



Advance Monthly Retail Sales

For release May 10, 1976 3:00 p.m.

CB-76-104

APRIL 1976

The Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce announced today that total sales of retail stores in April, after adjusting for seasonal variations and trading day differences, but not for price changes, were estimated at \$53.3 billion. This adjusted figure was virtually unchanged from March 1976 but 14 percent greater than sales for April of last year. The adjusted April estimate, excluding the automotive group, was 1 percent lower than March but 10 percent above April of last year.

Adjusted sales of durable goods stores increased 2 percent from March, while sales of nondurable goods stores declined about 1 percent. Compared with sales for April 1975, durable goods stores increased 25 percent, while nondurable goods stores increased 9 percent.

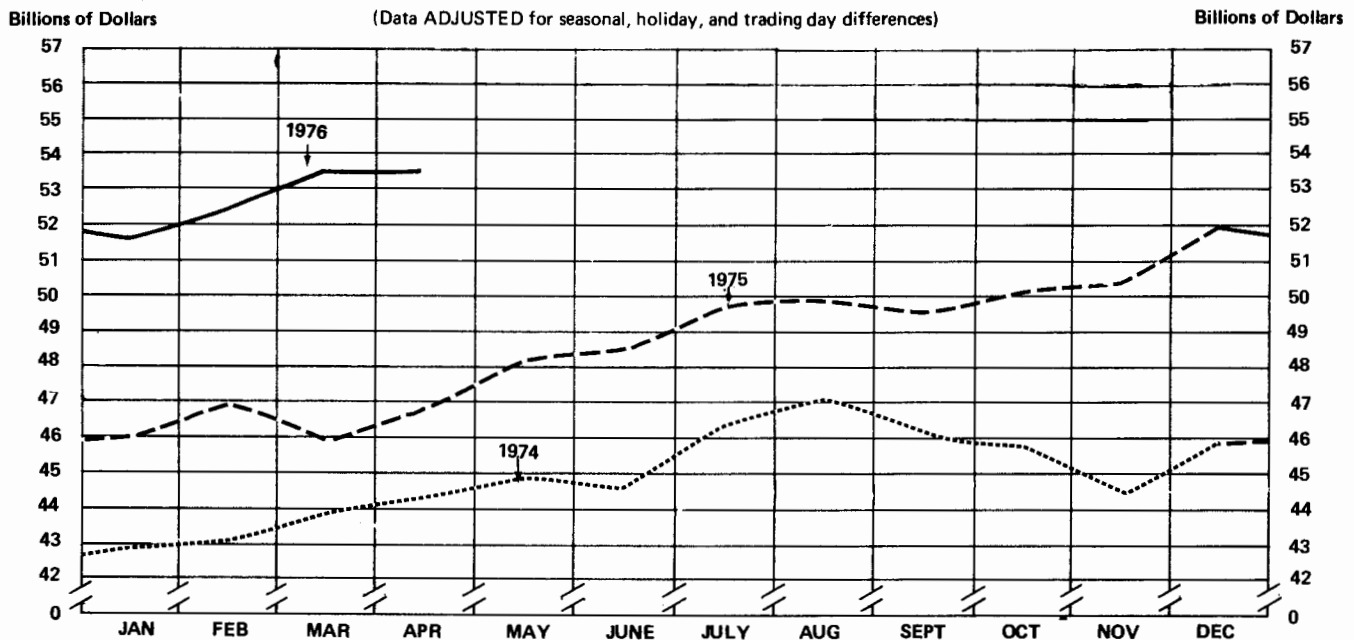
The revised estimate of retail sales for March, based on preliminary results from the full sample of retail stores, were about \$0.6 billion below the advance estimate of \$53.9 billion published earlier. Seasonally adjusted sales for March, as revised, were about 1 percent above February and 16 percent above March 1975. Excluding the automotive group, these estimates were about 2 percent above February, and 12 percent over March of last year. For nondurable goods stores, adjusted March sales increased about 2 percent from the previous month and 10 percent from the same month a year ago. For durable goods stores, adjusted sales for March were virtually unchanged from February but were 30 percent over March of last year.

