



advance monthly
RETAIL SALES

For release January 9, 1970

CB-70-304

DECEMBER 1969

The Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce, announced today that total sales of retail stores in December were estimated at \$36.2 billion. This advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal and holiday variations and trading day differences but not for price changes, was \$29.6 billion. The advance estimate, after adjustment, was virtually the same as November sales but about 4 percent above December sales last year. Adjusted total October - through - December sales averaged about 1 percent above the prior three months and 3 percent above the comparable period a year ago.

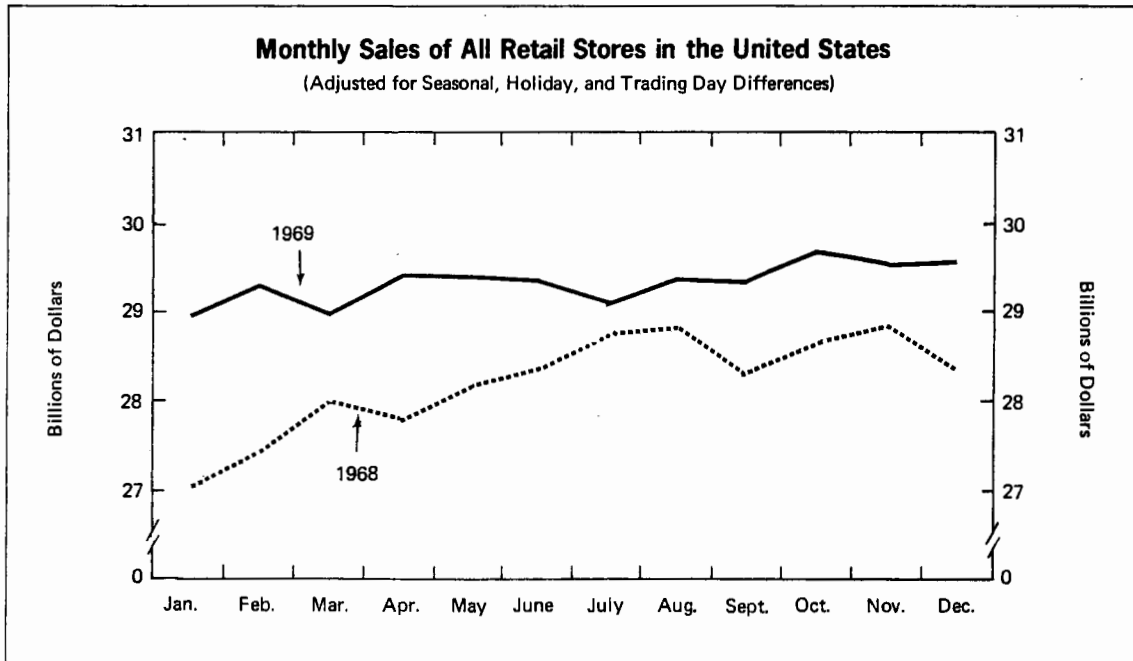
Based on the full sample, the total U.S. unadjusted sales estimate for November was about \$0.2 billion more than the \$29.7 billion published earlier in the November Advance Monthly Retail Sales report released December 10, 1969. The seasonally adjusted sales for November as revised were little changed from October.

The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting, by a small subsample of the Census Bureau's retail survey panel, of sales figures for the weeks and part-weeks comprising the month. Because retailers' weekly records often

differ from their monthly records (e.g., in reflecting such elements as carrying charges, sales taxes, merchandise returns), the sales figures estimated for the advance report can differ from the subsequently issued report based on the monthly records of the full sample of retailers. Additionally, sampling variability between subsample and later full sample results can be a cause of difference. For most months, such differences have been reduced by modifying the advance estimate, prior to publication, on the basis of the relationship between the advance and full-sample data for previous months.

The differences between the published advance and full-sample estimates of total retail sales seldom exceeds 1.5 percent and for the past year has averaged 1.2 percent. For individual kind-of-business groups, differences have been greater, ranging on the average from 1.3 percent for the food group to 4.8 percent for the lumber group.

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



For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Annual subscription to Current Retail Trade Reports (Weekly Retail Sales Report, Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report, Monthly Retail Trade Report, and Annual Retail Trade Report sold as a single subscription) \$6.00. Single copies, available only from the Bureau of the Census, 10¢.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE Maurice H. Stans, Secretary
Rocco C. Siciliano, Under Secretary
Harold C. Passer, Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS George Hay Brown, Director

Table 1. Sales of Retail Stores in the United States, by Kind-of-Business Group
Part A. NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal variations or trading day differences

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)				
	Dec. ¹ 1969	Nov. ² 1969	Dec. 1968	12-month total	
				1969	% change 1969/1968
Retail stores, total ³	36,205	29,911	34,086	352,081	+4
Durable goods stores, total ³	9,908	9,128	9,675	112,909	+2
Nondurable goods stores, total ³	26,297	20,783	24,411	239,172	+4
Food group.....	6,879	6,373	6,375	76,121	+4
Grocery stores.....	6,411	5,964	5,945	71,191	+5
Eating and drinking places.....	2,247	2,142	2,041	25,997	+3
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	8,387	5,666	7,807	58,383	+7
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	7,867	5,147	7,286	52,906	+7
Department stores.....	5,465	3,526	5,092	36,315	+9
Apparel group.....	2,873	1,765	2,641	20,176	+5
Furniture and appliance group.....	1,779	1,448	1,770	16,663	+1
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.....	1,524	1,496	1,517	19,258	+1
Automotive group.....	5,319	5,382	5,049	67,162	+3
Gasoline service stations.....	2,137	2,042	2,079	25,111	+2
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,404	978	1,295	11,932	+4

Part B. ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)					Percentage change November 1969 from--	
	1969			1968		Oct. 1969	Nov. 1968
	Dec. ¹	Nov. ²	Oct.	Dec.	Nov.		
Retail stores, total ³	29,581	29,548	29,620	28,347	28,806	0	+3
Durable goods stores, total ³	9,291	9,251	9,354	9,238	9,314	-1	-1
Nondurable goods stores, total ³	20,290	20,297	20,266	19,109	19,492	0	+4
Food group.....	6,472	6,450	6,450	6,139	6,235	0	+4
Eating and drinking places.....	2,255	2,219	2,219	2,062	2,128	+2	+6
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	5,003	5,000	5,000	4,577	4,729	0	+6
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	4,493	4,486	4,486	4,168	4,259	0	+5
Apparel group.....	1,662	1,719	1,719	1,571	1,652	-3	+1
Furniture and appliance group.....	1,343	1,358	1,358	1,357	1,360	-1	-1
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.....	1,571	1,559	1,559	1,616	1,600	+1	-2
Automotive group.....	5,570	5,638	5,638	5,445	5,521	-1	+1
Gasoline service stations.....	2,067	2,090	2,090	2,052	2,064	-1	0
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,017	1,007	1,007	969	944	+1	+8

¹Advance sample estimates.

²Preliminary estimates of full sample.

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

Table 2. Percentage Changes for Retail Sales
(ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	December 1969 from--		October through December 1969 from--	
	Nov. 1969	Dec. 1968	July through Sept. 1969	October through December 1968
Retail stores, total.....	0	+4	+1	+3
Durable goods stores, total.....	0	+1	+1	0
Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0	+6	+1	+5

Source: Bureau of the Census