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ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES December 2005

Intention to Revise Retail Estimates: Monthly retail sales estimates will be revised based on the 2004 Annual Retail Trade Survey and the results of the 2002 Census of Retail Trade. Revised unadjusted and corresponding adjusted data are scheduled for release on March 30, 2006.

The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for December, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$357.8 billion, an increase of 0.7 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$)* from the previous month and up 6.4 percent ($\pm 0.8\%$) from December 2004. Total sales for the 12 months of 2005 were up 7.3 percent ($\pm 0.2\%$) from 2004. Total sales for the October through December 2005 period were up 6.3 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from the same period a year ago. The October to November 2005 percent change was revised from +0.3 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$)* to +0.8 percent ($\pm 0.3\%$).

Retail trade sales were up 0.7 percent ($\pm 0.8\%$)* from November and were up 6.3 percent ($\pm 0.8\%$) above last year. Gasoline station sales were up 17.9 percent ($\pm 3.3\%$) from December 2004 and sales of nonstore retailers were up 10.6 percent ($\pm 3.5\%$) from last year.

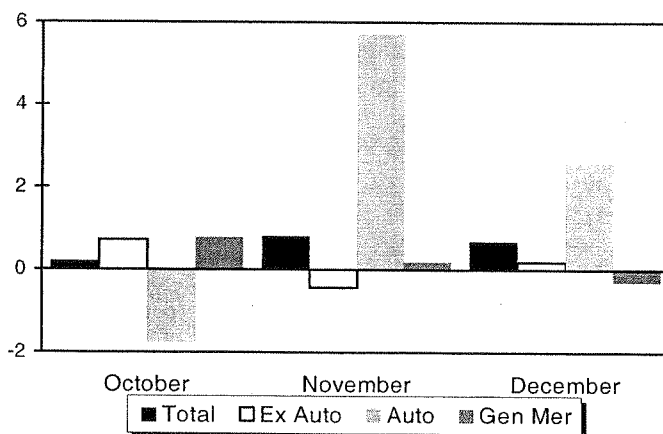
The scheduled release dates for 2006 are as follows: January 13, February 14, March 14, April 13, May 11, June 13, July 14, August 11, September 14, October 13, November 14, December 13.

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.

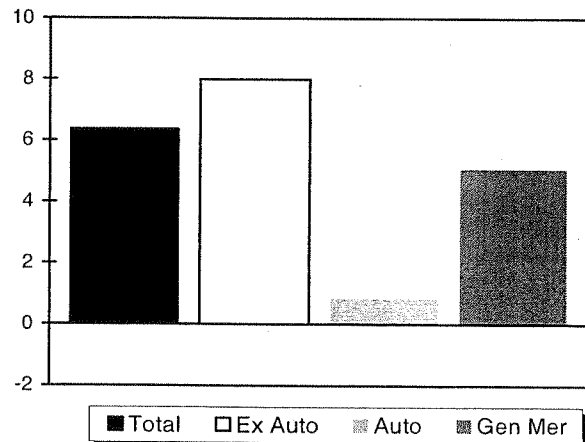
Percent Change in Retail and Food Services Sales

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

From Previous Month



From Previous Year



The Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services for January is scheduled to be released February 14, 2006 at 8:30 a.m. EST.

