

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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ADVANCE REPORT ON RETAIL TRADE, DECEMBER 1953

Total sales of retail stores in December were \$16.6 billion, the U.S. Department of Commerce announced today. December 1953 sales, adjusted for seasonal factors and trading day differences, were about 2 percent below a year ago, and 1 percent below November.

The December sales figures are based on the Advance Report on Retail Trade, a monthly Bureau of the Census survey conducted in cooperation with a representative cross-section of about 1,400 retail firms which, in total, operate some 35,000 stores in the United States.

Unadjusted Census figures are shown in table 1; these figures, adjusted by the Office of Business Economics for seasonal factors and trading day differences, are shown in table 2.

Total sales of retail stores for the full year 1953 were \$171 billion, an increase of 4 percent compared with 1952. Important differences in sales for the year 1953 compared with 1952 from the overall retail increase are shown in the automotive group with an increase of 18 percent; the apparel group with a 3 percent decrease; and the lumber, building, hardware group with a 1 percent decrease.

The small decline in seasonally adjusted retail sales from November to December reflected a reduction in durable goods sales and an almost offsetting increase in sales of nondurables. The largest gains, 5 and 9 percent, respectively, were registered by drug and apparel stores. Food stores showed a 3 percent rise in sales while smaller changes were indicated in the remaining major nondurable groups. In durable goods, decreases of 7 and 8 percent in December sales were shown for the automotive and lumber, building, hardware groups, while a decline of 3 percent was indicated for furniture and appliance stores.

Table 1.--SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP
(NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal factors and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (Millions of dollars)					
	12 months		December 1953 (Advance estimate)	December 1952	November 1953 ¹	October 1953 ²
	1953	1952				
Retail stores, total ³	171,010	164,090	16,641	16,911	14,029	14,952
Food group.....	40,883	39,771	3,709	3,555	3,306	3,567
Grocery stores.....	33,739	32,238	3,118	2,843	2,757	2,997
Eating and drinking places.....	13,043	12,689	1,127	1,109	1,060	1,135
General merchandise group.....	18,980	18,693	2,729	2,790	1,747	1,714
Department stores ⁴	10,374	10,277	1,483	1,521	963	934
Apparel group.....	10,319	10,633	1,409	1,533	884	902
Furniture and appliance group...	9,097	8,927	974	1,039	811	830
Lumber,building,hardware group ⁵ ..	13,478	13,681	979	1,093	1,031	1,213
Automotive group.....	33,503	28,338	2,412	2,378	2,582	2,926
Gasoline service stations.....	10,544	9,978	921	872	898	914
Drug and proprietary stores.....	4,784	4,718	519	513	376	394

See footnotes below table 2.

Source: Bureau of the Census

Table 2.--SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP
(ADJUSTED for seasonal factors and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (Millions of dollars)				Percent change, Dec. 1953 from--	
	1953			December 1952	November 1953	December 1952
	December (Advance estimate)	November ¹	October ²			
Retail stores, total ³	14,100	14,192	14,040	14,410	-1	-2
Durable goods stores, total ³ ..	4,720	5,042	5,029	4,871	-6	-3
Nondurable goods stores, total ³	9,380	9,150	9,011	9,539	+3	-2
Food group.....	3,500	3,391	3,400	3,372	+3	+4
Eating and drinking places.....	1,085	1,064	1,070	1,091	+2	-1
General merchandise group.....	1,595	1,566	1,528	1,690	+2	-6
Apparel group.....	375	805	768	987	+9	-11
Furniture and appliance group...	730	752	746	776	-3	-6
Lumber,building,hardware group ⁵ ..	1,020	1,110	1,086	1,119	-8	-9
Automotive group.....	2,645	2,832	2,859	2,617	-7	+1
Gasoline service stations.....	940	919	897	893	+2	+5
Drug and proprietary stores.....	405	386	383	411	+5	-1

¹Preliminary revision.

Source: Office of Business Economics

²Final revision.

³Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

⁴Preliminary estimate supplied by Federal Reserve Board.

⁵Includes farm equipment dealers.