

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, Friday, May 11, 2001.

ADVANCE MONTHLY RETAIL SALES APRIL 2001

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for April, adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$275.5 billion, an increase of 0.8 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from the previous month and up 3.1 percent ($\pm 0.9\%$) from April 2000. Total sales for the February through April period were up 2.4 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from the same period a year ago. The February to March 2001 percent change was revised from -0.2 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) to -0.4 percent ($\pm 0.3\%$).

Durable goods increased 0.7 percent ($\pm 1.4\%$) from March and were 1.9 percent ($\pm 1.8\%$) above last year. Automotive sales were up 2.7 percent ($\pm 2.5\%$) from April a year ago.

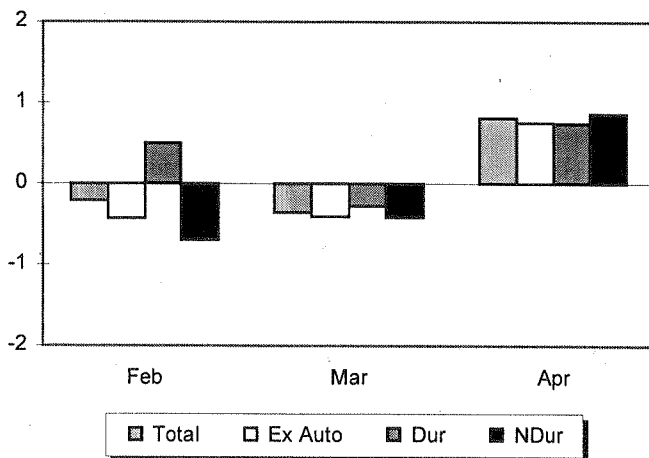
Nondurable goods increased 0.9 percent ($\pm 0.6\%$) from March and were up 4.0 percent from April 2000. Drug store sales were up 10.1 percent from last year, while apparel sales were up 4.7 percent from April a year ago.

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.

