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ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES February 2005

Intention to Revise Retail Estimates: Monthly retail sales estimates will be revised based on the results of the 2003 Annual Retail Trade Survey and the preliminary results of the 2002 Census of Retail Trade. Revised unadjusted and corresponding adjusted data are scheduled for release on March 31, 2005.

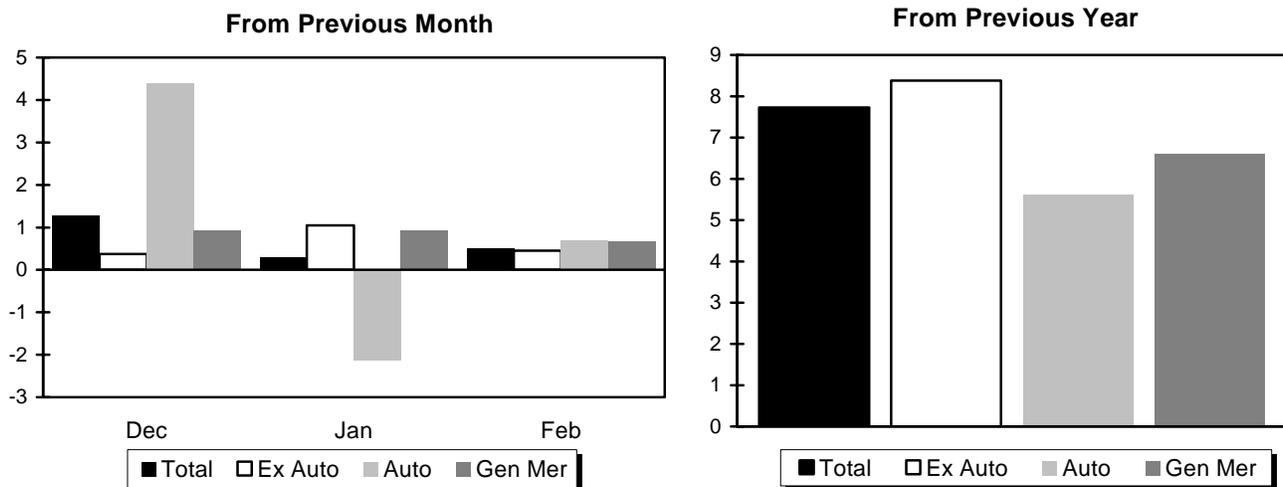
The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for February, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$352.1 billion, an increase of 0.5 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$)* from the previous month and up 7.7 percent ($\pm 0.8\%$) from February 2004. Total sales for the December 2004 through February 2005 period were up 8.2 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from the same period a year ago. The December 2004 to January 2005 percent change was revised from -0.3 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$)* to +0.3 percent ($\pm 0.3\%$)*.

Retail trade sales were up 0.4 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$)* from January and were 7.7 percent ($\pm 1.0\%$) above last year. Gasoline station sales were up 16.4 percent ($\pm 3.0\%$) from February 2004 and sales of building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers were up 13.1 percent ($\pm 2.3\%$) from last year.

The advance estimates are based on a subsample of the Census 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

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



The Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services for March is scheduled to be released April 13, 2005 at 8:30 a.m. EDT.

For information, visit the Census Bureau's Web site at <<http://www.census.gov/retail>>. This report is also available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's STAT-USA (202-482-1986).

* The 90 percent confidence interval includes zero. The Census Bureau does not have sufficient statistical evidence to conclude that the actual change is different from zero.

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

(Total sales estimates are shown in millions of dollars and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, Monthly Retail Trade Survey, and administrative records.)

