



The U.S. Department of Commerce announced today that total sales of retail stores in March were estimated at \$22.3 billion. Statistics prepared by the Department's Bureau of the Census show that this advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal and holiday variations and trading day differences, but not for price changes, was about 1 percent below the record sales in February 1965 but 9 percent above the March 1964 level.

The Office of Business Economics noted that after adjustment, sales of durable goods in March declined 2 percent, due in large part to a decline in automotive dealers' sales from an all-time high in February. Sales of non-durables were unchanged, as lower sales by apparel and department stores were balanced by increased sales by most other major kinds of business. Based on the full sample, seasonally adjusted sales of all retail stores in February 1965 were up 2 percent from the January 1964 level.

The March 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 estimates subsequently derived from the full sample.

The revision of the total seldom exceeds 1.5 percent and for the past year has averaged 0.8 percent. For individual kind-of-business groups, revisions have been greater, ranging on the average from 1.1 percent for the food group to 3.0 percent for the automotive group.

(more)

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES FOR MARCH 1965

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

(NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal and holiday variations or trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)		
	1965		1964
	March ¹	February ²	March
Retail stores, total ³	22,310	19,705	20,502
Durable-goods stores, total ³	7,845	6,704	6,741
Nondurable-goods stores, total ³	14,465	13,001	13,761
Food group.....	5,247	4,869	4,891
Grocery stores.....	4,760	4,428	4,406
Eating and drinking places.....	1,662	1,485	1,485
General merchandise group.....	2,391	1,981	2,303
Department stores.....	1,409	1,142	1,336
Apparel group.....	1,084	921	1,283
Furniture and appliance group.....	1,017	904	973
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. group	1,171	959	1,134
Automotive group.....	4,990	4,283	4,058
Gasoline service stations.....	1,727	1,573	1,585
Drug and proprietary stores.....	753	695	680

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 and holiday variations and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Percentage change, March 1965 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, February 1965 from--	
	Feb. 1965	Mar. 1964	1965			1964	Jan. 1965	Feb. 1964
			Mar. ¹	Feb. ²	Jan.	Feb.		
Retail stores, total ³	-1	+9	23,224	23,421	22,900	21,533	+2	+9
Durable-goods stores, total ³ ...	-2	+13	7,819	8,011	7,855	7,262	+2	+10
Nondurable-goods stores, total ³	0	+8	15,405	15,410	15,045	14,271	+2	+8
Food group.....				5,354	5,192	4,991	+3	+7
Eating and drinking places.....				1,757	1,704	1,593	+3	+10
General merchandise group.....				2,823	2,832	2,592	0	+9
Apparel group.....				1,341	1,327	1,291	+1	+4
Furniture and appliance group.....				1,082	1,103	1,073	-2	+1
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.....				1,358	1,377	1,348	-1	+1
Automotive group.....				4,894	4,709	4,162	+4	+18
Gasoline service stations.....				1,812	1,749	1,641	+4	+10
Drug and proprietary stores.....				748	734	666	+2	+

¹ Advance sample estimates.

² Preliminary estimates of full sample.

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