	1,256,285	10.4	120,082	104,238	102,830	108,445	91,559	109,368	108,229	105,870	99,252	97,571
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.	182,679	10.5	14,281	15,176	15,510	13,347	13,171	15,798	15,768	15,188	14,596	14,244
521.3	Building mat. and supply stores..	(*)	(*)	(*)	11,857	12,201	9,899	10,125	(*)	12,111	11,720	11,098	10,817
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,270	1,280	1,337	1,200	(*)	1,288	1,270	1,271	1,237
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	746,124	11.6	59,156	58,839	61,114	53,160	50,953	64,971	64,392	62,781	58,597	57,501
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	707,464	12.0	56,085	55,530	57,803	50,164	47,965	61,700	61,022	59,591	55,430	54,382
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	(*)	(*)	48,175	49,699	44,131	42,148	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,309	3,311	2,996	2,988	(*)	3,370	3,190	3,167	3,119
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	163,649	7.6	19,965	15,091	13,399	18,520	13,978	14,020	13,834	13,920	13,107	12,973
571	Furniture and home furnishings.	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,221	6,587	7,516	6,618	(*)	6,511	6,561	6,151	6,066
5722,31,4	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,769	5,839	9,158	6,354	(*)	6,244	6,306	5,970	5,916
5722	Household appliance stores.	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,005	952	1,082	922	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total	1,735,399	7.9	190,420	153,415	147,995	173,174	141,293	150,277	148,213	147,678	137,357	136,891
53	General merchandise group stores.	380,723	8.3	54,060	36,814	31,341	49,791	34,787	32,516	32,319	32,166	30,152	30,204
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts)..	297,488	7.5	43,280	28,911	24,257	40,127	27,587	25,325	25,162	25,033	23,744	23,680
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) ³ ..	(*)	(*)	(*)	29,469	24,721	40,890	28,143	(*)	25,581	25,537	24,248	24,166
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,380	1,243	1,697	1,152	(*)	1,227	1,227	1,010	1,031
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,523	5,841	7,967	6,048	(*)	5,930	5,906	5,398	5,493
54	Food stores.....	461,123	5.2	43,855	38,618	38,880	40,655	36,396	39,980	39,214	38,923	37,366	37,077
541	Grocery stores.....	436,885	5.4	41,163	36,589	36,905	38,129	34,501	37,903	37,146	36,942	35,403	35,133
554	Gasoline service stations.....	179,369	10.7	16,367	15,543	16,219	13,301	12,844	16,367	15,974	15,823	13,422	13,351
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	134,946	6.3	18,095	12,394	11,232	17,154	11,870	11,225	11,158	11,265	10,723	10,756
561	Men's and boy's clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,075	961	1,574	1,048	(*)	950	942	900	918
562.3	Women's clothing, specialty stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,167	2,912	4,775	3,063	(*)	2,954	2,978	2,938	2,892
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,320	4,549	7,281	5,068	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,671	1,629	2,328	1,708	(*)	1,719	1,744	1,791	1,774
58	Eating and drinking places.....	285,727	7.2	24,829	23,446	25,162	23,095	21,742	24,755	24,654	24,524	23,164	22,983
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	118,806	11.3	12,583	9,955	9,884	11,234	8,936	10,331	10,158	10,137	9,246	9,251
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,380	2,322	3,037	2,149	(*)	2,356	2,336	2,233	2,162
5961	Total mail order.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	8,776	7,782	9,101	7,551	(*)	7,182	7,321	6,294	6,308
53,56,57,594	GAF ⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	74,158	63,772	103,202	69,645	(*)	66,122	66,125	62,216	62,131

* 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 publication. Factors and explanatory material are contained in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-99-11.
- (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 ¹					
		Dec. 1999 Advance from --		Nov. 1999 Preliminary from --		Oct. 1999 through Dec. 1999 from --	
		Nov. 1999 (p)	Dec. 1998 (r)	Oct. 1999 (r)	Nov. 1998 (r)	July 1999 through Sept. 1999	Oct. 1998 through Dec. 1998
	Retail trade, total	1.2	9.7	1.1	9.4	1.9	9.3
	Total (excl. automotive dealers)	1.4	9.4	0.7	8.5	2.4	8.8
	Durable goods, total	1.1	10.2	2.2	10.9	1.9	10.1
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers	0.2	8.2	3.8	10.7	3.6	9.0
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	0.9	10.9	2.6	12.0	0.5	10.9
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	1.1	11.3	2.4	12.2	0.4	11.2
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	1.3	7.0	-0.6	6.6	1.1	7.2
	Nondurable goods, total.....	1.4	9.4	0.4	8.3	2.0	8.8
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.6	7.8	0.5	7.0	1.3	7.5
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	0.6	6.7	0.5	6.3	1.0	6.6
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ²	(NA)	(NA)	0.2	5.9	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	2.0	7.0	0.7	5.8	2.3	6.0
541	Grocery stores.....	2.0	7.1	0.6	5.7	2.3	6.2
554	Gasoline service stations.....	2.5	21.9	1.0	19.6	4.1	19.9
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	0.6	4.7	-0.9	3.7	-0.9	4.8
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.4	6.9	0.5	7.3	3.5	7.4
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	1.7	11.7	0.2	9.8	2.4	11.0

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

(1) Percent change rounded to nearest tenth.

(2) 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 Qtr. to Previous Qtr.	Current Mo. to Current Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	Retail trade, total	7.0	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.2	0.3
	Total (excl. auto dealers)	1.0	0.6	0.3	0.7	0.2	0.3
	Durable goods, total	1.4	0.9	0.6	1.1	0.2	0.5
52	Building materials group stores	3.5	1.9	1.1	2.7	0.3	1.3
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.6	1.2	0.8	1.5	0.2	0.6
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	1.8	1.3	0.9	1.6	0.4	0.7
57	Furniture, home furn, and equipment stores	2.0	1.4	0.7	1.8	0.1	0.5
	Nondurable goods, total	1.1	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.2
53	General merch. group, total.....	0.6	0.6	0.2	0.6	0.1	0.3
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)..	0.4	0.5	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.3
54	Food stores.....	1.2	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.2	0.3
541	Grocery stores	1.2	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.2	0.4
554	Gasoline service stations	2.2	1.2	1.4	1.4	0.6	0.9
56	Apparel and accessory stores	1.9	1.5	0.6	1.6	-0.2	0.8
58	Eating and drinking places	5.1	1.0	0.9	2.2	0.4	0.4
591	Drug and proprietary stores	1.7	0.8	0.4	1.2	0.0	0.4



- (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 are based on the latest 12 months of data.