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ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES May 2008

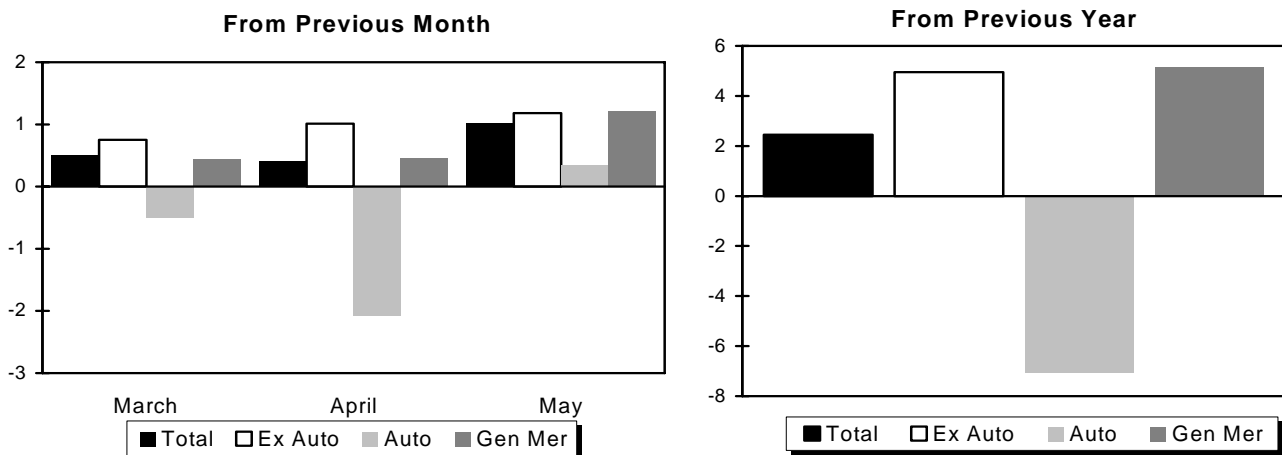
The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for May, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$385.4 billion, an increase of 1.0 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from the previous month and 2.5 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) above May 2007. Total sales for the March through May 2008 period were up 2.6 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from the same period a year ago. The March to April 2008 percent change was revised from -0.2 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$)* to +0.4 percent ($\pm 0.2\%$).

Retail trade sales were up 1.0 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from April 2008 and were 2.2 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) above last year. Gasoline station sales were up 13.8 percent ($\pm 2.1\%$) from May 2007 and sales of nonstore retailers were up 10.0 percent ($\pm 2.1\%$) 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 June is scheduled to be released July 15, 2008 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 ¹ code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted							Adjusted ²				
		5 Month Total		2008			2007		2008			2007	
		2008	% Chg. 2007	May ³ (a)	Apr. (p)	Mar. (r)	May	Apr.	May ³ (a)	Apr. (p)	Mar. (r)	May (r)	Apr. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	1,857,392	3.6	407,283	375,527	378,755	395,495	362,087	385,448	381,563	380,020	376,222	370,568
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	1,487,675	5.7	328,284	300,072	300,572	309,461	284,152	312,692	309,058	305,976	297,951	293,249
	Retail	1,669,374	3.4	366,352	337,522	340,236	357,416	325,816	347,015	343,444	342,367	339,643	334,151
	GAFO⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	89,420	93,727	95,021	88,362	(*)	98,438	97,982	96,993	96,114
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	369,717	-4.0	78,999	75,455	78,183	86,034	77,935	72,756	72,505	74,044	78,271	77,319
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	338,126	-4.6	72,071	68,919	71,769	79,308	71,751	66,120	66,078	67,643	71,902	71,041
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	53,749	56,849	62,685	57,059	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,536	6,414	6,726	6,184	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	45,114	-4.4	9,471	8,827	9,136	9,877	9,107	9,528	9,491	9,477	10,017	10,030
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,816	5,100	5,282	4,925	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,011	4,036	4,595	4,182	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	43,308	3.0	8,859	8,101	8,659	8,487	7,759	9,546	9,475	9,372	9,201	9,157
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,469	6,886	6,854	6,103	(*)	7,656	7,550	7,378	7,309
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,632	1,773	1,633	1,656	(*)	1,819	1,822	1,823	1,848
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	135,239	-3.2	34,851	30,996	25,703	35,979	30,415	28,117	27,449	26,740	29,048	27,804
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	25,490	21,802	29,677	25,730	(*)	23,734	22,949	25,694	24,693
445	Food & beverage stores	239,725	6.6	51,945	46,891	48,557	48,105	44,512	49,158	48,969	48,592	46,272	46,133
4451	Grocery stores	216,495	7.0	46,645	42,213	43,824	43,005	39,956	44,130	43,880	43,563	41,311	41,277
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,186	3,176	3,371	2,959	(*)	3,444	3,434	3,308	3,213
446	Health & personal care stores	102,382	4.5	21,235	20,071	20,779	20,240	19,296	20,597	20,439	20,272	19,670	19,690
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	16,602	17,184	16,994	16,267	(*)	16,855	16,765	16,515	16,532
447	Gasoline stations	205,771	19.7	47,072	42,715	41,281	40,841	36,181	43,464	42,376	42,296	38,205	36,037
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	85,272	1.7	19,224	17,342	18,119	18,772	17,363	18,977	18,886	18,872	18,997	18,495
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	850	816	888	874	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,447	3,406	3,653	3,440	(*)	3,389	3,339	3,466	3,298
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,369	6,751	6,934	6,545	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,195	2,285	2,202	2,228	(*)	2,242	2,210	2,189	2,159
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	33,139	4.6	6,968	6,449	6,649	6,675	6,116	7,517	7,464	7,404	7,384	7,221
452	General merchandise stores	231,007	4.9	51,227	45,594	47,929	47,678	44,836	50,110	49,511	49,285	47,656	47,470
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	75,890	-3.0	16,901	15,149	15,938	16,954	16,122	17,125	16,984	16,986	17,582	17,458
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁵	(*)	(*)	(*)	15,573	16,384	17,429	16,576	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	30,445	31,991	30,724	28,714	(*)	32,527	32,299	30,074	30,012
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	26,951	28,442	27,018	25,303	(*)	28,794	28,614	26,462	26,440
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,494	3,549	3,706	3,411	(*)	3,733	3,685	3,612	3,572
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	47,316	1.4	10,576	9,238	9,224	10,737	8,963	9,803	9,867	9,829	9,971	9,751
454	Nonstore retailers	131,384	7.3	25,925	25,843	26,017	23,991	23,333	27,442	27,012	26,184	24,951	25,044
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	17,847	16,855	17,154	16,103	(*)	18,456	17,893	17,362	17,149
722	Food services & drinking places ...	188,018	5.3	40,931	38,005	38,519	38,079	36,271	38,433	38,119	37,653	36,579	36,417