NAICS ¹ code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted							Adjusted ²				
		2 Month Total		2005		2004			2005		2004		
		2005	% Chg. 2004	Feb. ³ (a)	Jan. (p)	Dec. (r)	Feb.	Jan.	Feb. ³ (a)	Jan. (p)	Dec. (r)	Feb. (r)	Jan. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	623,739	5.5	312,911	310,828	406,081	296,443	294,797	352,138	350,369	349,308	326,875	324,217
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	481,895	6.0	239,150	242,745	326,927	225,878	228,732	271,135	269,925	267,121	250,181	249,276
	Retail	560,645	5.5	281,364	279,281	371,848	266,449	265,064	317,660	316,301	315,514	295,000	292,620
	GAFO⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	74,060	135,662	73,823	71,941	(*)	87,384	86,483	83,956	83,639
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	141,844	3.8	73,761	68,083	79,154	70,565	66,065	81,003	80,444	82,187	76,694	74,941
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	128,299	3.4	66,948	61,351	71,990	64,193	59,846	73,408	72,777	74,678	69,699	68,084
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	50,696	61,116	53,670	50,665	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,732	7,164	6,372	6,219	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	15,965	2.5	8,038	7,927	10,672	7,778	7,793	8,961	8,897	8,820	8,519	8,498
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,475	5,370	4,411	4,436	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,452	5,302	3,367	3,357	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	15,974	3.5	7,904	8,070	13,769	7,583	7,854	8,819	8,681	8,509	8,268	8,293
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,842	10,515	5,423	5,533	(*)	6,323	6,149	5,940	5,905
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,228	3,254	2,160	2,321	(*)	2,358	2,360	2,328	2,388
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	50,161	11.9	24,972	25,189	29,113	22,351	22,465	31,750	32,163	31,984	28,061	27,871
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	23,204	26,411	20,452	20,623	(*)	28,541	28,338	24,820	24,639
445	Food & beverage stores	85,225	2.9	41,133	44,092	49,676	39,940	42,902	45,481	45,296	44,979	43,027	43,246
4451	Grocery stores	77,222	2.7	37,086	40,136	43,176	36,132	39,050	40,709	40,623	40,389	38,603	38,817
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,348	3,996	2,324	2,406	(*)	2,799	2,791	2,757	2,759
446	Health & personal care stores	34,035	5.0	16,767	17,268	19,575	15,879	16,535	17,631	17,585	17,186	16,404	16,552
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	14,763	16,533	13,520	14,177	(*)	14,852	14,567	13,996	14,051
447	Gasoline stations	50,126	14.1	24,797	25,329	26,863	21,816	22,102	28,339	28,081	27,580	24,348	23,972
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	25,756	2.5	13,727	12,029	28,431	13,344	11,773	16,462	16,277	16,001	15,680	15,580
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	775	1,729	741	756	(*)	979	1,001	919	932
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,400	4,599	2,473	2,343	(*)	3,105	3,028	2,958	2,966
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,132	9,825	4,274	3,972	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,468	2,577	1,708	1,492	(*)	1,965	1,948	1,952	1,945
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	11,384	-5.6	5,205	6,179	12,290	5,554	6,501	6,656	6,651	6,705	6,925	6,836
452	General merchandise stores	74,352	4.6	37,605	36,747	65,667	36,355	34,725	43,925	43,633	43,231	41,202	41,074
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	28,863	-0.8	14,785	14,078	31,757	15,104	13,981	18,180	18,083	18,026	18,020	17,840
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁵	(*)	(*)	(*)	14,204	32,112	15,290	14,139	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	22,669	33,910	21,251	20,744	(*)	25,550	25,205	23,182	23,234
45291	Warehouse clubs & superstores	(*)	(*)	(*)	19,852	28,329	18,191	17,932	(*)	21,984	21,609	19,709	19,771
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,817	5,581	3,060	2,812	(*)	3,566	3,596	3,473	3,463
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	17,240	3.2	8,699	8,541	11,782	8,279	8,425	9,524	9,482	9,418	8,890	9,019
454	Nonstore retailers	38,583	10.5	18,756	19,827	24,856	17,005	17,924	19,109	19,111	18,914	16,982	16,738
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	11,512	16,101	9,862	10,577	(*)	11,954	11,778	10,778	10,695
722	Food services & drinking places ...	63,094	5.6	31,547	31,547	34,233	29,994	29,733	34,478	34,068	33,794	31,875	31,597

(*) Advance estimates are not available for this kind of business.

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

(1) For a full description of the NAICS codes used in this table, see <http://www.census.gov/epcd/www/naics.html>

(2) Estimates are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variation and for 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. The factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted estimates shown in this table. Year-to-date seasonally adjusted sales estimates are not tabulated. Adjustment factors and explanatory material can be found on the Internet at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>

(3) Advance estimates are based on early reports obtained from a small sample of firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey (MRTS) sample. All other estimates are from the MRTS sample

(4) GAFO represents firms which specialize in department store types of merchandise and is comprised of furniture & home furnishings (442), electronics & appliances (443), clothing & accessories (448), sporting goods, hobby, book, and music (451), general merchandise (452), office supply, stationery, and gift stores (4532).

(5) Estimates include data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line are not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

Note: Table 3 provides estimated measures of sampling variability. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>

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

(Estimates are shown as percents and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, Monthly Retail Trade Survey, and administrative records.)

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Percent Change ¹					
		Feb. 2005 Advance from --		Jan. 2005 Preliminary from --		Dec. 2004 through Feb. 2005 from --	
		Jan. 2005 (p)	Feb. 2004 (r)	Dec. 2004 (r)	Jan. 2004 (r)	Sept. 2004 through Nov. 2004	Dec. 2003 through Feb. 2004
	Retail & food services,						
	total	0.5	7.7	0.3	8.1	2.0	8.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.4	8.4	1.0	8.3	2.0	8.5
	Retail	0.4	7.7	0.2	8.1	1.9	8.2
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	0.7	5.6	-2.1	7.3	2.1	7.3
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	0.9	5.3	-2.5	6.9	1.7	7.1
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	0.7	5.2	0.9	4.7	1.4	4.8
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.6	6.7	2.0	4.7	1.7	4.7
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	-1.3	13.1	0.6	15.4	2.1	14.3
445	Food & beverage stores	0.4	5.7	0.7	4.7	1.3	5.3
4451	Grocery stores	0.2	5.5	0.6	4.7	1.3	5.2
446	Health & personal care stores	0.3	7.5	2.3	6.2	2.1	5.7
447	Gasoline stations	0.9	16.4	1.8	17.1	1.9	18.2
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	1.1	5.0	1.7	4.5	1.9	4.4
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	0.1	-3.9	-0.8	-2.7	-2.2	-2.2
452	General merchandise stores	0.7	6.6	0.9	6.2	2.2	6.7
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.5	0.9	0.3	1.4	1.2	1.3
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	0.4	7.1	0.7	5.1	1.0	6.1
454	Nonstore retailers	0.0	12.5	1.0	14.2	3.0	13.7
722	Food services & drinking places	1.2	8.2	0.8	7.8	3.0	8.4

(p) Preliminary estimates. (r) Revised estimates.