The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting of sales for the weeks and part-weeks of the month by a small subsample of the Bureau's retail survey panel. Because retailers' weekly records often differ from their monthly records (in reflecting such items as carrying charges, sales, taxes, merchandise returns), the advance estimate can differ from the subsequent estimates which are based on monthly reports obtained from the full sample of retail stores. In addition, sampling variability between the sub-sample used for the advance estimates and the full sample can cause a difference. For most months, such differences have been reduced by modifying the advance estimates, prior to publication, on the basis of the relationship between the advance and full-sample data for previous months.

The differences between advance and full-sample estimates of month-to-month percentage change in seasonally adjusted total retail store sales have ranged from 0 to 2 during the last 12 months and a median value of 1. For individual kind of business groups, these differences have been higher.

Preliminary estimates for March 1976 and final estimates for February 1976 based on the full sample will also be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade report for March (BR-76-3). The complete report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and will present a description of the sample design and the techniques used in developing the estimates. In addition, the complete report will include approximate measures of sampling variability.

MONTHLY SALES OF ALL RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES



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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

Data on retail trade, published in the Weekly Retail Sales Report, Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report, the Monthly Retail Trade Report, and the Annual Retail Trade Report are available on a single subscription from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 20402, at \$30.10 per year. Add \$7.55 for each subscription to a foreign address. Single copies of the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Report are available from Subscriber Services Section (Publications), Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233 at 25 cents each.

Table 1. ESTIMATED SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES BY KIND OF BUSINESS

(Sales in millions of dollars)

Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted ¹				
	1976			1975		1976			1975	
	Apr. ² advance	Mar. prelim.	Feb. final	Apr.	Mar.	Apr. ² advance	Mar. prelim.	Feb. final	Apr.	Mar.
Retail stores, total.....	54,182	51,663	45,243	45,896	44,937	53,288	53,304	52,601	46,813	45,951
Total (excl. automotive group).....	42,992	40,826	36,289	37,474	37,296	42,731	43,228	42,255	38,912	38,590
Durable goods stores, total.....	18,321	17,634	14,764	14,588	13,270	17,707	17,325	17,397	14,165	13,378
Nondurable goods stores, total.....	35,861	34,029	30,479	31,208	31,667	35,581	35,979	35,204	32,648	32,573
Food stores, total.....	11,452	11,245	10,507	10,178	10,706	11,365	11,639	11,424	10,598	10,805
Grocery stores.....	10,634	10,455	9,775	9,452	9,967	10,560	10,823	10,625	9,846	10,058
Eating and drinking places.....	4,231	4,076	3,723	3,773	3,668	4,317	4,313	4,174	3,898	3,821
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	8,480	7,708	6,213	7,059	7,039	8,524	8,621	8,401	7,638	7,599
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	7,851	7,087	5,718	6,503	6,489	7,898	8,012	7,849	7,068	7,058
Department stores.....	5,417	4,795	3,840	4,449	4,367	5,439	5,493	5,408	4,825	4,852
Variety stores.....	*	673	563	660	706	*	789	764	746	739
Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	*	583	432	458	458	*	572	533	476	456
Apparel and accessory stores, total.....	2,339	2,045	1,768	1,949	2,077	2,192	2,371	2,369	2,179	2,099
Men's, boys' wear stores.....	*	437	378	436	454	*	528	507	506	506
Women's apparel, accessory stores.....	*	807	715	749	795	*	912	935	819	820
Shoe stores.....	*	333	272	311	349	*	379	374	337	310
Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores, total.....	2,275	2,320	2,064	2,010	1,971	2,348	2,407	2,332	2,132	2,046
Furniture, home furnishings stores.....	*	1,368	1,226	1,207	1,176	*	1,394	1,385	1,244	1,199
Household appliance, TV, radio stores.....	*	744	654	620	605	*	810	736	686	660
Household appliance dealers.....	*	455	381	368	373	*	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
Building materials, hardware, farm equipment dealers, total.....	3,283	2,978	2,398	2,825	2,368	3,144	3,200	3,083	2,707	2,522
Lumber and other building materials dealers.....	*	1,666	1,367	1,418	1,237	*	1,845	1,746	1,415	1,355
Hardware stores.....	*	469	406	461	394	*	549	545	468	464
Automotive dealers, total.....	11,190	10,837	8,954	8,422	7,641	10,557	10,076	10,346	7,901	7,361
Passenger car, other automotive dealers.....	*	10,035	8,311	7,663	6,954	*	9,215	9,509	7,164	6,623
Passenger car dealers (franchised).....	*	8,705	7,252	6,488	5,947	*	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
Tire, battery, accessory dealers.....	*	802	643	759	687	*	861	837	737	738
Gasoline service stations.....	3,845	3,739	3,475	3,468	3,424	3,880	3,851	3,861	3,532	3,497
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,640	1,573	1,462	1,407	1,430	1,655	1,645	1,572	1,455	1,488
Liquor stores.....	*	851	786	806	837	*	942	918	884	903

