

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. ET, Thursday, December 12, 2002

**ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES
NOVEMBER 2002**

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for November, adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$302.5 billion, up 0.4 percent ($\pm 1.0\%$) from the previous month and up 2.1 percent ($\pm 1.1\%$) from November 2001. Total sales for the September through November 2002 period were up 2.1 percent ($\pm 0.6\%$) from the same period a year ago. The September to October 2002 percent change was revised from virtually unchanged ($\pm 1.0\%$) to +0.1 percent ($\pm 0.2\%$).

Retail trade sales were up 0.4 percent ($\pm 1.2\%$) from October and were 1.8 percent ($\pm 1.2\%$) above last year. Gasoline stations sales were up 11.8 percent ($\pm 2.1\%$) from last year and sales of nonstore retailers were up 8.7 percent ($\pm 7.1\%$) from November 2001.

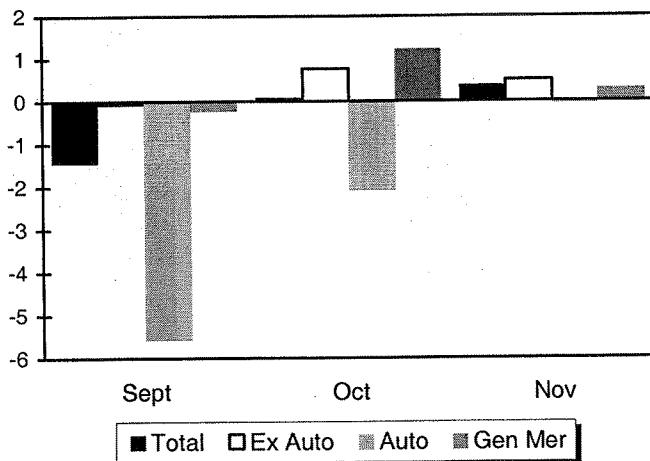
The scheduled release dates for 2003 are as follows: January 14, February 13, March 13, April 11, May 14, June 12, July 15, August 13, September 12, October 15, November 14, December 11.

The advance estimates are based on a subsample of the Bureau's full retail and food services sample. A stratified random sampling method is used to select approximately 5,000 retail and food services firms whose sales are then weighted and benchmarked to represent the complete universe of over three million retail and food services firms. Responding firms account for approximately 65% of the MARTS dollar volume estimate. For an explanation of the measures of sampling variability included in this report, please see the Reliability of Estimates section on the last page of this publication.

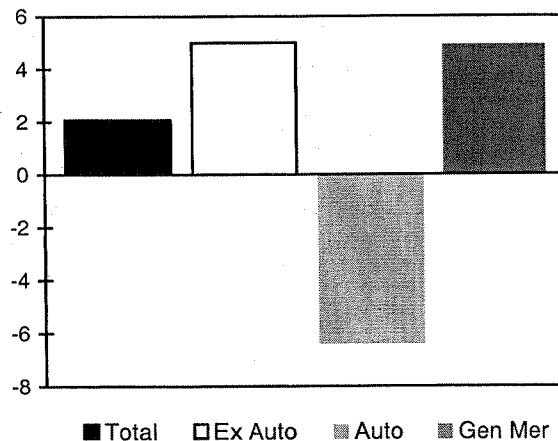
Percent Change in Retail and Food Services Sales

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

From Previous Month



From Previous Year



The Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services for December is scheduled to be released January 14, 2003 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: 301-763-2713.

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/retail>.

Table 1. Estimated Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services, by Kind of Business

(In Millions of Dollars and Annual Percent Change)

