

Advance Monthly Retail Sales

March 1987

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. DST, Wednesday, April 15, 1987

CB-87-68

NOTICE: The Census Bureau revised the monthly estimates of retail sales for the period January 1967 through February 1987 utilizing the results from the 1982 Census of Retail Trade and the 1985 Annual Retail Trade Survey. In addition to the annual benchmarking operation, this revision reflects the introduction of a new sample of retail firms and a change in the treatment of leased departments and concessions. Formerly, these sales were tabulated in the kind-of-business category of the store in which they were located. Under the new sample, these sales are shifted to the kind-of-business of the leased department or concession. The sales in this report are on the new basis.

For a further description of the changes, please see the December Monthly Retail Trade Report, page 17.

Advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for March adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$124.7 billion, virtually unchanged from February, but 6.2 percent above March 1986. The revised February showed an increase of 4.9 percent from January. Total sales in the January through March period decreased 1.0 percent from the prior three months but were 4.0 percent above the same period a year ago.

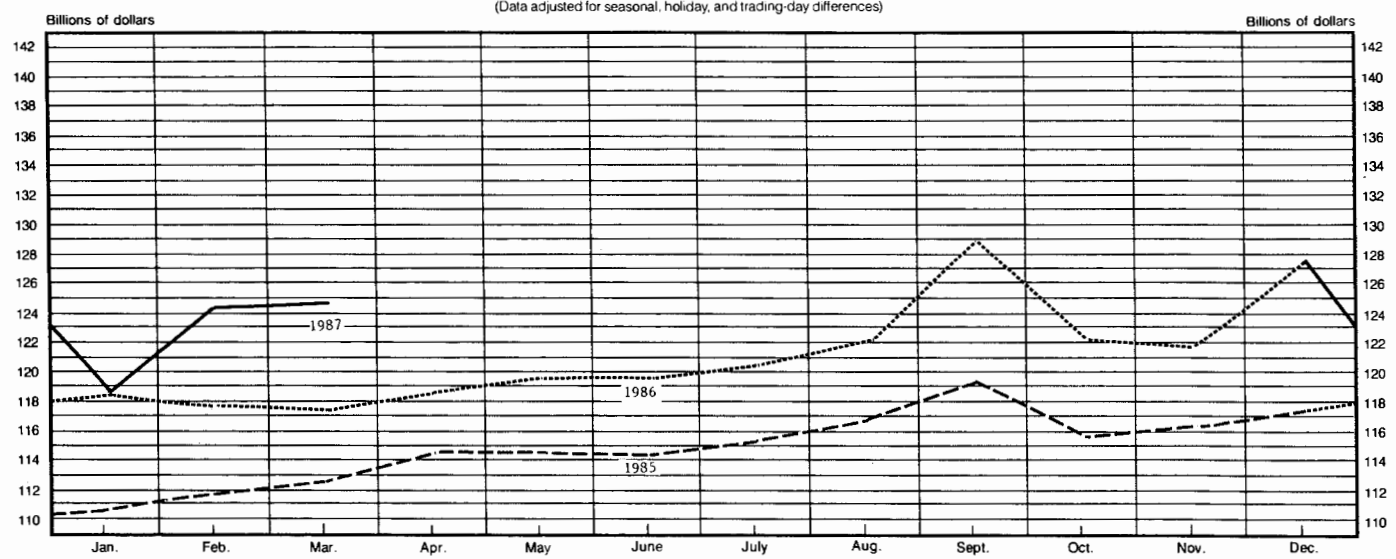
Durable goods were 9.3 percent above March 1986. Automotive sales showed little change from February but were 8.8 percent above sales a year ago.

