

# ADVANCE RETAIL SALES REPORT

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
Frederick H. Mueller, Secretary

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS  
Robert W. Burgess, Director

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For release  
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## ADVANCE REPORT ON RETAIL SALES, DECEMBER 1959

The Department of Commerce announced today that December 1959 retail store sales totaled \$21.7 billion, bringing sales for the full year 1959 to a record high of \$215.6 billion, about 8 percent above sales for the year 1958. December 1959 sales, after adjustment for seasonal factors and trading day differences, were about 1 percent below November of this year and virtually unchanged from December 1958.

The December sales figures are based on the Advance Report on Retail Trade, a monthly survey of the Bureau of the Census conducted in cooperation with a representative cross-section of about 2,000 retail firms which, in total, operate some 39,000 stores in the United States. The firms which are cooperating in the early reporting of sales are part of a larger group which furnishes figures at a later date. The advance estimates are preliminary and subject to revision, but the revision of the total seldom exceeds  $1\frac{1}{2}$  percent.

The preliminary Census figures for December are shown in table 1 of this release. The Office of Business Economics noted that the 1 percent decline from November to December, after adjustment for seasonal factors and trading day differences, was due to decreases in sales of durable-goods stores, particularly automotive. Most nondurable-goods stores reported more than seasonal increases in sales in December. Final estimates for November indicate that seasonally adjusted retail sales were 3 percent below October.

(more)

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 1959	November 1959	December 1958
	1959	1958			
Retail stores, total <sup>1</sup> .....	215,616	200,353	21,657	17,635	21,174
Durable-goods stores total <sup>1</sup> .....	71,743	63,409	6,106	5,502	6,390
Nondurable-goods stores, total.....	143,873	136,944	15,551	12,133	14,784
Food group.....	51,740	50,263	4,758	4,173	4,475
Grocery stores.....	46,071	44,546	4,186	3,708	3,947
Eating and drinking places.....	15,597	14,792	1,346	1,276	1,243
General merchandise group.....	23,451	21,668	3,612	2,190	3,359
Department stores.....	<sup>2</sup> 13,670	12,564	<sup>2</sup> 2,117	1,302	1,952
Apparel group.....	13,261	12,558	1,970	1,170	1,854
Furniture and appliance group.....	11,071	10,323	1,258	992	1,176
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip.	15,268	13,850	1,191	1,192	1,132
Automotive group.....	39,506	33,859	2,790	2,807	3,214
Gasoline service stations.....	16,759	15,758	1,403	1,433	1,369
Drug and proprietary stores.....	7,160	6,599	793	575	738

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	Percentage change, Dec. 1959 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, Nov. 1959 from--	
	Nov. 1959	Dec. 1958	1959			1958	Oct. 1959	Nov. 1958
			Dec.	Nov.	Oct.	Nov.		
Retail stores, total <sup>1</sup> .....	-1	0	17,644	17,840	18,341	16,962	-3	+5
Durable-goods stores, total <sup>1</sup> ...	-5	-7	5,399	5,681	6,360	5,521	-11	+3
Nondurable-goods stores, total <sup>1</sup>	+1	+4	12,245	12,159	11,981	11,441	+1	+6
Food group.....				4,390	4,294	4,215	+2	+4
Eating and drinking places.....				1,306	1,335	1,232	-2	+6
General merchandise group.....				1,966	1,940	1,777	+1	+11
Apparel group.....				1,119	1,079	1,033	+4	+8
Furniture and appliance group.....				935	924	883	+1	+6
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group....				1,283	1,245	1,237	+3	+4
Automotive group.....				2,961	3,690	2,906	-20	+2
Gasoline service stations.....				1,438	1,435	1,342	0	+7
Drug and proprietary stores.....				607	609	565	0	+7

Source: Office of Business Economics

<sup>1</sup> Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

<sup>2</sup> Based on preliminary estimates supplied by Federal Reserve Board.

NOTE: Excludes Alaska and Hawaii which in 1954, according to the Retail Census, had retail sales of approximately 0.1 and 0.3 of one percent, respectively, of the United States total.