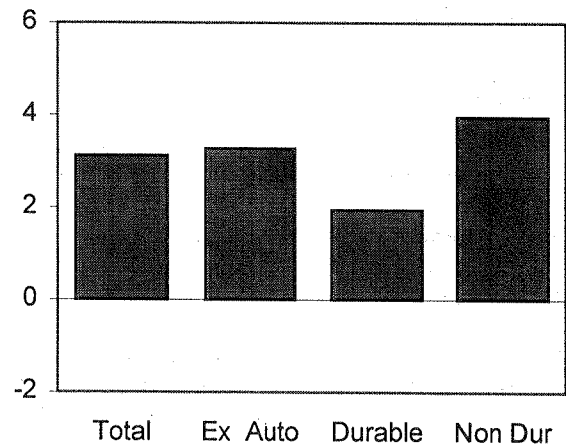
Percent Change in Retail Sales

(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 May is scheduled to be released June 13, 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 ¹				
		4 month total		2001			2000		2001			2000	
		2001	Change from 2000	Apr. ² (a)	Mar. (p)	Feb. (r)	Apr.	Mar.	Apr. ² (a)	Mar. (p)	Feb. (r)	Apr. (r)	Mar. (r)
	Retail trade, total.....	1,033,439	2.5	268,212	276,672	243,611	260,159	273,112	275,549	273,337	274,329	267,221	269,748
	Total (excl. auto dealers).....	765,874	3.2	199,721	202,172	180,016	194,062	198,200	207,423	205,889	206,741	200,862	202,395
	Durable goods, total.....	428,711	0.4	111,378	117,260	101,310	108,498	118,242	113,005	112,176	112,494	110,859	112,739
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.	55,571	0.2	16,907	14,909	11,864	16,275	15,698	15,698	15,462	15,620	15,316	16,187
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores..	(*)	(*)	(*)	12,211	9,752	12,566	12,481	(*)	12,563	12,519	12,106	12,775
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,247	1,050	1,373	1,270	(*)	1,327	1,380	1,297	1,355
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	267,565	0.6	68,491	74,500	63,595	66,097	74,912	68,126	67,448	67,588	66,359	67,353
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	254,214	0.5	64,880	70,830	60,560	62,705	71,322	64,493	63,868	64,017	62,957	63,851
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	(*)	(*)	59,523	51,468	52,786	60,418	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,670	3,035	3,392	3,590	(*)	3,580	3,571	3,402	3,502
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	53,146	-1.9	12,658	14,018	12,911	13,200	14,285	14,111	14,181	14,344	14,562	14,516
571	Furniture and home furnishings.	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,857	6,226	6,516	6,952	(*)	6,864	6,988	6,991	6,980
5722,31,4	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,073	5,732	5,695	6,279	(*)	6,222	6,271	6,457	6,453
5722	Household appliance stores.	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,025	911	928	975	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	604,728	4.1	156,834	159,412	142,301	151,661	154,870	162,544	161,161	161,835	156,362	157,009
53	General merchandise group stores.	117,962	2.1	32,451	31,155	27,577	31,492	31,200	34,663	33,964	34,192	33,398	33,853
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts)..	90,392	0.9	25,061	23,845	21,078	24,629	24,124	26,717	26,232	26,414	26,007	26,394
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) ³ ..	(*)	(*)	(*)	24,256	21,437	25,109	24,576	(*)	26,299	26,765	26,493	26,601
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,417	1,287	1,249	1,268	(*)	1,470	1,491	1,322	1,326
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,893	5,212	5,614	5,808	(*)	6,262	6,287	6,069	6,133
54	Food stores.....	159,054	3.8	40,402	41,729	37,504	39,759	39,770	41,455	41,428	41,402	40,280	39,747
541	Grocery stores.....	150,613	3.7	38,117	39,540	35,498	37,614	37,747	39,215	39,187	39,181	38,187	37,672
554	Gasoline service stations.....	67,896	1.6	17,821	17,352	15,871	17,259	18,313	18,203	17,760	18,138	17,848	18,611
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	41,914	4.4	12,050	11,553	9,527	11,546	11,291	12,308	12,118	12,342	11,761	11,988
561	Men's and boy's clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	849	744	895	833	(*)	965	973	935	953
562,3	Women's clothing, accessory stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,295	2,726	3,295	3,223	(*)	3,383	3,495	3,230	3,340
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,379	3,601	4,361	4,299	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,784	1,457	1,912	1,812	(*)	1,780	1,797	1,817	1,832
58	Eating and drinking places.....	101,554	3.6	25,870	27,376	24,070	25,547	25,962	26,079	26,298	26,277	25,420	25,329
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	46,415	11.6	11,646	12,056	11,131	10,505	10,851	11,799	11,866	11,779	10,719	10,607
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,485	2,193	2,263	2,327	(*)	2,602	2,608	2,436	2,462
5961	Total mail order.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	8,872	7,613	8,038	8,953	(*)	9,007	8,956	8,901	8,829
53,56,57, 594	GAF ⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	65,529	58,280	64,091	64,722	(*)	70,370	70,908	68,971	69,586

* 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-01-03.

(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					
		Apr. 2001 Advance from --		Mar. 2001 Preliminary from --		Feb. 2001 through Apr. 2001 from --	
		Mar. 2001 (p)	Apr. 2000 (r)	Feb. 2001 (r)	Mar. 2000 (r)	Nov. 2000 through Jan. 2001	Feb. 2000 through Apr. 2000
	Retail trade, total	0.8	3.1	-0.4	1.3	0.7	2.4
	Total (excl. automotive dealers)	0.7	3.3	-0.4	1.7	0.4	3.0
	Durable goods, total	0.7	1.9	-0.3	-0.5	1.6	0.4
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers	1.5	2.5	-1.0	-4.5	1.8	0.2
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.0	2.7	-0.2	0.1	1.6	0.6
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	1.0	2.4	-0.2	0.0	1.6	0.5
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-0.5	-3.1	-1.1	-2.3	-0.6	-2.0
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.9	4.0	-0.4	2.6	0.2	3.9
53	General merchandise group stores.....	2.1	3.8	-0.7	0.3	0.0	2.4
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	1.8	2.7	-0.7	-0.6	-0.5	1.4
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ²	(NA)	(NA)	-1.7	-1.1	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	0.1	2.9	0.1	4.2	0.9	4.2
541	Grocery stores.....	0.1	2.7	0.0	4.0	0.7	4.1
554	Gasoline service stations.....	2.5	2.0	-2.1	-4.6	-1.2	0.1
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.6	4.7	-1.8	1.1	0.7	3.9
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.8	2.6	0.1	3.8	0.6	3.8
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	-0.6	10.1	0.7	11.9	2.6	11.6

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	1.0	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.2
	Total (excl. auto dealers)	1.0	0.6	0.3	0.7	0.0	0.2
	Durable goods, total	1.4	0.9	0.6	1.1	0.1	0.4
52	Building materials group stores	3.5	1.9	1.1	2.7	-0.1	0.9
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	-0.1	0.8
	Nondurable goods, total	1.1	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
53	General merch. group, total.....	0.6	0.6	0.2	0.6	-0.1	0.4
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)...	0.4	0.5	0.1	0.4	-0.2	0.3
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	-0.3	0.7
56	Apparel and accessory stores	1.9	1.5	0.6	1.6	0.0	0.6
58	Eating and drinking places	5.1	1.0	0.9	2.2	0.2	0.5
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.