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				
		12 Month Total		2005			2004		2005			2004	
		2005	% Chg. 2004	Dec. ³ (a)	Nov. (p)	Oct. (r)	Dec.	Nov.	Dec. ³ (a)	Nov. (p)	Oct. (r)	Dec. (r)	Nov. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	4,186,021	7.3	417,895	352,743	345,335	393,631	330,108	357,841	355,387	352,541	336,432	332,874
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	3,268,966	8.3	342,978	285,942	279,771	319,419	263,375	280,630	280,119	281,332	259,864	258,200
	Retail	3,778,839	7.3	381,657	319,588	310,440	360,352	299,470	322,693	320,413	317,923	303,677	300,589
	GAFO⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	99,315	87,273	134,521	93,285	(*)	90,518	90,512	85,656	85,345
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	917,055	4.0	74,917	66,801	65,564	74,212	66,733	77,211	75,268	71,209	76,568	74,674
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	844,233	3.6	68,947	60,703	59,478	68,551	61,237	70,933	68,981	65,074	70,671	68,961
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	50,568	48,779	58,759	51,984	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,098	6,086	5,661	5,496	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	109,064	5.1	11,412	10,244	9,139	10,809	9,573	9,263	9,271	9,231	8,774	8,671
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,314	4,930	5,371	5,078	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,930	4,209	5,438	4,495	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	100,413	6.2	13,965	9,518	7,766	13,049	8,873	8,539	8,550	8,515	7,966	7,996
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,907	6,232	10,933	7,247	(*)	6,960	6,932	6,435	6,391
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,611	1,534	2,116	1,626	(*)	1,590	1,583	1,531	1,605
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	332,593	9.7	25,907	28,068	29,159	23,948	24,733	28,943	29,110	28,710	26,379	25,652
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	25,390	26,310	21,609	22,457	(*)	25,724	25,420	23,260	22,661
445	Food & beverage stores	522,643	4.9	49,596	44,063	43,789	46,778	41,782	44,431	44,248	44,261	42,334	42,221
4451	Grocery stores	467,150	4.3	42,581	39,245	39,194	40,725	37,487	39,573	39,442	39,510	38,096	37,942
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,014	2,874	3,785	2,752	(*)	2,940	2,906	2,649	2,680
446	Health & personal care stores	218,297	6.3	21,109	18,260	18,109	19,764	17,044	18,714	18,652	18,460	17,398	17,374
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	15,522	15,424	16,775	14,611	(*)	15,823	15,675	14,728	14,894
447	Gasoline stations	387,908	21.0	32,351	31,967	37,496	27,378	27,624	33,875	33,579	35,779	28,728	29,017
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	201,668	6.1	30,544	18,459	16,549	28,391	17,210	17,172	17,179	17,197	16,029	16,043
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	921	818	1,413	905	(*)	839	830	815	823
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,379	3,138	4,498	3,109	(*)	3,209	3,173	2,959	2,969
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,432	6,527	10,287	6,944	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,069	2,034	2,671	1,860	(*)	2,153	2,137	1,998	1,942
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	81,543	1.8	12,491	7,423	6,041	11,963	7,342	6,875	6,773	6,857	6,609	6,705
452	General merchandise stores	533,162	6.0	67,780	50,220	44,540	65,421	46,925	45,302	45,438	45,351	43,113	42,694
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	214,682	-0.6	30,972	21,113	17,404	31,936	20,760	17,733	18,012	17,905	18,145	18,011
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁵	(*)	(*)	(*)	21,322	17,568	32,317	21,003	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	29,107	27,136	33,485	26,165	(*)	27,426	27,446	24,968	24,683
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	25,276	23,724	28,274	22,486	(*)	23,981	23,964	21,600	21,354
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,831	3,412	5,211	3,679	(*)	3,445	3,482	3,368	3,329
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	114,295	5.9	12,118	9,803	9,634	11,619	9,421	9,600	9,679	9,769	9,195	9,270
454	Nonstore retailers	260,198	11.5	29,467	24,762	22,654	27,020	22,210	22,768	22,666	22,584	20,584	20,272
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	15,562	13,854	17,578	13,945	(*)	14,251	14,079	12,812	12,689
722	Food services & drinking places ...	407,182	7.1	36,238	33,155	34,895	33,279	30,638	35,148	34,974	34,618	32,755	32,285

(*) 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					
		Dec. 2005 Advance from --		Nov. 2005 Preliminary from --		Oct. 2005 through Dec. 2005 from --	
		Nov. 2005 (p)	Dec. 2004 (r)	Oct. 2005 (r)	Nov. 2004 (r)	Jul. 2005 through Sep. 2005	Oct. 2004 through Dec. 2004
	Retail & food services, total	0.7	6.4	0.8	6.8	0.6	6.3
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.2	8.0	-0.4	8.5	1.8	8.7
	Retail	0.7	6.3	0.8	6.6	0.3	6.2
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	2.6	0.8	5.7	0.8	-3.8	-1.8
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	2.8	0.4	6.0	0.0	-4.3	-2.6
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	-0.1	5.6	0.4	6.9	0.2	6.1
443	Electronics & appliance stores	-0.1	7.2	0.4	6.9	1.7	7.2
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	-0.6	9.7	1.4	13.5	3.7	11.7
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.4	5.0	0.0	4.8	1.1	5.1
4451	Grocery stores	0.3	3.9	-0.2	4.0	0.8	4.2
446	Health & personal care stores	0.3	7.6	1.0	7.4	1.5	7.1
447	Gasoline stations	0.9	17.9	-6.1	15.7	0.1	20.4
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	0.0	7.1	-0.1	7.1	2.9	6.9
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	1.5	4.0	-1.2	1.0	1.0	2.6
452	General merchandise stores.....	-0.3	5.1	0.2	6.4	1.5	6.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	-1.5	-2.3	0.6	0.0	0.8	-1.0
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	-0.8	4.4	-0.9	4.4	1.6	5.6
454	Nonstore retailers	0.5	10.6	0.4	11.8	2.9	11.7
722	Food services & drinking places	0.5	7.3	1.0	8.3	2.7	7.6

(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	0.8	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.1
	Retail	0.7	0.5	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.1
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	2.1	1.5	0.6	1.7	0.4	0.5
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	2.2	1.6	0.6	1.8	0.4	0.5
442	Furniture & home furn. stores.....	4.1	1.5	1.0	2.1	0.1	0.5
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.9	0.6	0.5	1.0	0.3	0.3
444	Building material & garden eq. &						
	supplies dealers.....	2.2	0.8	0.6	1.2	0.3	0.3
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.9	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
4451	Grocery stores	0.9	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.1
446	Health & personal care stores	3.1	0.5	0.4	0.8	0.0	0.1
447	Gasoline stations	1.8	0.7	0.5	2.0	0.3	0.3
448	Clothing & clothing accessories						
	stores	1.5	0.6	0.5	0.7	-0.1	0.2
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book &						
	music stores.....	2.8	1.8	1.2	1.9	-0.1	0.6
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.3	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	4.1	3.6	1.6	4.0	0.1	0.4
454	Nonstore retailers	4.4	2.0	0.9	2.1	0.3	0.6
722	Food services & drinking places ..	3.0	0.6	0.7	1.6	0.2	0.1

(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>

