

Advance Monthly Retail Sales

MARCH 1982

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 3:30 P.M. EST, Monday April 12, 1982

CB-82-51

SEE "NOTICE OF REVISED RETAIL SALES ESTIMATES" BELOW TABLE 1 ON PAGE 2. THE SALES COMPARISONS IN THIS REPORT ARE BASED ON REVISED DATA.

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 \$87.2 billion. This adjusted figure was 0.5 percent below February but 1.2 percent higher than March a year ago. The adjusted March estimate excluding the automotive group was 1.2 percent below February but 1.5 percent above March of last year.

Adjusted sales of durable goods stores were about 0.9 percent above February while sales of nondurable goods stores decreased 1.1 percent. Compared with sales for March 1981, durable goods stores sales decreased 2.2 percent while nondurable goods stores increased 2.8 percent.

The revised estimate of retail sales for February 1982 based on preliminary results from a full sample of retail stores was about \$87.6 billion, about \$1.0 billion above the February advance estimate published earlier. Seasonally adjusted preliminary sales for February were about 2.6 percent above January and 2.8 percent above February 1981. Excluding the automotive group, retail sales were 1.7 percent above January and 3.6 percent above February 1981. For nondurable goods stores, adjusted February sales were 1.3 percent higher than January, and 4.8 percent above February 1981. For durable goods stores, February adjusted sales were 5.7 percent above January but 1.6 percent below February 1981.

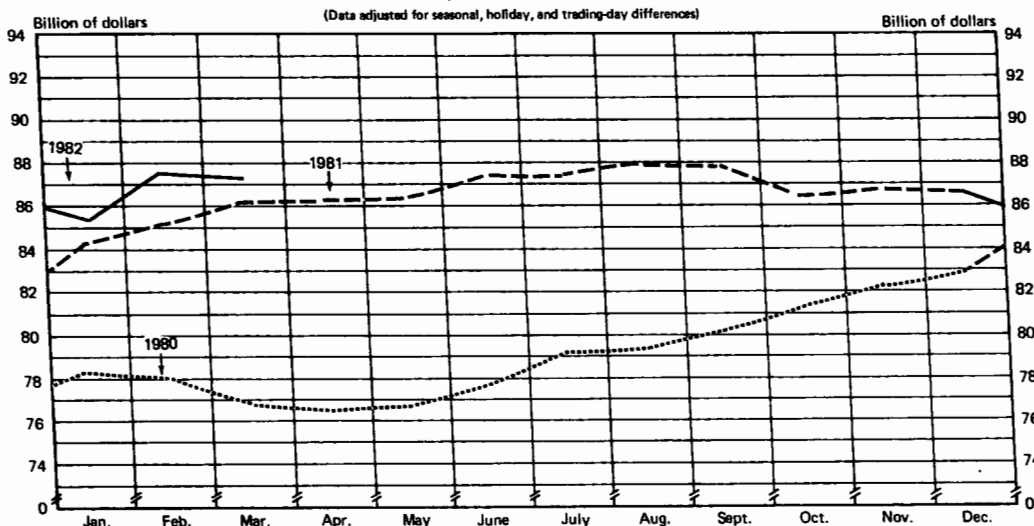
The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting of sales by a small subsample of the Bureau's retail survey panel. Because of the early reporting, the advance estimates can differ from the subsequent estimates which are based on monthly reports obtained from the full sample of retail stores. In addition, sampling variability between the subsample 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.

Percentage differences between advance and full-sample preliminary estimates of month-to-month percentage change in seasonally adjusted total retail store sales have ranged from approximately -1.5 percent to +0.9 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.7 percent for the past 12 months. For individual kind-of-business groups, these differences tend to be higher. Sampling variability of and revisions to advance-to-preliminary estimates are shown in table 4 on the last page of this report.

Preliminary estimates for February 1982 and final estimates for January 1982 based on the full sample will be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for February (BR-82-02). The complete report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and will present a description of revisions, and the techniques used in developing the estimates. In addition, the completed report will include approximate measures of sampling variability.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for April is scheduled to be released May 12, 1982 at 2:30 p.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES FOR THE UNITED STATES January 1980—March 1982



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U.S. Department of Commerce
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The 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, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, at \$25 per year. Add \$6.25 for each subscription to a foreign address. Postage stamps not acceptable; currency submitted at sender's risk. Remittances from foreign countries must be by international money order or by a draft on a U.S. bank. Single copies of the Advance Monthly Retail Sales report are for sale by Subscriber Services (Publications), Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233, at 70 cents each.



Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kind of Business for the United States

(Sales in millions of dollars)

1972 SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted ¹				
		1982			1981		1982			1981	
		Mar. ² advance	Feb. prelim.	Jan. final	Mar.	Feb.	Mar. ² advance	Feb. prelim.	Jan. final	Mar.	Feb.
	Retail trade, total.....	86,025	75,840	76,647	83,971	73,727	87,164	87,574	85,320	86,128	85,201
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	68,940	62,019	64,529	67,225	59,855	71,976	72,851	71,643	70,895	70,324
	Durable goods stores, total.....	27,998	23,406	21,704	28,063	23,666	26,993	26,762	25,316	27,601	27,197
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	3,704 (*)	3,092	3,058	4,192	3,485	4,017 (*)	4,149	4,046	4,604	4,681
521,3	Building materials and supply stores.....	(*)	1,993	1,916	2,750	2,331	(*)	2,690	2,538	3,073	3,142
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	588	657	705	579	(*)	786	844	784	777
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	17,085	13,821	12,118	16,746	13,872	15,188	14,723	13,677	15,233	14,877
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous auto- motive dealers.....	15,480 (*)	12,504	10,742	15,173	12,529	13,555 (*)	13,066 (NA)	12,083 (NA)	13,608 (NA)	13,188 (NA)
551	Motor vehicle dealers (franchised).....	(*)	11,299	9,689	13,699	11,474	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	1,317	1,376	1,573	1,343	(*)	1,657	1,594	1,625	1,689
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	3,638 (*)	3,194	3,211	3,670	3,312	3,758 (*)	3,693	3,508	3,838	3,826
571	Furniture and home furnishings stores....	(*)	1,921	1,930	2,283	2,048	(*)	2,193	2,112	2,334	2,338
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores	(*)	1,012	1,032	1,091	979	(*)	1,200 (NA)	1,137 (NA)	1,185 (NA)	1,161 (NA)
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	428	443	468	416	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	58,027	52,434	54,943	55,908	50,061	60,171	60,812	60,004	58,527	58,004
53	General merchandise group stores.....	9,585	7,461	7,442	9,054	7,228	10,967	10,725	10,427	10,406	10,367
531	Department stores.....	7,944	6,139	6,157	7,383	5,819	9,068	8,884	8,672	8,486	8,409
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	521	518	649	546	(*)	714	707	752	74
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.	(*)	801	767	1,022	863	(*)	1,127	1,048	1,168	1,210
54	Food stores.....	20,134	18,593	19,966	18,788	17,436	20,407	20,389	20,213	19,366	19,122
541	Grocery stores.....	18,448	17,066	18,498	17,289	16,022	18,729	18,713	18,666	17,861	17,568
554	Gasoline service stations.....	7,647	7,512	8,110	8,285	7,530	7,771	8,422	8,628	8,463	8,442
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	3,769	3,141	3,302	3,445	2,913	4,240	4,296	3,947	3,945	3,985
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	437	488	536	480	(*)	608	568	650	666
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	1,212	1,256	1,300	1,098	(*)	1,645	1,534	1,459	1,488
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	664	682	709	602	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	552	625	645	514	(*)	761	722	712	709
58	Eating and drinking places.....	8,120	7,260	7,279	7,620	6,668	8,320	8,432	7,973	7,823	7,753
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	2,816	2,567	2,590	2,589	2,424	2,894	2,818	2,690	2,677	2,658
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,284	1,333	1,297	1,243	(*)	1,497	1,466	1,441	1,450
53,56,57, 594,5961 (pt.)	GAF ³ plus mail-order houses (department stores mdse.).....	(*)	16,668	16,779	18,963	15,959	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57, 594	GAF.....	(*)	16,321	16,472	18,555	15,638	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)

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

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

NA Not available.

¹Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-82-3.²Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.³GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise. Data for mail-order catalog desks located within department stores of some mail-order firms are included in the department store estimates.

NOTICE OF REVISED RETAIL SALES ESTIMATES - The adjusted and unadjusted monthly estimates of retail sales from January 1978 to February 1982 have been revised utilizing the results from the 1977 Census of Retail Trade and the 1980 Annual Retail Trade Survey. The revised estimates and a description of the methodology are contained in the Revised Monthly Retail Sales and Inventories-January 1972-December 1981 Report (BR-13-81S).

Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kind of Business for the United States

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

1972 SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change					
		Mar. 1982 advance from--		Feb. 1982 preliminary from--		Jan. 1982 through Mar. 1982	
		Feb. 1982 preliminary	Mar. 1981 final	Jan. 1982 final	Feb. 1981 final	Oct. 1981 through Dec. 1981	Jan. 1981 through Mar. 1981
	Retail trade, total.....	-0.5	+1.2	+2.6	+2.8	+0.1	+1.8
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	-1.2	+1.5	+1.7	+3.6	+0.2	+2.5
	Durable goods stores, total.....	+0.9	-2.2	+5.7	-1.6	+0.1	-2.6
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	-3.2	-12.7	+2.5	-11.4	-1.7	-11.7
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+3.2	-0.3	+7.6	-1.0	0.0	-1.6
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous auto- motive dealers.....	+3.7	-0.4	+8.1	-0.9	+0.6	-1.8
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+1.8	-2.1	+5.3	-3.5	-3.3	-4.8
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	-1.1	+2.8	+1.3	+4.8	+0.1	+3.9
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+2.3	+5.4	+2.9	+3.4	-0.1	+4.0
531	Department stores.....	+2.1	+6.9	+2.4	+5.6	+2.0	+6.1
54	Food stores.....	+0.1	+5.4	+0.9	+6.6	-0.1	+6.0
541	Grocery stores.....	+0.1	+4.9	+0.3	+6.5	-0.7	+5.9
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-7.7	-8.2	-2.4	-0.2	-2.9	-1.9
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-1.3	+7.5	+8.8	+7.8	+4.3	+5.8
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-1.3	+6.4	+5.8	+8.8	+3.8	+6.4
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	+2.7	+8.1	+4.8	+6.0	0.0	+4.8

Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales of Group II Companies by Kind of Business for the United States:

(Sales in millions of dollars)

1972 SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted ¹		
		Feb. 1982 preliminary	Jan. 1982 final	Feb. 1981	Feb. 1982 preliminary	Jan. 1982 final	Feb. 1981
	Retail trade, total.....	26,183	27,194	24,715	31,989	31,311	30,216
53	General merchandise group stores.....	6,801	6,753	6,520	9,829	9,569	9,408
531	Department stores.....	5,911	5,914	5,607	8,542	8,330	8,091
533	Variety stores.....	406	396	416	565	550	579
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.	484	443	497	722	689	738
54	Food stores.....	10,061	10,934	9,341	10,998	10,878	10,212
541	Grocery stores.....	9,896	10,797	9,202	10,827	10,733	10,068
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1,116	1,160	1,038	1,680	1,598	1,560
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	482	475	452	716	674	672
566	Shoe stores.....	233	280	234	341	358	342
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	1,373	1,394	1,263	1,560	1,488	1,435

Note: The Group II component of the sample consists of companies which had 11 or more retail establishments according to the most recent update of multi-establishment files and which were selected with certainty (i.e., their sales size exceeded specified dollar volume cutoffs which vary by kind of business).

¹Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-13-3.)

Table 4. Sampling Variability of and Revision to Advance-to-Preliminary Estimate

SIC code	Kind of business	Estimated coefficient of variation in percent of the advance-to-preliminary ratio			Preliminary-to-final percent change minus the advance-to-preliminary percent change			
		Range ¹		Median	Range ²		Mean	Average of absolute difference
		From	To		From	To		
	Retail trade, total.....	0.6	0.8	0.7	-1.54	+0.94	-0.18	0.69
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0.7	0.8	0.7	-3.12	+2.82	-0.38	0.57
	Durable goods stores, total.....	1.2	2.0	1.6	-3.59	+4.63	-0.14	1.55
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	1.5	3.6	1.8	-4.10	+3.70	-0.39	2.07
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.8	2.3	2.05	-4.62	+7.79	+0.67	2.63
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	1.0	1.8	1.45	-5.47	+4.04	+0.55	2.71
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	1.7	4.2	2.25	-4.37	+2.97	-0.61	1.99
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0.5	0.7	0.6	-1.24	+0.54	-0.31	0.46
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.3	0.7	0.45	-3.03	+2.04	+0.05	1.24
531	Department stores.....	0.1	0.4	0.35	-2.36	+3.23	+0.18	1.29
54	Food stores.....	1.2	1.5	1.5	-1.65	+1.54	-0.23	0.77
541	Grocery stores.....	0.4	0.5	0.45	-2.61	+2.50	-0.38	0.86
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.6	1.5	0.95	-2.32	+0.50	-0.83	1.04
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.2	2.9	1.75	-1.92	+1.19	-0.33	1.06
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.6	1.2	1.05	-2.35	+2.33	-0.13	1.39
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	0.4	1.9	0.55	-1.09	+0.99	-0.15	0.68

Note: See Appendix B, Reliability of Data, in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for a discussion on the measures of sampling variability.

¹The ranges of sampling variability shown are based on sales estimates unadjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences for the data months of July-December 1981.

²The ranges shown are based on sales estimates adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences for the 12-month period, January-December 1981.