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted							Adjusted ¹				
		11 Month Total		2002			2001		2002			2001	
		2002	% Chg. 2001	Nov. ² (a)	Oct. (p)	Sept. (r)	Nov.	Oct.	Nov. ² (a)	Oct. (p)	Sept. (r)	Nov. (r)	Oct. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	3,251,836	3.2	301,767	300,307	285,453	297,547	302,176	302,529	301,421	301,181	296,406	304,043
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	2,448,474	3.8	238,136	229,075	215,539	228,585	218,353	231,373	230,227	228,464	220,365	220,258
	Retail	2,943,144	3.0	274,435	272,071	257,995	271,630	275,416	274,467	273,437	273,048	269,632	277,416
	GAFO ³	(*)	(*)	(*)	77,042	71,546	87,162	72,591	(*)	80,764	79,404	77,592	76,440
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	803,362	1.3	63,631	71,232	69,914	68,962	83,823	71,156	71,194	72,717	76,041	83,785
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers	735,157	1.3	57,819	64,724	63,871	63,120	77,530	65,038	65,049	66,532	70,055	77,763
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	55,133	54,435	54,736	68,338	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,508	6,043	5,842	6,293	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	85,854	4.5	9,112	7,986	7,564	8,522	7,630	8,209	8,026	8,013	7,740	7,592
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,302	4,159	4,639	4,127	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,684	3,405	3,883	3,503	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	80,879	7.4	8,826	7,268	7,069	8,405	6,768	7,980	7,908	7,830	7,683	7,356
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,056	4,942	6,149	4,747	(*)	5,662	5,610	5,413	5,298
44312	Computer & software stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,212	2,127	2,256	2,021	(*)	2,246	2,220	2,270	2,058
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	291,233	5.4	24,799	27,721	25,748	23,720	26,347	26,782	26,457	26,441	25,051	25,079
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	24,682	23,106	21,186	23,383	(*)	23,046	23,014	21,752	21,752
445	Food & beverage stores	436,971	2.0	40,988	39,876	38,461	40,185	39,257	40,524	40,150	40,113	39,929	39,878
4451	Grocery stores	393,671	1.8	36,704	35,949	34,672	36,070	35,483	36,377	36,057	36,004	35,926	35,950
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,563	2,446	2,745	2,505	(*)	2,631	2,644	2,604	2,569
446	Health & personal care stores	166,408	8.3	15,292	15,588	14,696	14,360	14,673	15,716	15,666	15,634	14,668	14,717
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	13,186	12,450	12,124	12,491	(*)	13,199	13,273	12,321	12,504
447	Gasoline stations	213,425	-3.4	19,255	20,616	19,757	17,315	19,229	20,141	20,054	19,639	18,018	18,797
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	148,534	3.0	16,002	14,156	12,601	15,501	13,368	14,582	14,768	13,992	13,897	14,074
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	851	769	994	882	(*)	846	845	873	887
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,766	2,598	2,921	2,744	(*)	2,788	2,761	2,766	2,763
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,250	4,379	5,642	4,672	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,668	1,590	1,745	1,613	(*)	1,801	1,753	1,799	1,763
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	75,264	5.0	8,220	6,652	6,857	8,383	6,432	7,412	7,449	7,453	7,621	7,243
452	General merchandise stores	397,429	6.8	43,666	37,193	33,901	42,479	34,916	38,868	38,754	38,283	37,044	36,647
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.)	194,062	-1.4	21,633	17,956	16,228	23,194	17,969	18,662	18,919	18,705	19,348	19,149
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	18,280	16,525	23,637	18,320	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	19,237	17,673	19,285	16,947	(*)	19,835	19,578	17,696	17,498
45291	Warehouse clubs & superstores	(*)	(*)	(*)	15,972	14,780	15,763	14,035	(*)	16,517	16,313	14,609	14,484
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,265	2,893	3,522	2,912	(*)	3,318	3,265	3,087	3,014
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	101,109	0.9	9,463	9,574	9,007	9,604	9,418	9,384	9,526	9,576	9,327	9,442
454	Nonstore retailers	142,676	1.6	15,181	14,209	12,420	14,194	13,555	13,713	13,485	13,357	12,613	12,806
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	9,815	8,848	10,122	9,383	(*)	9,365	9,323	8,802	8,877
722	Food services & drinking places ...	308,892	5.5	27,332	28,236	27,458	25,917	26,760	28,062	27,984	28,133	26,774	26,627

(*) Advance estimates are not available from the subsample panel for these business classifications.

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

Note: Totals include data for business classifications not shown separately.

