

**Special Notice:** On June 13 with the release of the advance monthly retail sales estimates for May 2001, we will begin using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) in place of the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system. In addition, we will restate the unadjusted and adjusted data series on a NAICS basis beginning with January 1992 through April 2001. These data series will also be revised based on the results of the 1999 Annual Retail Trade Survey, which was conducted on a NAICS basis, and will be released on June 1, 2001. For further information on NAICS, including publication stubs for the new release, see our web site at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/naics.html>.

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. ET, Tuesday, March 13, 2001.

**ADVANCE MONTHLY RETAIL SALES  
FEBRUARY 2001**

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for February, adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$274.5 billion, a decrease of 0.2 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) from the previous month, but up 2.7 percent ( $\pm 0.9\%$ ) from February 2000. Total sales for the December through February period were up 3.5 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) from the same period a year ago. The December 2000 to January 2001 percent change was revised from +0.7 percent ( $\pm 0.4\%$ ) to +1.3 percent ( $\pm 0.4\%$ ).

Durable goods were unchanged ( $\pm 1.4\%$ ) from January, but were 1.1 percent ( $\pm 1.8\%$ ) below last year. Building materials sales were up 2.9 percent ( $\pm 4.5\%$ ) from February a year ago.

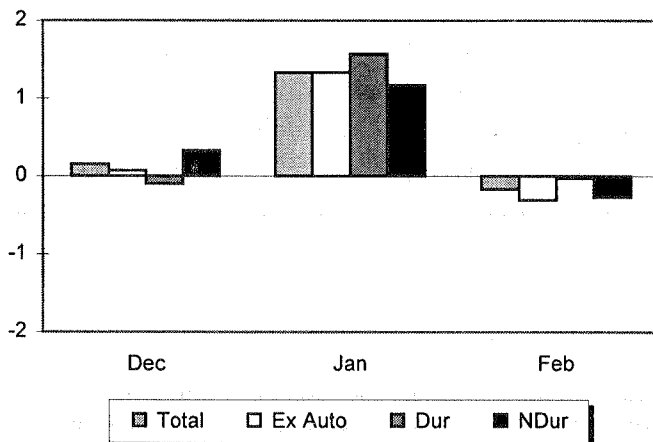
Nondurable goods decreased 0.3 percent ( $\pm 0.6\%$ ) from January, but were up 5.5 percent from February 2000. Drug store sales were up 13.3 percent from last year. Apparel sales were up 5.8 percent from February a year ago.