(1) Estimates shown in this table are derived from adjusted estimates provided in Table 1 of this report.

Note: Table 3 provides estimated measures of sampling variability. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Survey Description

The U.S. Census Bureau conducts the Advance Monthly Retail Trade and Food Services Survey (MARTS) to provide an early estimate of monthly sales by kind of business for retail and food service firms located in the United States. Each month, questionnaires are mailed to a probability sample of approximately 5,000 employer firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey (MRTS). Firms responding to MARTS account for approximately 65% of the total national sales estimate. Advance sales estimates are computed using a link relative estimator. The change in sales from the previous month is estimated using only units that have reported data for both the current and

previous month. There is no imputation or adjustment for nonrespondents in MARTS. The total sales estimate is derived by multiplying this ratio by the preliminary sales estimate for the previous month (derived from the larger MRTS sample). Detailed industry estimates are summed to derive total estimates at broad industry levels. The monthly estimates are adjusted using annual survey estimates and for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences. Additional information on MARTS and MRTS can be found on the Census Bureau website at: <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>.

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

Reliability of Estimates

Because the estimates presented in this report are based on a sample survey, they contain sampling error and nonsampling error.

Sampling error is the difference between the estimate and the result that would be obtained from a complete enumeration of the sampling frame conducted under the same survey conditions. This error occurs because only a subset of the entire sampling frame is measured in a sample survey. Standard errors and coefficients of variation (CV), as given in Table 3 of this report, are estimated measures of sampling variation.

The margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is a 90 percent confidence interval. If, for example, the percent change estimate is +1.2 percent and its estimated standard error is 0.9 percent, then the margin of sampling error is $\pm 1.65 \times 0.9$ percent or ± 1.5 percent, and the 90 percent confidence interval is -0.3 percent to +2.7 percent. If the interval contains 0, then one does not have sufficient statistical evidence to conclude at the 90

percent confidence level that the change is different from zero and therefore the change is not statistically significant. Estimated changes shown in the text are statistically significant unless otherwise noted. For a monthly total, the median estimated coefficient of variation is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated value $\pm 1.65 \times CV \times$ (the estimated monthly total). The Census Bureau recommends that individuals using estimates in this report incorporate this information into their analyses, as sampling error could affect the conclusions drawn from the estimates.

Nonsampling error encompasses all other factors that contribute to the total error of a sample survey estimate. This type of error can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, mistakes in the recording and coding of data, and other errors of collection, response, coverage, or processing. Although nonsampling error is not measured directly, the Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the process to minimize this type of error.

Table 3. Estimated Measures of Sampling Variability and Revision to Advance Estimates

(Estimates are shown as percents and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey and Monthly Retail Trade Survey)

NAICS Code	Kind of Business	Median CV ⁽¹⁾ for Current Mo. (%)	Median standard error ⁽¹⁾ for Percent change			Revision for month-to-month change ⁽²⁾	
			Previous Mo. to Current Mo.	Previous Qtr. to Current Qtr.	Current Mo. to same Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	Retail & food services,						
	total	0.7	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.2
	Retail	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.2
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1.7	1.3	0.7	1.7	0.4	0.3
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	1.9	1.5	0.7	1.8	0.4	0.3
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	3.8	1.4	1.2	2.1	0.0	0.9
443	Electronics & appliance stores	2.0	0.7	0.5	1.1	0.2	0.2
444	Building material & garden eq. &... supplies dealers	1.9	1.0	0.6	1.4	0.4	0.4
445	Food & beverage stores	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
4451	Grocery stores	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.1
446	Health & personal care stores	3.1	0.5	0.4	0.9	0.3	0.4
447	Gasoline stations	1.6	0.8	0.5	1.8	0.4	0.4
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	1.5	0.7	0.5	0.9	0.0	0.3
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	2.7	1.7	1.3	1.9	-0.2	0.6
452	General merchandise stores	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	3.4	2.9	1.9	3.6	0.2	0.7
454	Nonstore retailers	4.3	1.8	0.9	2.1	0.3	0.7
722	Food services & drinking places ..	2.4	0.6	0.6	1.3	0.3	0.4

(1) Estimated measures of sampling variability are based on estimates not adjusted for seasonal variation or holiday or trading-day differences. Medians are based on estimates for the most recent 12 months.

(2) These columns provide measures of the difference between the advance-to-preliminary and preliminary-to-final estimates of month-to-month change for the same pair of months as measured by the Advance sample and MRTS sample. The average and median differences are based on estimates for the most recent 12 months.

Note: Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>

