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OCTOBER 1966

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The U.S. Department of Commerce announced today that total sales of retail stores in October were estimated at \$26.1 billion; this advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal and holiday variations and trading day differences but not price changes, was \$25.7 billion. The advance estimate, after adjustment was little changed from September but about 6 percent above October last year. Adjusted August-through-October sales averaged about 2 percent above the prior three months and 7 percent above the comparable period in 1965.

The Office of Business Economics noted that, after adjustment, sales by durable goods retailers fell 3 percent from September to October primarily due to lowered sales at automotive, and furniture and appliance stores. Sales at nondurable goods stores rose 1 percent to a new high, with all major component trades holding or exceeding September sales rates. Average monthly sales during the August-October period for durable goods stores were about 5 percent more than the average for the prior three months while the average for nondurable goods stores for the same period exceeded the average for the prior three months by about 1 percent. The year-to-year gain in the three month average was about 6 percent for the durable goods stores, as compared to 8 percent for nondurable goods stores. Average automotive sales were about 6 percent above last year for this period.

Based on the full sample the total U.S. unadjusted sales estimate for September was \$24.8 billion, about 1 percent more than the \$24.6 billion published earlier in the September Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report released on October 10, 1966. The seasonally adjusted sales for September as revised showed a slight increase from August.

The October sales figures are based on advance reporting of a small subsample of the Census Bureau's panel of retail firms. 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 1.3 percent. For individual kind-of-business groups revisions have been greater, ranging on the average from 1.4 percent for food stores to 4.5 percent for the apparel group.

It should be noted that even for figures derived from the full sample, sales movements between individual pairs of months tend to be relatively irregular. Data for several months are generally required to indicate the underlying trend.

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES FOR OCTOBER 1966

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)		
	1966		1965
	October <sup>1</sup>	September <sup>2</sup>	October
Retail stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	26,111	24,827	25,067
Durable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	8,532	7,590	8,413
Nondurable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	17,579	17,237	16,654
Food group.....	5,992	6,058	5,962
Grocery stores.....	5,477	5,560	5,448
Eating and drinking places.....	2,077	2,058	1,878
General merchandise group.....	3,365	3,270	3,122
Department stores.....	2,211	2,157	2,035
Apparel group.....	1,549	1,461	1,360
Furniture and appliance group.....	1,310	1,298	1,272
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. group	1,484	1,475	1,530
Automotive group.....	5,074	4,059	4,994
Gasoline service stations.....	1,990	1,919	1,884
Drug and proprietary stores.....	842	822	798

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, Oct. 1966 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, Sept. 1966 from--	
	Sept. 1966	Oct. 1965	1966			1965	Aug. 1966	Sept. 1965
			Oct. <sup>1</sup>	Sept. <sup>2</sup>	Aug.	Sept.		
Retail stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	0	+6	25,667	25,656	25,572	23,753	0	+8
Durable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> ...	-3	+3	8,110	8,318	8,358	7,768	0	+7
Nondurable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .	+1	+8	17,557	17,338	17,214	15,985	+1	+8
Food group.....				5,966	5,920	5,586	+1	+7
Eating and drinking places.....				1,998	1,975	1,814	+1	+10
General merchandise group.....				3,336	3,332	3,043	0	+10
Apparel group.....				1,463	1,499	1,343	-2	+9
Furniture and appliance group.....				1,280	1,285	1,184	0	+8
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group....				1,318	1,360	1,348	-3	-2
Automotive group <sup>4</sup> .....				4,990	4,959	4,658	+1	+7
Gasoline service stations.....				1,927	1,906	1,827	+1	+5
Drug and proprietary stores.....				861	837	794	+3	+8

<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>Extreme care should be taken in interpreting data in this category for September due to the difficulty in adjusting the passenger car dealer category for the model changeover.