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## ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES March 2007

**Notice of Revision:** Monthly retail sales and inventories were revised based on the results of the 2005 Annual Retail Trade Survey. The Annual Revision of Monthly Retail and Food Services showing revised data can be found on our website at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/annpub07.pdf>.

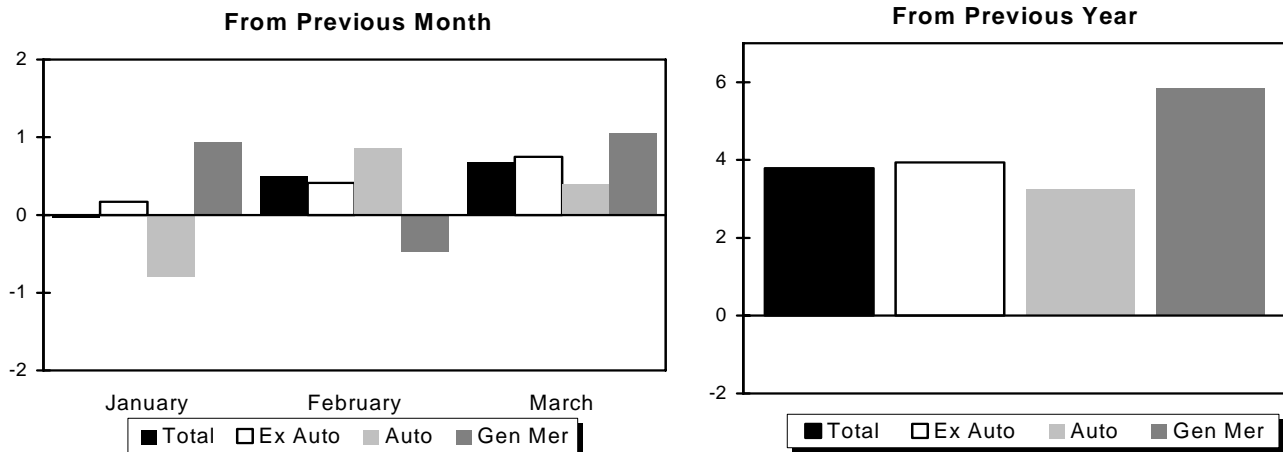
The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for March, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$371.6 billion, an increase of 0.7 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ )\* from the previous month and up 3.8 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) from March 2006. Total sales for the January through March 2007 period were up 3.2 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ ) from the same period a year ago. The January 2007 to February 2007 percent change was revised from 0.1 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ )\* to 0.5 percent ( $\pm 0.2\%$ ).

Retail trade sales were up 0.6 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ )\* from February 2007 and were 3.6 percent ( $\pm 0.8\%$ ) above last year. Clothing and clothing accessories stores were up 8.0 percent ( $\pm 1.5\%$ ) from March 2006 and sales of general merchandise stores were up 5.8 percent ( $\pm 0.2\%$ ) 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 April is scheduled to be released May 11, 2007 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 than 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 <sup>1</sup> code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted							Adjusted <sup>2</sup>				
		3 Month Total		2007			2006		2007			2006	
		2007	% Chg. 2006	Mar. <sup>3</sup> (a)	Feb. (p)	Jan. (r)	Mar.	Feb.	Mar. <sup>3</sup> (a)	Feb. (p)	Jan. (r)	Mar. (r)	Feb. (r)
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>												
	<b>total</b> .....	1,038,439	3.9	378,163	327,479	332,797	364,206	315,634	371,567	369,070	367,230	358,001	356,451
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	816,089	4.1	293,198	257,361	265,530	281,491	248,205	294,144	291,950	290,762	283,005	282,142
	Retail .....	932,836	3.7	339,685	294,165	298,986	328,162	283,886	334,711	332,661	330,598	323,007	321,754
	<b>GAFO<sup>4</sup></b> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	83,079	83,867	88,077	80,054	(*)	96,411	97,055	92,645	92,901
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	222,350	3.0	84,965	70,118	67,267	82,715	67,429	77,423	77,120	76,468	74,996	74,309
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	204,695	3.3	78,445	64,611	61,639	76,233	61,870	71,184	71,001	70,364	68,864	68,139
44111	New car dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	53,368	51,064	62,526	50,971	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,507	5,628	6,482	5,559	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	29,377	5.0	10,419	9,319	9,639	9,995	8,948	10,440	10,378	10,365	10,035	9,975
4421	Furniture stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,337	5,256	5,417	5,033	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,982	4,383	4,578	3,915	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	25,683	2.3	8,477	8,373	8,833	8,473	8,048	9,026	9,205	9,275	8,968	8,879
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,701	7,024	6,683	6,487	(*)	7,372	7,433	7,217	7,160
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,672	1,809	1,790	1,561	(*)	1,833	1,842	1,751	1,719
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	76,319	-4.6	29,678	22,700	23,941	31,481	24,062	29,715	29,293	29,346	31,078	30,894
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	20,430	21,929	27,980	22,056	(*)	25,602	25,829	27,676	27,605
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	134,548	6.4	47,001	42,537	45,010	44,026	40,290	46,931	46,826	46,500	44,388	44,405
4451	Grocery stores .....	121,037	6.2	42,095	38,199	40,743	39,604	36,178	41,761	41,748	41,448	39,644	39,582
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,734	2,710	2,862	2,616	(*)	3,236	3,222	3,068	3,103
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	57,947	6.8	19,965	18,435	19,547	19,089	17,252	19,402	19,385	19,315	18,461	18,122
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	15,617	16,770	16,002	14,505	(*)	16,508	16,506	15,416	15,301
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	91,982	1.2	34,276	28,304	29,402	32,690	28,276	34,414	33,377	32,888	32,723	33,149
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	47,725	8.4	18,261	15,353	14,111	16,493	14,563	18,887	18,445	18,797	17,488	17,434
44811	Men's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	690	722	721	608	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
44812	Women's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,662	2,621	3,250	2,559	(*)	3,315	3,330	3,237	3,179
44814	Family clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,458	5,255	6,291	5,070	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,906	1,789	2,174	1,955	(*)	2,214	2,317	2,176	2,271
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	19,182	-1.3	6,687	5,664	6,831	6,678	5,785	7,276	7,197	7,183	7,347	7,332
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	127,532	5.5	45,891	40,841	40,800	43,066	39,344	47,825	47,326	47,549	45,185	45,616
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	44,579	-1.1	16,075	14,426	14,078	16,399	14,728	17,457	17,489	17,738	17,789	17,840
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) <sup>5</sup> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	14,806	14,461	16,858	15,141	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	26,415	26,722	26,667	24,616	(*)	29,837	29,811	27,396	27,776
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	23,438	23,837	23,338	21,640	(*)	26,335	26,223	23,936	24,287
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,977	2,885	3,329	2,976	(*)	3,502	3,588	3,460	3,489
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	27,491	0.0	9,519	8,855	9,117	9,524	8,919	9,922	9,867	9,880	9,887	9,891
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	72,700	8.4	24,546	23,666	24,488	23,932	20,970	23,450	24,242	23,032	22,451	21,748
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses ....	(*)	(*)	(*)	14,378	15,657	15,446	13,173	(*)	15,852	15,641	15,143	14,572
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ...	105,603	5.3	38,478	33,314	33,811	36,044	31,748	36,856	36,409	36,632	34,994	34,697