Nondurable goods were virtually unchanged from February but were 4.3 percent above March 1986. Individual kind-of-business levels showed little change from February, however, compared to sales a year ago, general merchandise sales were up 2.7 percent, food stores up 3.5 percent, apparel up 6.4 percent, while gasoline service stations were down 5.4 percent.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales report for April is scheduled to be released May 13, 1987, at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES January 1985-March 1987

(Data adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences)



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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					
		1987			1986		1987			1986	
		Mar. ² adv.	Feb. prel.	Jan. final	Mar.	Feb.	Mar. ² adv.	Feb. prel.	Jan. final	Mar. ² adv.	Feb. ²
	Retail trade, total.....	120,583	106,066	106,393	114,915	100,459	124,669	124,412	118,579	117,428	117,590
	Total (excl. auto group)..	92,022	81,988	85,496	88,875	77,197	97,466	97,486	94,850	92,418	91,629
	Durable goods, total.....	47,425	40,534	37,769	43,085	37,794	47,854	47,681	43,766	43,769	44,309
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..	6,917	5,637	5,641	6,572	5,120	7,601	7,758	7,424	7,303	7,050
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	4,386	4,378	4,807	3,853	(*)	5,967	5,701	5,294	5,242
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	761	822	801	656	(*)	1,017	974	894	876
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	28,561	24,078	20,897	26,040	23,262	27,203	26,926	23,729	25,010	25,961
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	26,418	22,294	18,996	24,003	21,498	24,923	24,662	21,513	22,817	23,728
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	20,226	17,230	21,738	19,857	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores....	(*)	1,784	1,901	2,037	1,764	(*)	2,264	2,216	2,193	2,233
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	6,485	5,912	6,288	5,855	5,225	6,892	6,916	6,763	6,220	6,110
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	3,212	3,274	3,257	2,870	(*)	3,709	3,570	3,386	3,318
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	2,274	2,582	2,194	1,999	(*)	2,720	2,727	2,408	2,385
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	668	734	690	616	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	73,158	65,532	68,624	71,830	62,665	76,815	76,731	74,813	73,659	73,281
53	General merchandise group stores..	11,729	9,516	9,276	11,885	8,966	13,296	13,440	13,078	12,941	12,679
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)	10,021	8,036	7,877	10,032	7,499	11,310	11,415	11,126	10,869	10,667
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts.)	(NA)	8,689	8,537	10,839	8,101	(NA)	12,325	12,041	11,769	11,523
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	559	552	788	554	(*)	737	724	807	733
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	921	847	1,065	913	(*)	1,288	1,228	1,265	1,279
54	Food stores.....	24,601	22,738	24,961	24,391	21,966	25,363	25,248	25,028	24,508	24,387
541	Grocery stores.....	23,156	21,421	23,659	22,937	20,705	23,897	23,775	23,588	23,075	22,980
554	Gasoline service stations.....	6,905	6,376	6,641	7,211	7,161	7,230	7,140	6,918	7,639	8,037
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	6,340	5,180	5,377	6,594	4,731	7,052	7,022	6,689	6,627	6,419
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	566	648	704	545	(*)	807	796	797	776
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	2,230	2,312	2,755	2,010	(*)	2,954	2,865	2,758	2,662
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	1,103	1,090	1,476	1,033	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,038	1,081	1,334	913	(*)	1,357	1,288	1,213	1,195
58	Eating and drinking places.....	12,835	11,460	11,843	11,571	10,052	13,070	13,203	12,929	11,712	11,567
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	4,285	3,971	4,182	4,009	3,629	4,399	4,345	4,298	4,029	3,966
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,392	1,474	1,558	1,387	(*)	1,663	1,592	1,693	1,653
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	194	193	259	216	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAF ³	(*)	24,215	24,505	27,674	21,918	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)

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

NA Not available. ^r Revised

¹ Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-11 program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publication. Factors and explanatory material are contained in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, RR-87-02.

² 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.

