

# Advance Monthly Retail Sales

## February 1986

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EST, Thursday, March 13, 1986

CB-86-39

**INTENTION TO REVISE RETAIL SALES ESTIMATES:** The unadjusted and adjusted monthly retail sales estimates will be revised utilizing the results from the 1984 Annual Retail Trade Survey. Revised estimates for the period January 1983 through February 1986 along with the previously published estimates for the same period are scheduled for release during the week of March 17th.

**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.

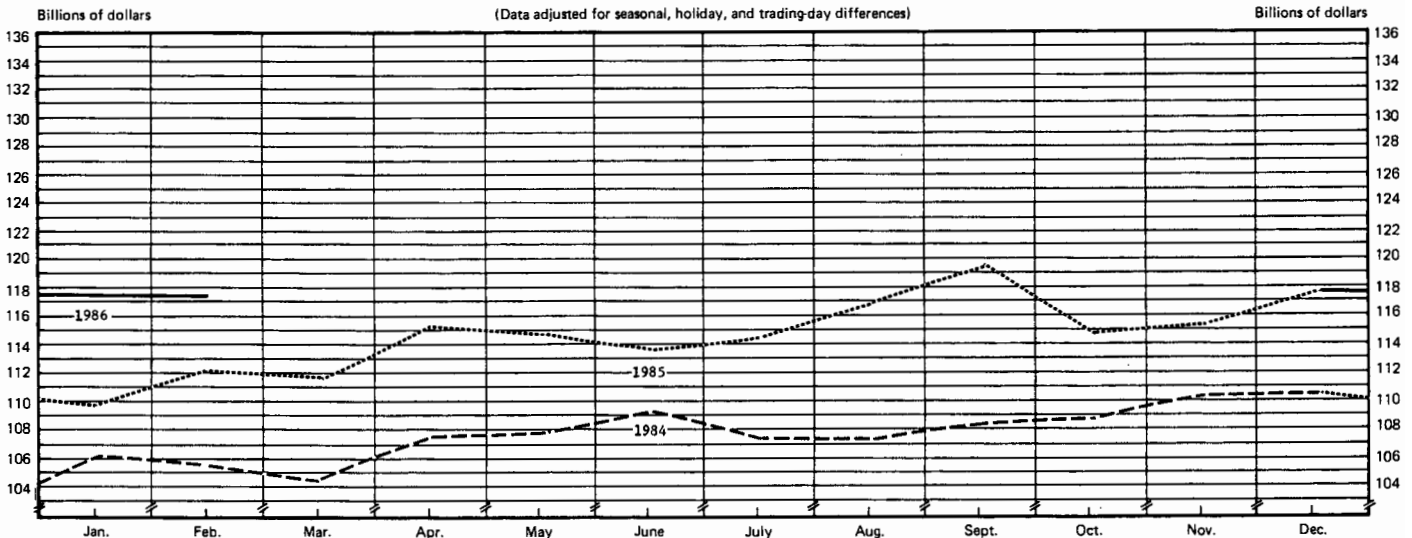
Advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for February adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$117.3 billion, virtually unchanged from January but 4.6 percent above February 1985. Total sales in the December through February period were 0.7 percent above the prior three months and 5.6 percent above the same months one year ago.

Durable goods were virtually unchanged compared to January but were 7.6 percent above February 1985. Building materials and furniture showed little change from January but were 20.7 percent and 13.5 percent, respectively, above the same month a year ago. Automotive sales were 4.0 percent above February 1985.

Nondurable goods were about the same as January but were 2.9 percent above February 1985. After a decline of 1.8 percent in January, the general merchandise group increased 2.8 percent in February. Food stores and apparel were 4.2 percent and 3.1 percent, respectively, above February of last year. Gasoline service stations decreased 2.6 percent in February but were 2.1 percent above February 1985.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales report for March is scheduled to be released April 11, 1986, at 8:30 a.m.

### ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES January 1984-February 1986



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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 <sup>1</sup>				
		1986		1985			1986		1985		
		Feb. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Jan. prel.	Dec. final	Feb.	Jan.	Feb. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Jan. prel.	Dec. final	Feb.	Jan.
	Retail trade, total.....	99,685	105,559	139,467	95,585	98,817	117,274	117,364	117,567	112,096	110,972
	Total (excl. auto group)..	76,470	81,905	116,498	73,256	77,027	91,318	91,054	91,478	87,147	86,351
	Durable goods, total.....	37,680	38,884	46,311	35,195	35,375	44,203	44,291	43,994	41,073	40,622
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..	4,928	5,310	5,890	4,162	4,452	6,779	6,907	6,616	5,618	5,774
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	4,003	4,195	3,058	3,252	(*)	5,172	4,918	4,094	4,180
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	723	994	606	691	(*)	852	866	807	836
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	23,215	23,654	22,969	22,329	21,790	25,956	26,310	26,089	24,949	24,621
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	21,521	21,827	20,869	20,742	20,044	23,806	24,198	23,987	22,945	22,598
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	20,322	19,418	18,980	18,612	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores....	(*)	1,827	2,100	1,587	1,746	(*)	2,112	2,102	2,004	2,023
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	5,545	5,800	8,462	4,875	5,132	6,478	6,294	6,264	5,708	5,547
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	3,087	3,713	2,613	2,694	(*)	3,377	3,226	3,049	2,891
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	2,263	3,975	1,902	2,071	(*)	2,433	2,561	2,251	2,254
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	696	1,042	579	629	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	62,005	66,675	93,156	60,390	63,442	73,071	73,073	73,573	71,023	70,350
53	General merchandise group stores..	9,487	9,417	24,857	9,315	9,134	13,628	13,251	13,496	13,419	12,893
531	Department stores.....	8,033	8,001	20,946	7,785	7,644	11,592	11,253	11,452	11,266	10,781
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	548	1,338	565	541	(*)	753	721	772	737
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	868	2,573	965	949	(*)	1,245	1,323	1,381	1,37
54	Food stores.....	21,640	23,702	25,365	20,799	22,279	24,028	24,214	24,165	23,067	23,076
541	Grocery stores.....	20,334	22,419	23,610	19,512	21,003	22,593	22,807	22,680	21,680	21,720
554	Gasoline service stations.....	7,163	8,215	8,788	7,202	7,990	8,281	8,504	8,710	8,110	8,349
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	4,378	4,759	10,083	4,260	4,449	5,973	5,923	6,176	5,791	5,490
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	551	1,362	489	564	(*)	671	721	699	696
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	2,037	4,065	1,822	1,853	(*)	2,518	2,591	2,423	2,274
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	1,211	3,080	1,091	1,117	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	738	1,190	673	733	(*)	871	892	884	855
58	Eating and drinking places.....	9,619	10,157	10,678	9,268	9,495	11,031	11,113	10,885	10,616	10,515
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	3,802	3,994	5,336	3,584	3,703	4,124	4,122	4,000	3,904	3,853
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,477	2,266	1,342	1,471	(*)	1,623	1,631	1,575	1,636
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	247	441	278	336	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAF <sup>3</sup> .....	(*)	23,004	51,229	21,285	21,662	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)

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

NA Not available.

<sup>1</sup>Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-86-01).

<sup>2</sup>Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.

<sup>3</sup>GAF 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					
		Feb. 1986 advance from--		Jan. 1986 preliminary from--		Dec. 1985 through Feb. 1986	
		Jan. 1986 prelim.	Feb. 1985 final	Dec. 1985 final	Jan. 1985 final	Sept. 1985 through Nov. 1985	Dec. 1984 through Feb. 1985
	Retail trade, total.....	-0.1	+4.6	-0.2	+5.8	+0.7	+5.6
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	+0.3	+4.8	-0.5	+5.4	+1.2	+5.3
	Durable goods, total.....	-0.2	+7.6	+0.7	+9.0	+1.4	+8.6
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	-1.9	+20.7	+4.4	+19.6	+8.2	+16.9
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-1.3	+4.0	+0.8	+6.9	-0.9	+6.7
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	-1.6	+3.8	+0.9	+7.1	-1.0	+6.8
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+2.9	+13.5	+0.5	+13.5	+4.2	+12.7
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.0	+2.9	-0.7	+3.9	+0.3	+3.8
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+2.8	+1.6	-1.8	+2.8	0.0	+2.2
531	Department stores.....	+3.0	+2.9	-1.7	+4.4	+0.8	+3.4
54	Food stores.....	-0.8	+4.2	+0.2	+4.9	+1.3	+5.3
541	Grocery stores.....	-0.9	+4.2	+0.6	+5.0	+1.4	+5.4
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-2.6	+2.1	-2.4	+1.9	-0.5	+3.0
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+0.8	+3.1	-4.1	+7.9	-1.4	+6.0
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.7	+3.9	+2.1	+5.7	-0.1	+4.0
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	0.0	+5.6	+3.1	+7.0	+1.2	+5.7

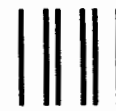
**Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales of Group II Companies, by Kind of Business**

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted <sup>1</sup>		
		Jan. 1986 prelim.	Dec. 1985 final	Jan. 1985	Jan. 1986 prelim.	Dec. 1985 final	Jan. 1985
	Retail trade, total.....	34,541	56,766	32,650	40,105	40,171	38,313
53	General merchandise group stores.....	8,705	23,218	8,395	12,368	12,487	11,987
531	Department stores.....	7,656	20,031	7,307	10,783	10,946	10,321
533	Variety stores.....	446	1,167	448	625	607	630
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	603	2,020	640	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	13,396	14,177	12,585	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	13,221	13,880	12,437	13,247	13,181	12,704
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1,742	4,234	1,548	2,428	2,425	2,172
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	785	1,840	672	1,104	1,077	957
566	Shoe stores.....	355	661	335	445	461	428
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	2,139	3,174	1,993	2,273	2,178	2,127

<sup>1</sup>Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-86-01).

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 January 1986 and final estimates for December 1985 based on the full sample will be published late this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for January (BR-86-01). 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. 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 <sup>1</sup>		Median	Range <sup>2</sup>		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

<sup>1</sup>The 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.

<sup>2</sup>The 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, February 1985-January 1986. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period August 1934-July 1985.

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