(*) 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 ¹					
		May 2008 Advance from --		Apr. 2008 Preliminary from --		Mar. 2008 through May 2008 from --	
		Apr. 2008 (p)	May 2007 (r)	Mar. 2008 (r)	Apr. 2007 (r)	Dec. 2007 through Feb. 2008	Mar. 2007 through May 2007
	Retail & food services, total	1.0	2.5	0.4	3.0	1.0	2.6
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	1.2	4.9	1.0	5.4	1.9	4.8
	Retail	1.0	2.2	0.3	2.8	0.9	2.4
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	0.3	-7.0	-2.1	-6.2	-2.8	-5.8
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	0.1	-8.0	-2.3	-7.0	-3.3	-6.5
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	0.4	-4.9	0.1	-5.4	-0.3	-5.3
443	Electronics & appliance stores	0.7	3.7	1.1	3.5	1.3	3.2
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	2.4	-3.2	2.7	-1.3	1.4	-3.9
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.4	6.2	0.8	6.1	1.8	6.0
4451	Grocery stores	0.6	6.8	0.7	6.3	1.9	6.4
446	Health & personal care stores	0.8	4.7	0.8	3.8	1.7	4.0
447	Gasoline stations	2.6	13.8	0.2	17.6	3.6	17.1
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	0.5	-0.1	0.1	2.1	1.1	0.4
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	0.7	1.8	0.8	3.4	1.5	2.2
452	General merchandise stores.....	1.2	5.1	0.5	4.3	1.8	4.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.8	-2.6	0.0	-2.7	-0.5	-3.3
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	-0.6	-1.7	0.4	1.2	0.0	-0.6
454	Nonstore retailers	1.6	10.0	3.2	7.9	3.9	7.9
722	Food services & drinking places	0.8	5.1	1.2	4.7	1.2	4.4

(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

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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 ± 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 ⁽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	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2
	Retail	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.1
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1.8	1.2	0.6	1.5	-0.1	0.7
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	1.9	1.3	0.7	1.6	-0.1	0.7
442	Furniture & home furn. stores.....	2.1	1.3	0.8	1.8	0.0	0.8
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.2	0.6	0.5	1.4	0.1	0.5
444	Building material & garden eq. &... supplies dealers.....	2.3	1.2	0.8	1.4	0.4	0.6
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
4451	Grocery stores	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
446	Health & personal care stores	1.5	0.4	0.4	1.2	-0.2	0.4
447	Gasoline stations	1.9	0.5	0.3	1.3	0.5	0.4
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	1.9	0.7	0.6	1.0	-0.1	0.6
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	2.2	1.5	1.1	1.8	0.1	0.4
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.1	0.2
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	3.2	2.4	1.5	2.9	0.8	0.9
454	Nonstore retailers	1.6	0.9	0.6	1.2	0.2	0.6
722	Food services & drinking places ..	1.9	0.8	0.7	1.3	0.1	0.3

- (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 revisions 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>