NOTE: Totals include data for kinds of businesses not shown separately.

*Advance estimates are not available from the subsample panel for these kinds of businesses.

¹Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See explanatory material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-76-3). ²Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.

Table 2. PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND OF BUSINESS

(Adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading day differences)

Kind of business	Percent change					
	April 1976 advance from--		March 1976 preliminary from--		February 1976 through April 1976 from--	
	Mar. 1976 preliminary	Apr. 1975 final	Feb. 1976 final	Mar. 1975 final	Nov. 1975 through Jan. 1976	Feb. 1975 through Apr. 1975
Total, retail stores.....	0	+14	+1	+16	+3	+14
Total (excluding automotive group).....	-1	+10	+2	+12	+2	+11
Durable goods stores, total.....	+2	+25	0	+30	+6	+24
Nondurable goods stores, total.....	-1	+9	+2	+10	+2	+10
Food stores, total.....	-2	+7	+2	-8	+1	+7
Grocery stores.....	-2	+7	+2	+8	+1	+7
Eating and drinking places.....	0	+11	+3	+13	+1	+11
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	-1	+12	+3	+13	+3	+12
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	-1	+12	+2	+14	+3	+12
Department stores.....	-1	+13	+2	+13	+3	+13
Apparel and accessory stores, total.....	-8	+1	0	+13	0	+7
Furniture, home furnishings and equipment stores, total.....	-2	+10	+3	+18	+2	+14
Building materials, hardware, farm equipment dealers, total..	-2	+16	+4	+27	+4	+18
Automotive dealers, total.....	+5	+34	-3	+37	+10	+31
Gasoline service stations.....	+1	+10	0	+10	+2	+10
Drug and proprietary stores.....	+1	+14	+5	+11	+5	+11

Table 3. ESTIMATED SALES OF STORES OF FIRMS OPERATING 11 OR MORE RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND OF BUSINESS: MARCH 1976

(Sales in millions of dollars)

Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted ¹		
	1976		1975	1976		1975
	Mar. prelim.	Feb. final	Mar.	Mar. prelim.	Feb. final	Mar.
Retail stores, total.....	15,469	13,349	14,342	16,534	16,079	14,882
Food stores, total.....	5,979	5,576	5,779	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
Grocery stores ²	5,913	5,504	5,702	6,046	5,957	5,668
General merchandise group with nonstores...	6,137	4,876	5,559	6,861	6,677	6,038
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	5,805	4,636	5,278	6,545	6,420	5,768
Department stores.....	4,288	3,425	3,900	4,906	4,817	4,333
Variety stores.....	552	453	564	650	626	595
Apparel and accessory stores, total.....	499	401	563	583	586	540
Shoe stores.....	133	107	162	158	149	141
Drug and proprietary stores.....	641	578	548	723	654	586

¹Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday and trading day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-76-3). NA Not available.

