

Advance Monthly Retail Sales

December 1985

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EST, Tuesday, January 14, 1986

CB-86-09

NOTICE: Beginning with the March 1986 publication, released April 11, seasonal factors to adjust sales estimates will be developed each month (instead of twice a year) using all available unadjusted estimates. Based on extensive research on this procedure, we expect improvements in the seasonally adjusted estimates.

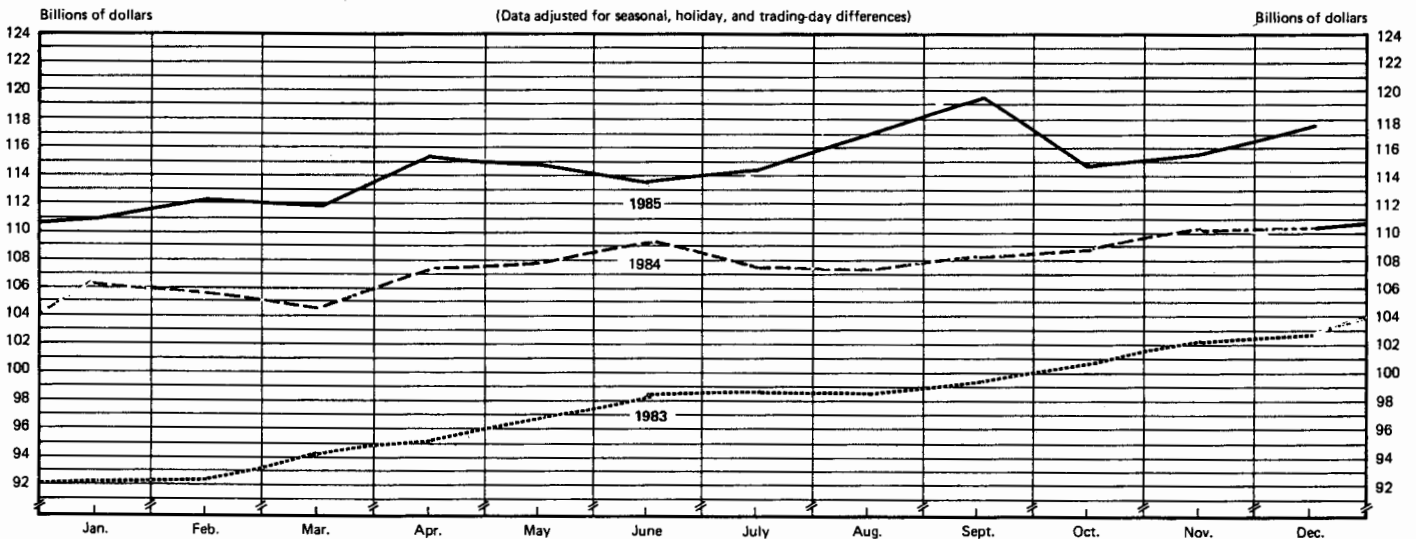
Advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for December adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$117.9 billion, 1.9 percent above November and 6.6 percent above December 1984. Fourth quarter sales were 0.7 percent below the third quarter but were 5.6 percent above the same quarter a year ago. Total sales for the 12 months of 1985 were \$1,378.6 billion, up 6.3 percent above the 1984 total.

Durable goods increased 4.3 percent from November and increased 9.3 percent from the previous year. Automotive sales increased 5.7 percent from November and were 10.0 percent above the same month a year ago. Building materials increased 9.1 percent from last year while furniture dealers increased 8.5 percent in the same period.

Nondurable goods were about the same as November but were 5.1 percent above December a year ago. The general merchandise group sales increased 3.0 percent from last year, while apparel increased 9.1 percent during the same period. Food stores sales increased 6.9 percent from December a year ago. Drug store sales were little changed during the month but increased 5.1 percent above last year.

