



For release
June 10, 1964

MAY 1964

CB-64-343

The U. S. Department of Commerce announced today that total sales of retail stores in May were estimated at \$22.4 billion. Statistics prepared by the Department's Bureau of the Census show that this advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal variations and trading day differences, but not for price changes, was about one and one-half percent above April 1964 and about 7 percent above May 1963.

The Office of Business Economics noted that after adjustment, the appreciable increase in sales from April to May occurred mostly at nondurable goods stores, with the largest relative gains in apparel and general merchandise. Durable goods sales in May were maintained at April's high rate. Based on the full sample, seasonally adjusted sales of all retail stores in April were almost 1 percent higher than the March level.

The May sales figures are based on a monthly survey of the Bureau of the Census conducted in cooperation with a representative cross-section of about 2,500 retail firms which, in total, operate some 48,000 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 by the estimates subsequently derived from the full sample.

The revision of the total seldom exceeds 1.5 percent and for the past year has averaged 0.7 percent. For individual kind-of-business groups, revisions have been greater, ranging on the average from 0.7 percent for the food group to 3.0 percent for the lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.

(more)

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES FOR MAY 1964

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)		
	1964		1963
	May ¹	April ²	May
Retail stores, total ³	22,439	21,183	21,228
Durable-goods stores, total ³	7,503	7,361	7,239
Nondurable-goods stores, total ³	14,936	13,822	13,989
Food group.....	5,278	4,928	5,066
Grocery stores.....	4,743	4,433	4,578
Eating and drinking places.....	1,629	1,534	1,562
General merchandise group.....	2,506	2,322	2,278
Department stores.....	1,433	1,363	1,325
Apparel group.....	1,330	1,140	1,163
Furniture and appliance group.....	1,033	1,011	934
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. group	1,393	1,342	1,422
Automotive group.....	4,495	4,446	4,301
Gasoline service stations.....	1,742	1,631	1,626
Drug and proprietary stores.....	696	657	676

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 differences⁴)

Kind-of-business group	Percentage change, May 1964 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, April 1964 from--	
	Apr. 1964	May 1963	1964			1963	Mar. 1964	Apr. 1963
			May ¹	Apr. ²	Mar.	Apr.		
Retail stores, total ³	+1	+7	21,694	21,399	21,263	20,276	+1	+6
Durable-goods stores, total ³ ...	0	+8	7,030	7,014	6,939	6,646	+1	+6
Nondurable-goods stores, total ³	+2	+7	14,664	14,385	14,324	13,630	0	+6
Food group.....				5,097	5,152	4,864	-1	+5
Eating and drinking places.....				1,586	1,584	1,518	0	+4
General merchandise group.....				2,529	2,489	2,301	+2	+10
Apparel group.....				1,272	1,228	1,166	+4	+9
Furniture and appliance group.....				1,104	1,088	945	+1	+17
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.....				1,254	1,277	1,290	-2	-3
Automotive group.....				4,020	3,894	3,824	+3	+5
Gasoline service stations.....				1,688	1,629	1,594	+4	+6
Drug and proprietary stores.....				681	702	677	-3	+1

¹ Advance sample estimates.

² Preliminary estimates of full sample.

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

⁴ Data adjusted for seasonal variations and trading day differences.