Table 4. ESTIMATED SALES OF RETAIL STORES BY SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS FOR SPECIFIED STANDARD METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREAS AND CITIES

(Sales in millions of dollars)

Area	Not adjusted		
	1976		1975
	Mar. preliminary	Feb. final	Mar.
Standard Consolidated Areas¹			
Chicago, Ill.--Northwestern Ind., total.....	2,036	1,767	1,809
Nondurable goods stores.....	1,423	1,245	1,315
GAF ²	644	519	563
New York--Northeastern N.J., total.....	3,292	2,914	3,008
Nondurable goods stores.....	2,390	2,191	2,299
GAF ²	932	780	882
Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas¹			
Baltimore, Md., GAF ²	124	102	113
Boston, Mass., GAF ²	184	150	188
Chicago, Ill., total.....	1,874	1,618	1,665
Nondurable goods stores.....	1,319	1,154	1,221
GAF ²	605	487	531
Cleveland, Ohio, GAF ²	122	99	115
Dallas, Texas, GAF ²	150	119	130
Detroit, Mich., total.....	987	841	838
Nondurable goods stores.....	612	554	588
GAF ²	251	206	256
Houston, Texas, GAF ²	171	141	144

Table 4. ESTIMATED SALES OF RETAIL STORES BY SELECTED KINDS OF BUSINESS FOR SPECIFIED STANDARD METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREAS AND CITIES--Continued

(Sales in millions of dollars)

Area	Not adjusted		
	1976		1975
	Mar. preliminary	Feb. final	Mar.
Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas ¹ --Con.			
Kansas City, Mo.--Kansas, GAF ²	142	114	130
Los Angeles-Long Beach, Calif., total.....	1,790	1,544	1,527
Nondurable goods stores.....	1,215	1,088	1,132
GAF ²	496	417	449
Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn., GAF ²	131	122	121
New York, N.Y.--Nassau-Suffolk, N.Y., total ³	2,200	1,971	2,069
Nondurable goods stores.....	1,637	1,500	1,592
GAF ²	624	538	623
Nassau-Suffolk, N.Y., total ⁴	620	546	552
Nondurable goods stores.....	424	383	402
GAF ²	143	128	136
New York, N.Y., total ⁵	1,580	1,425	1,517
Nondurable goods stores.....	1,213	1,117	1,190
GAF ²	481	410	487
Philadelphia, Pa., total.....	1,071	930	972
Nondurable goods stores.....	758	667	724
GAF ²	293	236	272
Pittsburgh, Pa., total.....	564	487	537
Nondurable goods stores.....	415	367	405
GAF ²	161	135	146
St. Louis, Mo.-Ill., total.....	522	458	505
Nondurable goods stores.....	334	300	340
GAF ²	140	113	128
San Francisco-Oakland, Calif., total.....	782	713	701
Nondurable goods stores.....	568	519	521
GAF ²	199	170	187
Washington, D.C.-Md.-Va., total.....	735	676	691
Nondurable goods stores.....	504	464	497
GAF ²	176	169	168
Cities			
Chicago, Ill., total.....	788	670	674
Nondurable goods stores.....	603	516	535
GAF ²	346	271	295
Detroit, Mich., total.....	225	188	203
Nondurable goods stores.....	138	126	134
GAF ²	45	38	56
Los Angeles, Calif., total.....	612	529	555
Nondurable goods stores.....	439	386	443
GAF ²	202	167	193
New York, N.Y., total.....	1,333	1,199	1,284
Nondurable goods stores.....	1,029	950	1,007
GAF ²	412	352	424
Philadelphia, Pa., total.....	384	329	350
Nondurable goods stores.....	299	259	286
GAF ²	127	99	117

¹Definitions of standard consolidated areas and standard metropolitan statistical areas are shown in the Monthly Retail Trade Report BR-76-3. ²Stores in the general merchandise, apparel, and furniture and appliance groups; these stores specialize in department store types of merchandise. ³Formerly New York, N.Y. SMSA. ⁴Includes Nassau and Suffolk Counties formerly included in the New York, N.Y., SMSA. ⁵Includes New York City, Rockland and Westchester Counties, N.Y.