- 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 released on the Internet at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>.
- 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.
- GAFO represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise (furniture & home furnishings (442), electronics & appliances(443), clothing & accessories(448), sporting goods, hobby, book, music (451), general merchandise(452), office supplies, stationery, and gift stores(4532)).
- Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services, by Kind of Business

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

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Percent Change ¹					
		Nov. 2002 Advance from --		Oct. 2002 Preliminary from --		Sept. 2002 through Nov. 2002 from --	
		Oct. 2002 (p)	Nov. 2001 (r)	Sept. 2002 (r)	Oct. 2001 (r)	Jun. 2002 through Aug. 2002	Sept. 2001 through Nov. 2001
	Retail & food services, total	0.4	2.1	0.1	-0.9	-0.6	2.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.5	5.0	0.8	4.5	0.8	4.8
	Retail	0.4	1.8	0.1	-1.4	-0.6	1.7
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	-0.1	-6.4	-2.1	-15.0	-4.8	-5.7
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	0.0	-7.2	-2.2	-16.3	-5.2	-6.4
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	2.3	6.1	0.2	5.7	2.4	6.5
443	Electronics & appliance stores	0.9	3.9	1.0	7.5	1.8	6.8
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	1.2	6.9	0.1	5.5	0.8	6.9
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.9	1.5	0.1	0.7	0.4	1.0
4451	Grocery stores	0.9	1.3	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.7
446	Health & personal care stores	0.3	7.1	0.2	6.4	1.7	7.8
447	Gasoline stations	0.4	11.8	2.1	6.7	2.4	5.2
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	-1.3	4.9	5.5	4.9	-0.2	4.4
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	-0.5	-2.7	-0.1	2.8	0.4	1.7
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.3	4.9	1.2	5.7	1.0	5.3
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	-1.4	-3.5	1.1	-1.2	-0.9	-2.4
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	-1.5	0.6	-0.5	0.9	-0.2	1.7
454	Nonstore retailers	1.7	8.7	1.0	5.3	1.2	7.5
722	Food services & drinking places	0.3	4.8	-0.5	5.1	-0.4	5.6

(p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

(1) Percent change rounded to nearest tenth.

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

Source of Data and Reliability of Estimates

Source of Data: The Census Bureau conducts the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey each month to provide an early indication of sales of retail and food service companies. The Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey is a voluntary survey of a sub-sample of about 5,000 firms selected from the Monthly Retail Trade Survey. Firms responding to this survey account for approximately 65% of the dollar volume estimate.

Reliability of Estimates: The reliability of the estimates is a function of sampling and nonsampling errors. The margin of sampling error, as included on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is a 90% confidence

interval. If for example, the trend estimated 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. Nonsampling error, on the other hand, can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, and response errors. Although not directly measured, precautionary steps are taken to minimize nonsampling error. Additional survey information is available at www.census.gov/svsd/www/advtable.html.

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

NAICS Code	Kind of Business	Level of sales: Median CV ⁽²⁾ for Current Mo. (%)	Trend (percent change): Median standard error ⁽²⁾ for			Revision for month- to-month change ⁽¹⁾	
			Current Mo. to Previous Mo.	Current Qtr. to Previous Qtr.	Current Mo. to Current Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	Retail & food services,						
	total	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.0	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.1	0.2
	Retail	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.0	0.2
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1.9	1.8	1.1	1.8	-0.1	0.5
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	2.1	1.9	1.2	2.0	-0.1	0.6
442	Furniture & home furn. stores.....	4.0	1.9	1.0	2.5	0.2	0.7
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.5	0.6	0.3	1.4	0.3	0.6
444	Building material & garden eq. &...						
	supplies dealers.....	1.8	1.1	0.7	1.7	0.0	0.5
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.0	0.2
4451	Grocery stores	0.8	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.0	0.2
446	Health & personal care stores	2.5	0.6	0.9	1.5	-0.1	0.4
447	Gasoline stations	1.8	0.8	0.8	1.3	0.3	0.7
448	Clothing & clothing accessories						
	stores	1.5	0.7	0.6	1.0	0.1	0.6
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book &						
	music stores.....	2.4	2.1	0.8	2.5	0.1	0.9
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.2
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	3.2	3.2	1.8	3.6	0.4	1.0
454	Nonstore retailers	7.5	4.2	6.1	4.3	-0.1	1.0
722	Food services & drinking places ..	2.1	1.0	0.8	1.7	0.2	0.8



(1) These columns measure the difference between the estimates of trend for the same pair of data months, i.e. the difference between the Advance/Preliminary ratio and the Preliminary/Final ratio estimates. Revisions are based on estimates from the 12 most recent months.
 (2) Medians are based on estimates from the 12 most recent months.