The scheduled release dates for 1986 are as follows: February 13, March 13, April 11, May 13, June 12, July 15, August 13, September 12, October 15, November 14, and December 11.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES January 1983-December 1985



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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 \$37 per year. Add \$9.25 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. This report is available electronically in CENDATA, the Bureau's on-line information service, through a commercial vendor. For further information, contact Customer Services, DUSD, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233, or call (301) 763-4100 or (301) 763-7561.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, by Kind of Business

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted						Adjusted ¹					
		12 month total		1985			1984		1985			1984	
		1985	Percent change from 1984	Dec. ² adv.	Nov. prel.	Oct. final	Dec.	Nov. ³	Dec. ² adv.	Nov. prel.	Oct. final	Dec.	Nov.
	Retail trade, total.....	1,378,609	+6.3	139,950	118,757	116,144	132,262	113,543	117,862	115,620	114,860	110,519	110,255
	Total (excl. auto group)..	1,068,337	+4.7	116,835	95,791	91,285	111,367	91,165	91,618	90,788	90,309	86,661	86,563
	Durable goods stores, total.	511,752	+10.2	46,403	41,060	42,648	42,373	39,313	44,034	42,219	41,923	40,295	39,934
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..	72,931	+6.2	5,820	6,152	6,848	5,311	5,744	6,510	6,376	6,290	5,969	5,889
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,516	5,184	3,707	4,235	(*)	4,632	4,641	4,403	4,299
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	.876	939	923	805	(*)	864	924	791	798
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	310,272	+12.0	23,115	22,966	24,859	20,895	22,378	26,244	24,832	24,551	23,858	23,692
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	285,055	+12.8	20,928	20,700	22,597	18,897	20,361	24,055	22,623	22,462	21,846	21,730
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	(*)	(*)	19,080	20,755	17,442	18,829	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,266	2,262	1,998	2,017	(*)	2,209	2,089	2,012	1,962
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	70,327	+10.6	8,218	6,638	6,194	7,534	6,006	6,110	6,104	6,153	5,629	5,600
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,417	3,256	3,438	3,263	(*)	3,132	3,140	3,011	3,021
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,755	2,474	3,475	2,356	(*)	2,509	2,527	2,243	2,200
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	(*)	(*)	826	797	919	737	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods total.....	866,857	+4.1	93,547	77,697	73,496	89,889	74,230	73,828	73,401	72,937	70,224	70,321
53	General merchandise group stores..	160,479	+4.4	25,024	16,488	13,291	24,381	16,109	13,599	13,565	13,344	13,197	13,168
531	Department stores.....	135,176	+4.6	21,123	13,915	11,239	20,348	13,533	11,549	11,481	11,284	11,125	11,084
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	785	693	1,431	855	(*)	722	717	755	795
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,788	1,359	2,602	1,721	(*)	1,362	1,343	1,317	1,289
54	Food stores.....	281,488	+4.3	25,359	24,231	23,645	24,425	22,760	24,170	23,908	23,638	22,607	22,843
541	Grocery stores.....	264,469	+4.6	23,695	22,828	22,262	22,733	21,343	22,762	22,469	22,218	21,186	21,364
554	Gasoline service stations.....	103,014	+2.0	8,889	8,613	8,817	8,249	8,339	8,810	8,691	8,577	8,299	8,372
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	71,981	+7.6	10,250	7,006	6,062	9,519	6,413	6,296	6,175	6,075	5,772	5,737
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	857	701	1,375	869	(*)	725	707	716	741
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,919	2,613	3,797	2,682	(*)	2,572	2,549	2,400	2,395
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,981	1,602	2,873	1,718	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	959	899	1,190	906	(*)	898	877	872	867
58	Eating and drinking places.....	130,486	+5.1	10,798	10,734	11,236	10,557	10,088	11,007	11,100	11,070	10,621	10,530
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	47,401	+7.3	5,374	3,957	3,975	5,107	3,763	4,028	4,042	4,090	3,831	3,805
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,690	1,560	2,306	1,646	(*)	1,625	1,597	1,619	1,628
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	(*)	(*)	479	437	510	558	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAF ³	(*)	(*)	(*)	34,401	29,038	48,912	32,582	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)

*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-85-11).

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.

