



Advance Monthly Retail Sales

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MARCH 1977

The Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce, announced today that total sales of retail stores in March, after adjusting for seasonal variations and trading day differences, but not for price changes, were estimated at \$59.6 billion. This adjusted figure was about 2 percent above February 1977, and 12 percent greater than March a year ago. The adjusted March estimate, excluding the automotive group, was 2 percent above February and 9 percent above March of last year.

Adjusted sales of durable goods stores increased 4 percent from February, while sales of nondurable goods stores increased 2 percent. Compared with sales for March 1976, durable goods stores increased 18 percent, while nondurable goods stores increased 9 percent.

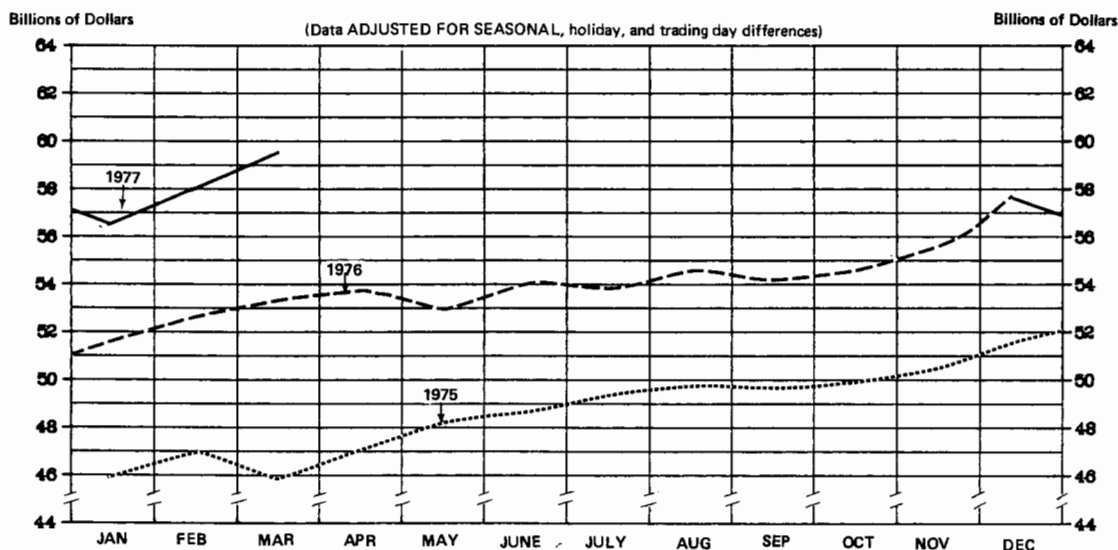
The revised estimate of retail sales for February, based on preliminary results from the full sample of retail stores, was about \$58.2 billion, about \$0.6 billion above the advance estimate published earlier. Seasonally adjusted sales for February, as revised, were about 3 percent above January and 11 percent above February 1976. Excluding the automotive group, these estimates were about 3 percent above January and 9 percent over February of last year. For nondurable goods stores, adjusted February sales were about 2 percent above the previous month and 9 percent above the same month a year earlier. For durable goods stores, adjusted sales for February were 4 percent above January and 14 percent higher than February 1976.

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 percent during the last 12 months, with a median of 1 percent. For individual kind-of-business groups, these differences tend to be higher.

Preliminary estimates for February 1977 and final estimates for January 1977 based on the full sample will also be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade report for February (BR-77-2). 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				
	1977			1976		1977			1976	
	Mar. ² advance	Feb. prelim.	Jan. final	Mar.	Feb.	Mar. ² advance	Feb. prelim.	Jan. final	Mar.	Feb.
Retail stores, total.....	58,258	49,364	49,213	51,752	45,243	59,558	58,166	56,660	53,344	52,601
Total (excl. automotive group).....	45,352	39,039	39,601	40,820	36,289	46,991	46,203	45,058	43,182	42,255
Durable goods stores, total.....	20,510	16,594	15,645	17,758	14,764	20,542	19,754	19,024	17,403	17,397
Non-durable goods stores, total.....	37,748	32,770	33,568	33,994	30,479	39,016	38,412	37,636	35,941	35,204
Food stores, total.....	12,148	11,060	11,521	11,176	10,507	12,314	12,134	11,871	11,567	11,424
Grocery stores.....	11,294	10,327	10,770	10,384	9,775	11,443	11,311	11,046	10,749	10,625
Eating and drinking places.....	4,648	4,139	4,081	4,083	3,723	4,887	4,802	4,465	4,321	4,174
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	8,485	6,595	6,484	7,696	6,213	9,108	8,985	8,882	8,606	8,401
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	7,810	6,034	5,924	7,074	5,718	8,446	8,348	8,207	7,996	7,849
Department stores.....	5,419	4,197	4,160	4,776	3,840	5,948	5,936	5,802	5,471	5,408
Variety stores.....	*	486	452	670	563	*	665	644	785	764
Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	*	441	420	579	432	*	554	640	568	533
Apparel and accessory stores, total.....	2,263	1,850	1,959	2,050	1,768	2,479	2,484	2,380	2,377	2,369
Men's, boys' wear stores.....	*	427	475	438	378	*	589	550	529	507
Women's apparel, accessory stores.....	*	709	717	810	715	*	927	879	915	935
Shoe stores.....	*	279	304	329	272	*	375	365	375	374
Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores, total.....	2,589	2,198	2,183	2,304	2,064	2,639	2,556	2,414	2,388	2,332
Furniture, home furnishings stores.....	*	1,327	1,311	1,366	1,226	*	1,529	1,481	1,392	1,385
Household appliance, TV, radio stores.....	*	672	677	728	654	*	788	720	792	736
Household appliance dealers.....	*	392	386	442	381	*	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
Building materials, hardware, farm equipment dealers, total.....	3,381	2,653	2,385	3,020	2,398	3,540	3,471	3,251	3,208	3,083
Lumber and other building materials dealers.....	*	1,557	1,390	1,668	1,367	*	2,027	1,831	1,815	1,746
Hardware stores.....	*	388	394	469	406	*	512	540	549	545
Automotive dealers, total.....	12,906	10,325	9,612	10,932	8,954	12,567	11,963	11,602	10,162	10,346
Passenger car, other automotive dealers.....	*	9,554	8,828	10,135	8,311	*	10,956	10,611	9,307	9,509
Passenger car dealers (franchised).....	*	8,444	7,869	8,746	7,252	*	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
Tire, battery, accessory dealers.....	*	771	784	797	643	*	1,007	991	855	837
Gasoline service stations.....	4,159	3,669	3,969	3,779	3,475	4,253	4,222	4,263	3,892	3,861
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,725	1,582	1,578	1,571	1,462	1,773	1,737	1,690	1,643	1,572
Liquor stores.....	*	864	838	848	786	*	1,031	941	939	918