*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.*

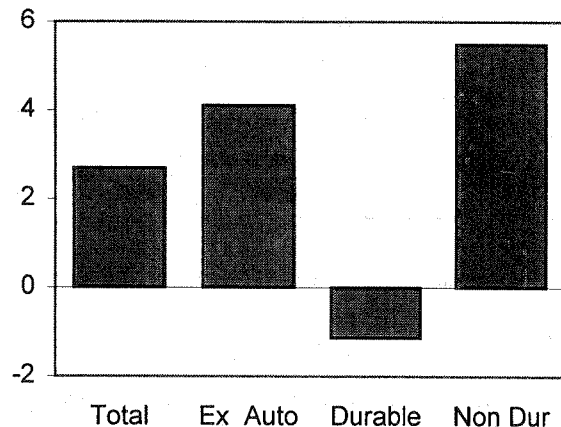
**Percent Change in Retail Sales**

(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 March is scheduled to be released April 12, 2001 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 <sup>1</sup>				
		2 month total		2001		2000			2001		2000		
		2001	Change from 2000	Feb. <sup>2</sup> (a)	Jan. (p)	Dec. (r)	Feb.	Jan.	Feb. <sup>2</sup> (a)	Jan. (p)	Dec. (r)	Feb. (r)	Jan. (r)
	<b>Retail trade, total.....</b>	<b>486,906</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>242,650</b>	<b>244,256</b>	<b>317,333</b>	<b>244,951</b>	<b>229,871</b>	<b>274,493</b>	<b>274,963</b>	<b>271,347</b>	<b>267,313</b>	<b>263,234</b>
	Total (excl. auto dealers).....	362,765	3.7	179,428	183,337	259,765	178,248	171,579	206,978	207,612	204,891	198,807	196,013
	<b>Durable goods, total.....</b>	<b>198,988</b>	<b>-0.7</b>	<b>100,287</b>	<b>98,701</b>	<b>116,375</b>	<b>105,562</b>	<b>94,785</b>	<b>111,899</b>	<b>111,935</b>	<b>110,202</b>	<b>113,175</b>	<b>111,332</b>
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.	23,873	1.7	11,978	11,895	13,496	12,113	11,364	15,658	15,407	15,331	15,223	15,319
521.3	Building mat. and supply stores..	(*)	(*)	(*)	9,775	10,577	9,790	9,185	(*)	12,296	12,214	11,998	12,086
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,074	1,343	1,003	1,048	(*)	1,299	1,295	1,286	1,278
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	124,141	-0.7	63,222	60,919	57,568	66,703	58,292	67,515	67,351	66,456	68,506	67,221
551.2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	118,041	-0.7	60,178	57,863	54,246	63,595	55,309	63,951	63,866	62,857	65,026	63,720
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)...	(*)	(*)	(*)	49,254	46,460	54,306	47,625	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,056	3,322	3,108	2,983	(*)	3,485	3,599	3,480	3,501
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	26,260	-1.6	12,703	13,557	19,755	13,436	13,238	14,225	14,498	14,066	14,406	14,273
571	Furniture and home furnishings	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,442	7,931	6,382	6,084	(*)	7,103	6,620	6,914	6,798
572.31,4	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,167	9,984	6,120	6,241	(*)	6,332	6,425	6,463	6,447
5722	Household appliance stores.	(*)	(*)	(*)	972	1,217	892	887	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	<b>Nondurable goods, total.....</b>	<b>287,918</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>142,363</b>	<b>145,555</b>	<b>200,958</b>	<b>139,389</b>	<b>135,086</b>	<b>162,594</b>	<b>163,028</b>	<b>161,145</b>	<b>154,138</b>	<b>151,902</b>
53	General merchandise group stores.	54,307	2.9	27,976	26,331	55,451	27,308	25,494	34,628	34,534	34,030	33,105	33,095
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts)..	41,211	1.0	21,360	19,851	44,217	21,056	19,755	26,733	26,610	26,430	25,804	26,028
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) <sup>3</sup> ..	(*)	(*)	(*)	20,187	44,996	21,456	20,124	(*)	26,817	26,450	26,172	26,277
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,149	2,311	1,142	946	(*)	1,555	1,442	1,296	1,285
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,331	8,923	5,110	4,793	(*)	6,369	6,158	6,005	5,782
54	Food stores.....	76,653	4.1	37,281	39,372	44,986	36,506	37,157	41,389	41,281	41,164	39,253	38,774
541	Grocery stores.....	72,825	4.2	35,402	37,423	42,220	34,574	35,343	39,292	39,064	39,056	37,176	36,701
554	Gasoline service stations.....	32,740	4.8	15,907	16,833	17,656	15,971	15,272	18,221	18,257	18,053	17,726	16,746
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	18,239	5.4	9,487	8,752	19,166	9,147	8,163	12,321	12,289	12,143	11,647	11,354
561	Men's and boy's clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	776	1,622	718	744	(*)	969	954	926	907
562.3	Women's clothing, accessory stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,489	5,296	2,513	2,169	(*)	3,433	3,341	3,161	2,971
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,296	8,352	3,499	3,158	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,330	2,366	1,513	1,330	(*)	1,827	1,819	1,812	1,819
58	Eating and drinking places.....	48,074	3.3	23,843	24,231	26,006	23,643	22,894	26,201	26,598	25,825	25,099	24,966
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	22,708	12.3	11,140	11,568	13,525	10,152	10,076	11,788	11,697	11,404	10,402	10,388
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,245	3,590	2,101	2,043	(*)	2,632	2,579	2,432	2,387
5961	Total mail order.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	8,613	12,900	7,690	7,724	(*)	9,261	9,382	8,563	8,621
53,56,57, 594	GAF <sup>4</sup> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	56,570	114,222	57,756	53,969	(*)	71,160	69,642	68,422	67,676

\* 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-12-ARIMA 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-01-01.

(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 <sup>1</sup>					
		Feb. 2001 Advance from --		Jan. 2001 Preliminary from --		Dec. 2000 through Feb. 2001 from --	
		Jan. 2001 (p)	Feb. 2000 (r)	Dec. 2000 (r)	Jan. 2000 (r)	Sept. 2000 through Nov. 2000	Dec. 1999 through Feb. 2000
	<b>Retail trade, total .....</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>3.5</b>
	Total (excl. automotive dealers) .....	-0.3	4.1	1.3	5.9	0.7	4.7
	<b>Durable goods, total .....</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>-1.1</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>-0.2</b>
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers .....	1.6	2.9	0.5	0.6	1.9	0.7
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	0.2	-1.4	1.3	0.2	0.2	-0.1
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	0.1	-1.7	1.6	0.2	0.1	-0.2
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-1.9	-1.3	3.1	1.6	-1.4	0.0
	<b>Nondurable goods, total.....</b>	<b>-0.3</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>6.2</b>
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.3	4.6	1.5	4.3	0.4	4.2
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	0.5	3.6	0.7	2.2	0.0	3.1
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) <sup>2</sup> .....	(NA)	(NA)	1.4	2.1	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	0.3	5.4	0.3	6.5	1.4	4.7
541	Grocery stores.....	0.6	5.7	0.0	6.4	1.5	4.8
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-0.2	2.8	1.1	9.0	-1.9	6.4
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	0.3	5.8	1.2	8.2	1.4	7.1
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-1.5	4.4	3.0	6.5	1.7	5.0
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	0.8	13.3	2.6	12.6	2.2	11.4

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 <sup>1</sup> for Current Mo. (x 100)	Trend (percent change): Estimated standard error <sup>1</sup> for			Revision for month- to-month change <sup>2</sup>	
			Current Mo. to Previous Mo.	Current Qtr. to Previous Qtr.	Current Mo. to Current Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	<b>Retail trade, total.....</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.3</b>
	Total (excl. auto dealers) .....	1.0	0.6	0.3	0.7	0.1	0.3
	<b>Durable goods, total .....</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.4</b>
52	Building materials group stores .....	3.5	1.9	1.1	2.7	0.0	1.1
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.6	1.2	0.8	1.5	0.2	0.4
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	1.8	1.3	0.9	1.6	0.2	0.4
57	Furniture, home furn, and equipment stores .....	2.0	1.4	0.7	1.8	0.0	0.9
	<b>Nondurable goods, total.....</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.2</b>
53	General merch. group, total.....	0.6	0.6	0.2	0.6	0.0	0.2
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)..	0.4	0.5	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.1
54	Food stores.....	1.2	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.3
541	Grocery stores .....	1.2	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.3
554	Gasoline service stations .....	2.2	1.2	1.4	1.4	0.1	1.0
56	Apparel and accessory stores .....	1.9	1.5	0.6	1.6	0.2	0.7
58	Eating and drinking places .....	5.1	1.0	0.9	2.2	0.3	0.4
591	Drug and proprietary stores .....	1.7	0.8	0.4	1.2	0.2	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 are based on the latest 12 months of data.