

Advance Monthly Retail Sales

December 1987

CB 88-08

INTENTION TO REVISE SALES ESTIMATES. The unadjusted and adjusted monthly retail sales benchmark revisions through February 1988, are scheduled for release the week of March 14, 1988

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EST, Thursday, January 14, 1988

Advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for December adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$126.7 billion, an increase of 0.7 percent (+1.3%) from the previous month but 0.6 percent below December 1986. Total sales less automotive were 2.3 percent above December 1986. Total sales in the fourth quarter were 1.2 percent below the third quarter but were 1.8 percent above the same quarter a year ago. Total sales for the 12 months of 1987 were \$1,505.7 billion, up 3.5 percent from the 1986 total.

Durable goods increased 1.7 percent (+2.7%) from the previous month but were 5.3 percent below the previous year. Durable goods less automotive increased 0.7 percent (+ 2.7%) from November and were 1.1 percent above last year. Building materials were 1.7 percent above last year, while furniture stores were down 3.6 percent from December 1986.

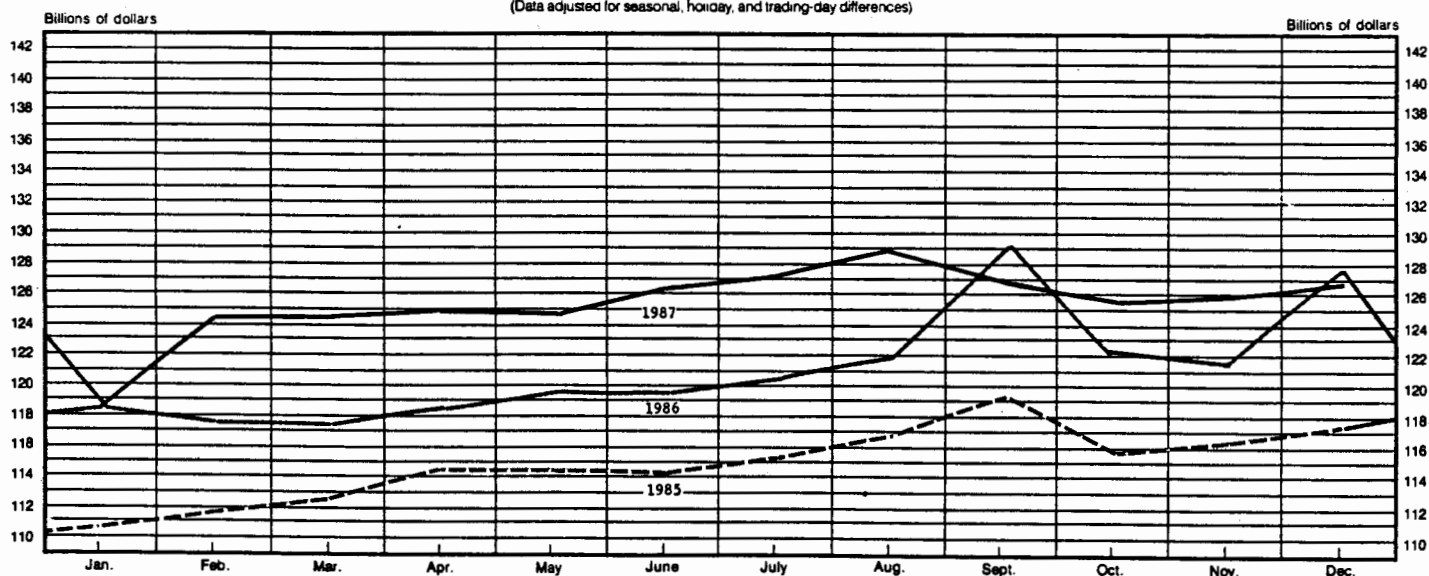
Nondurable goods increased 0.1 percent (+ 1.0%) from November and were 2.6 percent above the previous year. The general merchandise group was up 5.0 percent from last year while apparel stores were up 1.2 percent. Gasoline service stations were 8.8 percent above December 1986 and drug stores were up 5.7 percent in the same period.

Data in this report are based on a sample and, therefore, are subject to sampling as well as nonsampling errors. A discussion of the reliability of the data is on page 4.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales report for January is scheduled to be released February 11, 1988 at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES January 1985-December 1987