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					
		Mar. 1987 advance from--		Feb. 1987 preliminary from--		Jan. 1987 through Mar. 1987	
		Feb. 1987 prelim.	Mar. 1986 final	Jan. 1987 final	Feb. 1986 final	Oct. 1986 through Dec. 1986	Jan. 1986 through Mar. 1986
	Retail trade, total.....	+0.2	+6.2	+4.9	+5.8	-1.0	+4.0
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0.0	+5.5	+2.8	+6.4	+2.2	+5.0
	Durable goods, total.....	+0.4	+9.3	+8.9	+7.6	-5.7	+4.8
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	-2.0	+4.1	+4.5	+10.0	+1.8	+6.1
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+1.0	+8.8	+13.5	+3.7	-11.5	+0.6
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+1.1	+9.2	+14.6	+3.9	-12.6	+0.6
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-0.3	+10.8	+2.3	+13.2	+0.9	+11.2
	Nondurable goods, total.....	+0.1	+4.3	+2.6	+4.7	+2.1	+3.6
53	General merchandise group stores.....	-1.1	+2.7	+2.8	+6.0	+2.3	+4.3
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	-0.9	+4.1	+2.6	+7.0	+2.0	+5.3
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	(NA)	(NA)	+2.4	+7.0	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	+0.5	+3.5	+0.9	+3.5	+0.3	+3.1
541	Grocery stores.....	+0.5	+3.6	+0.8	+3.5	+0.6	+3.2
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+1.3	-5.4	+3.2	-11.2	+3.7	-11.4
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+0.4	+6.4	+5.0	+9.4	+0.9	+6.7
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-1.0	+11.6	+2.1	+14.1	+4.4	+12.4
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+1.2	+9.2	+1.1	+9.6	+3.5	+9.1

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		
		Feb. 1987 prelim.	Jan. 1987 final	Feb. 1986	Feb. 1987 prelim.	Jan. 1987 final	Feb. ² 1986
	Retail trade, total.....	36,862	38,384	34,670	45,318	44,325	42,477
53	General merchandise group stores.....	8,790	8,540	8,329	12,449	12,122	11,811
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	7,804	7,626	7,273	11,070	10,786	10,331
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	8,424	8,249	7,839	11,949	11,651	11,135
533	Variety stores.....	407	405	431	554	548	587
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	579	509	625	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	12,836	14,251	12,241	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	12,629	14,051	12,028	13,893	13,789	13,232
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	2,595	2,633	2,357	3,712	3,590	3,377
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	1,145	1,170	1,028	1,588	1,585	1,428
566	Shoe stores.....	583	623	533	792	788	724
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	2,276	2,416	2,023	2,540	2,530	2,255

² Revised NA Not available

¹ Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-11 program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publication. Factors and explanatory material are contained in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, RR-87-02.

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 -1.6 percent to +0.8 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 February 1987 and final estimates for January 1987 based on the full sample will be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for February (BR-87-02). 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. 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	-1.6	+0.8	-0.1	0.6
	Total (excl. automotive group)....	0.8	0.9	0.8	-0.7	+0.6	0.0	0.4
	Durable goods stores, total.....	1.3	1.7	1.6	-2.1	+0.8	-0.3	0.7
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	0.9	2.0	1.3	-2.6	+4.2	+0.5	1.7
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.5	2.2	1.7	-2.6	+1.7	-0.5	1.1
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	0.9	1.6	1.2	-2.6	+1.7	-0.5	1.2
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	1.8	2.5	2.1	-3.4	+2.7	+0.1	1.5
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0.5	0.7	0.6	-0.7	+0.8	0.0	0.3
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.5	1.0	0.6	-0.6	+1.1	+0.1	0.4
531	Department stores.....	0.2	0.5	0.2	-0.7	+0.6	+0.1	0.3
54	Food stores.....	1.0	1.2	1.0	-0.6	+0.5	-0.1	0.3
541	Grocery stores.....	0.3	0.5	0.4	-0.7	+0.5	-0.1	0.3
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.6	1.3	0.9	-5.2	+3.1	-0.5	1.8
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.1	3.1	1.7	-1.3	+2.2	+0.6	0.9
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.8	1.3	0.9	-2.1	+1.5	0.0	1.0
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	0.3	1.8	0.6	-0.8	+1.2	+0.2	0.6

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 January-December 1983.

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, March 1986-February 1987. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period August 1985-July 1986.

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