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-77-2). 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. NA Not available.

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					
	March 1977 advance from--		February 1977 preliminary from--		January 1977 through March 1977 from--	
	Feb. 1977 preliminary	Mar. 1976 final	Jan. 1977 final	Feb. 1976 final	Oct. 1976 through Dec. 1976	Jan. 1976 through Mar. 1976
Total, retail stores.....	+2	+12	+3	+11	+4	+11
Total (excluding automotive group).....	+2	+9	+3	+9	+2	+8
Durable goods stores, total.....	+4	+18	+4	+14	+7	+15
Non-durable goods stores, total.....	+2	+9	+2	+9	+2	+9
Food stores, total.....	+1	+6	+2	+6	+1	+6
Grocery stores.....	+1	+6	+2	+6	+1	+6
Eating and drinking places.....	+2	+13	+8	+15	+7	+11
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	+1	+6	+1	+7	0	+8
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	+1	+6	+2	+6	-1	+7
Department stores.....	0	+9	+2	+10	-1	+11
Apparel and accessory stores, total.....	0	+4	+4	+5	0	+4
Furniture, home furnishings and equipment stores, total.....	+3	+11	+6	+10	+2	+9
Building materials, hardware, farm equipment dealers, total..	+2	+10	+7	+13	+2	+9
Automotive dealers, total.....	+5	+24	+3	+16	+11	+20
Gasoline service stations.....	+1	+9	-1	+9	+2	+10
Drug and proprietary stores.....	+2	+8	+3	+10	+2	+10

Table 3. ESTIMATED SALES OF STORES OF FIRMS OPERATING 11 OR MORE RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND OF BUSINESS: FEBRUARY 1977

(Sales in millions of dollars)

Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted ¹		
	1977		1976	1977		1976
	Feb. prelim.	Jan. final	Feb.	Feb. prelim.	Jan. final	Feb.
Retail stores, total.....	14,356	14,510	13,349	17,421	17,116	16,079
Food stores, total.....	5,906	6,175	5,576	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
Grocery stores	5,822	6,091	5,504	6,287	6,177	5,957
General merchandise group with nonstores...	5,215	5,090	4,876	7,199	7,099	6,677
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	4,942	4,834	4,636	6,892	6,763	6,420
Department stores.....	3,752	3,707	3,425	5,307	5,163	4,817
Variety stores.....	370	342	453	513	502	626
Apparel and accessory stores, total.....	430	441	401	629	587	586
Shoe stores.....	105	114	107	147	143	149
Drug and proprietary stores.....	644	655	578	739	751	654

¹Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday and trading day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-77-2). 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		
	1977		1976
	Feb. preliminary	Jan. final	Feb.
Standard Consolidated Areas ¹			
Chicago, Ill.--Northwestern Ind., total.....	1,918	1,927	1,767
Nondurable goods stores.....	1,284	1,309	1,245
GAF ²	549	525	519
New York-Northeastern N.J., total.....	3,063	3,231	2,914
Nondurable goods stores.....	2,315	2,482	2,191
GAF ²	824	864	780
Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas ¹			
Baltimore, Md., GAF ²	95	94	102
Boston, Mass., GAF ²	168	167	150
Chicago, Ill., total.....	1,753	1,769	1,618
Nondurable goods stores.....	1,181	1,202	1,154
GAF ²	511	491	487
Cleveland, Ohio, GAF ²	96	101	99
Dallas, Texas, GAF ²	131	135	119
Detroit, Mich., total.....	986	969	841
Nondurable goods stores.....	627	655	554
GAF ²	221	224	206
Houston, Texas, GAF ²	152	164	141