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

(NA) Not available. (S) Suppressed. (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 <sup>1</sup>					
		Mar. 2007 Advance from --		Feb. 2007 Preliminary from --		Jan. 2007 through Mar. 2007 from --	
		Feb. 2007 (p)	Mar. 2006 (r)	Jan. 2007 (r)	Feb. 2006 (r)	Oct. 2006 through Dec. 2006	Jan. 2006 through Mar. 2006
	<b>Retail &amp; food services, total .....</b>	0.7	3.8	0.5	3.5	1.4	3.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	0.8	3.9	0.4	3.5	1.6	3.5
	Retail .....	0.6	3.6	0.6	3.4	1.5	3.0
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers .....</b>	0.4	3.2	0.9	3.8	0.6	2.0
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	0.3	3.4	0.9	4.2	0.6	2.2
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores .....</b>	0.6	4.0	0.1	4.0	2.2	4.0
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores .....</b>	-1.9	0.6	-0.8	3.7	-0.8	1.7
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers.....</b>	1.4	-4.4	-0.2	-5.2	0.9	-4.5
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores.....</b>	0.2	5.7	0.7	5.5	1.1	5.6
4451	Grocery stores .....	0.0	5.3	0.7	5.5	1.2	5.5
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores .....</b>	0.1	5.1	0.4	7.0	0.5	6.3
447	<b>Gasoline stations .....</b>	3.1	5.2	1.5	0.7	5.6	1.2
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores .....</b>	2.4	8.0	-1.9	5.8	2.8	7.0
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores.....</b>	1.1	-1.0	0.2	-1.8	0.8	-1.9
452	<b>General merchandise stores.....</b>	1.1	5.8	-0.5	3.7	1.9	4.8
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	-0.2	-1.9	-1.4	-2.0	-0.4	-1.6
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers .....</b>	0.6	0.4	-0.1	-0.2	-2.1	0.0
454	<b>Nonstore retailers .....</b>	-3.3	4.4	5.3	11.5	2.1	7.9
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places ....</b>	1.2	5.3	-0.6	4.9	0.4	4.9

(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

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## 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  $\pm 1.5$  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 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 <sup>(1)</sup> for Current Mo. (%)	Median standard error <sup>(1)</sup> for Percent change			Revision for month-to-month change <sup>(2)</sup>	
			Previous Mo. to Current Mo.	Previous Qtr. to Current Qtr.	Current Mo. to same Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>						
	total .....	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
	<b>Retail .....</b>	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.3
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers .....</b>	2.0	1.7	0.8	1.4	0.1	0.8
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	2.2	1.9	0.8	1.6	0.1	0.8
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores.....</b>	2.1	1.7	0.9	1.9	0.1	0.3
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores .....</b>	1.4	0.6	0.9	1.0	0.0	0.4
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp;.....</b>						
	<b>supplies dealers.....</b>	2.3	1.2	0.7	1.2	-0.3	1.0
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores.....</b>	0.7	0.3	0.4	0.5	-0.1	0.1
4451	Grocery stores .....	0.8	0.3	0.4	0.5	-0.1	0.1
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores .....</b>	1.6	0.7	0.5	1.0	0.0	0.3
447	<b>Gasoline stations .....</b>	2.6	0.7	0.7	1.2	0.1	0.5
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories</b>						
	<b>stores .....</b>	1.6	0.6	0.8	0.9	0.2	0.3
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp;</b>						
	<b>music stores.....</b>	2.4	1.4	1.3	2.1	-0.2	0.4
452	<b>General merchandise stores.....</b>	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers .....</b>	3.6	3.1	1.9	3.1	-0.1	0.7
454	<b>Nonstore retailers .....</b>	1.5	1.1	0.8	2.7	0.1	0.6
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places ..</b>	1.5	0.8	0.8	1.1	0.1	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 period August 2006 to present.

(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>

