

**COMMERCE**

Office of the Secretary

Luther H. Hodges, Secretary      Washington 25, D. C.

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## ADVANCE REPORT ON RETAIL SALES, MARCH 1961

Total sales of retail stores in March were \$17.9 billion, the U. S. Department of Commerce announced today. After adjustment for seasonal variations and trading day differences, but not for price changes, total retail sales amounted to \$18.1 billion, about 1 percent above February and one percent below March 1960.

The March 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 sample group which furnishes figures at a later date. The advance estimates are subject to revision, on the basis of estimates subsequently derived from the full sample, but the revision of the total seldom exceeds  $1\frac{1}{2}$  percent.

The advance Census figures for March are shown in table 1 of this release. The Office of Business Economics indicated that, after adjustment for seasonal variations and trading day differences, the rise from February to March was primarily attributable to increased sales of new automobiles. Changes in the other major lines of trade were small. Estimates for February for the full sample indicate that seasonally adjusted retail sales were 1 percent above January.

(more)

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES FOR MARCH 1961

Table 1. SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP

(NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal variations or trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)		
	1961		1960
	Mar. <sup>1</sup>	Feb. <sup>2</sup>	Mar. <sup>r</sup>
Retail stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	17,878	15,167	17,419
Durable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	5,437	4,508	5,814
Nondurable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	12,441	10,659	11,605
Food group.....	4,713	4,184	4,365
Grocery stores.....	4,222	3,753	3,921
Eating and drinking places.....	1,261	1,163	1,215
General merchandise group.....	1,873	1,420	1,691
Department stores.....	<sup>4</sup> 1,062	797	977
Apparel group.....	1,201	787	956
Furniture and appliance group.....	755	680	803
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. group...	1,071	831	1,022
Automotive group.....	3,174	2,597	3,587
Gasoline service stations.....	1,414	1,277	1,387
Drug and proprietary stores.....	626	590	603

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 variations and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Percentage change, Mar. 1961 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, Feb. 1961 from--	
	Feb. 1961	Mar. 1960	1961		1960		Jan. 1961	Feb. 1960
			Mar. <sup>1</sup>	Feb. <sup>2</sup>	Jan.	Feb. <sup>r</sup>		
Retail stores, total <sup>3</sup> ....	+1	-1	18,097	17,913	17,773	18,161	+1	-1
Durable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .	+2	-7	5,507	5,384	5,359	6,010	0	-10
Nondurable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup>	0	+2	12,590	12,529	12,414	12,151	+1	+3
Food group.....				4,601	4,563	4,400	+1	+5
Eating and drinking places.....				1,373	1,340	1,301	+2	+6
General merchandise group.....				2,002	1,950	1,966	+3	+2
Apparel group.....				1,148	1,144	1,133	0	+1
Furniture and appliance group.....				810	844	911	-4	-11
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.				1,179	1,190	1,228	-1	-4
Automotive group.....				2,901	2,848	3,397	+2	-15
Gasoline service stations.....				1,468	1,465	1,430	0	+3
Drug and proprietary stores.....				631	615	628	+3	0

Source: Office of Business Economics

<sup>r</sup>. Monthly sales by kind-of-business revised for 1960. See Monthly Retail Trade Report for January 1961.

<sup>1</sup> Advance sample estimates. <sup>2</sup> Preliminary estimates of full sample.

<sup>3</sup> Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

<sup>4</sup> Based on preliminary estimates supplied by Federal Reserve Board.