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

Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, by Kind of Business

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

SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change					
		Dec. 1985 advance from--		Nov. 1985 preliminary from--		Oct. 1985 through Dec. 1985	
		Nov. 1985 prelim.	Dec. 1984 final	Oct. 1985 final	Nov. 1984 final	July 1985 through Sept 1985	Oct. 1984 through Dec. 1984
	Retail trade, total.....	+1.9	+6.6	+0.7	+4.9	-0.7	+5.6
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	+0.9	+5.7	+0.5	+4.9	+1.8	+5.4
	Durable goods, total.....	+4.3	+9.3	+0.7	+5.7	-3.8	+7.3
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+2.1	+9.1	+1.4	+8.3	+4.9	+9.4
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+5.7	+10.0	+1.1	+4.8	-8.9	+6.6
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+6.3	+10.1	+0.7	+4.1	-9.9	+6.5
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+0.1	+8.5	-0.8	+9.0	+4.7	+9.7
	Nondurable goods, total.....	+0.6	+5.1	+0.6	+4.4	+1.1	+4.7
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+0.3	+3.0	+1.7	+3.0	+0.9	+3.3
531	Department stores.....	+0.6	+3.8	+1.7	+3.6	+1.7	+3.9
54	Food stores.....	+1.1	+6.9	+1.1	+4.7	+1.3	+5.1
541	Grocery stores.....	+1.3	+7.4	+1.1	+5.2	+1.4	+5.5
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+1.4	+6.2	+1.3	+3.8	+1.2	+4.1
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+2.0	+9.1	+1.6	+7.6	+3.1	+8.7
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.8	+3.6	+0.3	+5.4	+1.3	+5.4
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	-0.3	+5.1	-1.2	+6.2	+1.4	+6.7

Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales of Group II Companies, by Kind of Business

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted ¹		
		Nov. 1985 prelim.	Oct. 1985 final	Nov. 1984	Nov. 1985 prelim.	Oct. 1985 final	Nov. 1984
	Retail trade, total.....	43,981	39,507	42,155	40,016	39,604	38,358
53	General merchandise group stores.....	15,339	12,239	15,014	12,599	12,342	12,209
531	Department stores.....	13,308	10,740	12,933	11,007	10,794	10,592
533	Variety stores.....	665	582	724	607	614	667
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	1,366	917	1,357	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	13,461	12,979	12,694	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	13,285	12,822	12,529	12,873	12,925	12,430
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	2,856	2,351	2,510	2,462	2,393	2,185
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	1,252	1,049	1,094	1,096	1,048	957
566	Shoe stores.....	504	457	462	459	466	433
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	2,148	2,122	2,117	2,170	2,241	2,132

¹Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-85-11).

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).



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Sample Design and Reliability of Data

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.

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 -0.9 percent to +1.6 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.6 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 below.

Preliminary estimates for November 1985 and final estimates for October 1985 based on the full sample will be published late this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for November (BR-85-11). The complete report will provide sales estimate in greater detail and will present a description of revisions, and the techniques used in developing the estimates. The complete report will include additional measures of sampling variability.

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.....	0.7	0.9	0.8	-0.9	+1.6	0.0	0.6
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0.8	0.9	0.8	-0.7	+1.1	-0.1	0.4
	Durable goods stores, total.....	1.3	1.7	1.6	-1.1	+3.8	+0.4	0.9
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	0.9	2.0	1.3	-3.7	+5.8	-0.1	1.8
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.5	2.2	1.7	-1.8	+4.9	+1.0	1.4
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	0.9	1.6	1.2	-1.8	+5.3	+1.1	1.5
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	1.8	2.5	2.1	-3.8	+3.4	-0.1	1.5
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0.5	0.7	0.6	-0.8	+1.2	0.0	0.4
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.5	1.0	0.6	-1.7	+1.6	+0.1	0.6
531	Department stores.....	0.2	0.5	0.2	-1.1	+1.9	+0.2	0.8
54	Food stores.....	1.0	1.2	1.0	-1.0	+1.0	-0.2	0.6
541	Grocery stores.....	0.3	0.5	0.4	-1.3	+0.9	-0.2	0.5
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.6	1.3	0.9	-2.4	+4.2	+0.2	1.2
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.1	3.1	1.7	-1.6	+2.8	-0.1	1.2
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.8	1.3	0.9	-2.5	+2.8	0.0	1.1
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	0.3	1.8	0.6	-1.1	+2.2	+0.4	1.1

¹The ranges of sampling variability shown are based on sales estimates unadjusted for seasonal variation, holiday, and trading-day differences for the data months of November 1984-July 1985.

²The ranges shown for the retail trade total are based on sales estimates adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences for the 12-month period, November 1984-December 1985. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period August 1984-July 1985.

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