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



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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. 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		1987			1986		1987			1986	
		1987	Percent change from 1986	Dec. ² adv.	Nov. prel.	Oct. final	Dec.	Nov.	Dec. ² adv.	Nov. prel.	Oct. final	Dec.F	Nov.F
	Retail trade, total.....	1,505,657	+3.5	153,442	125,208	127,214	152,106	121,365	126,675	125,768	125,631	127,495	121,73
	Total (excl. auto group)..	1,164,844	+4.1	126,641	99,671	99,172	122,564	97,141	97,426	97,218	96,888	95,245	94,07
	Durable goods, total.....	583,032	+2.6	54,518	46,217	48,598	56,692	44,469	49,591	48,750	48,660	52,369	47,46
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..	90,410	+2.6	6,994	7,210	8,249	6,936	6,958	7,627	7,528	7,609	7,503	7,36
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,720	6,605	5,140	5,282	(*)	5,958	5,988	5,737	5,55
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,004	1,077	1,030	896	(*)	1,033	1,050	885	91
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	340,813	+1.5	26,801	25,537	28,042	29,542	24,224	29,249	28,550	28,743	32,250	27,65
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	313,282	+1.3	24,504	23,205	25,480	27,382	21,977	26,957	26,220	26,377	30,090	25,43
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	(*)	(*)	21,427	23,345	25,319	20,076	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,332	2,562	2,160	2,247	(*)	2,330	2,366	2,160	2,21
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	80,706	+2.8	9,204	7,010	6,757	9,493	7,290	6,588	6,618	6,604	6,836	6,805
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,752	3,750	4,248	3,810	(*)	3,570	3,613	3,618	3,605
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,775	2,529	4,404	2,970	(*)	2,574	2,504	2,724	2,702
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	(*)	(*)	898	791	1,151	834	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	922,625	+4.1	98,924	78,991	78,616	95,414	76,896	77,084	77,018	76,971	75,126	74,263
53	General merchandise group stores..	164,017	+5.6	25,589	16,340	13,899	24,038	15,512	13,733	13,762	13,783	13,073	12,900
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)	139,804	+6.0	21,641	14,016	11,932	20,272	13,249	11,717	11,798	11,802	11,108	11,004
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) ³	(*)	(*)	(*)	15,013	12,829	21,901	14,314	(*)	12,669	12,689	11,987	11,899
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	713	692	1,269	685	(*)	709	716	796	672
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,611	1,275	2,497	1,578	(*)	1,275	1,265	1	1,224
54	Food stores.....	303,130	+2.4	27,271	24,400	25,767	26,938	24,748	25,281	25,149	25,182	25,235	25,038
541	Grocery stores.....	286,041	+2.7	25,447	23,050	24,358	25,005	23,280	23,849	23,763	23,764	23,701	23,539
554	Gasoline service stations.....	89,447	+3.3	7,555	7,378	7,759	6,922	6,711	7,414	7,498	7,570	6,813	6,862
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	84,826	+5.0	11,626	7,559	7,256	11,426	7,570	7,033	7,013	7,126	6,953	6,841
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	874	824	1,554	927	(*)	753	817	811	786
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,162	3,089	4,790	3,217	(*)	2,917	2,967	2,970	2,890
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,902	1,709	2,933	1,794	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,306	1,313	1,735	1,318	(*)	1,307	1,306	1,301	1,273
58	Eating and drinking places.....	152,725	+5.4	12,584	12,123	12,898	12,476	11,863	12,841	12,734	12,547	12,770	12,370
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	52,966	+7.4	5,990	4,322	4,471	5,648	4,044	4,473	4,488	4,516	4,231	4,199
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,637	1,619	2,224	1,622	(*)	1,644	1,608	1,602	1,595
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	(*)	(*)	366	320	369	332	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAF ⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	36,157	32,355	54,163	35,016	(*)	32,232	32,270	31,240	30,822

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

NA Not available. Revised

¹Data 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, BR-87-11.

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.

³Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

⁴GAF 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. 1987 advance from--		Nov. 1987 preliminary from--		Oct. 1987 through Dec. 1987	
		Nov. 1987 prelim.	Dec. 1986 final	Oct. 1987 final	Nov. 1986 final	July 1987 through Sep. 1987	Oct. 1986 through Dec. 1986
	Retail trade, total.....	+0.7	-0.6	+0.1	+3.3	-1.2	+1.8
	Total (excl. automotive group)....	+0.2	+2.3	+0.3	+3.3	-0.5	+2.8
	Durable goods, total.....	+1.7	-5.3	+0.2	+2.7	-2.4	-0.5
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+1.3	+1.7	-1.1	+2.3	+1.2	+1.7
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+2.4	-9.3	-0.7	+3.2	-3.7	-1.6
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+2.8	-10.4	-0.6	+3.1	-3.9	-2.2
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-0.5	-3.6	+0.2	-2.7	-3.0	-2.8
	Nondurable goods, total.....	+0.1	+2.6	+0.1	+3.7	-0.5	+3.3
53	General merchandise group stores.....	-0.4	+5.0	0.0	+6.8	+0.1	+5.9
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	-0.7	+5.5	0.0	+7.2	+0.3	+6.4
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	(NA)	(NA)	-2	+6.5	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	+0.5	+0.2	-0.1	+0.4	-0.5	+0.5
541	Grocery stores.....	+0.4	+0.6	0.0	+1.0	-0.4	+0.9
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-1.1	+8.8	-1.0	+9.3	-2.5	+9.4
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+0.3	+1.2	-1.6	+2.5	-1.5	+2.5
58	Eating and drinking places.....	+0.8	+0.6	+1.5	+2.9	+0.7	+1.6
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	-0.3	+5.7	-0.6	+6.9	+0.5	+6.9

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. 1987 prelim.	Oct. 1987 final	Nov. 1986	Nov. 1987 prelim.	Oct. 1987 final	Nov. ² 1986
	Retail trade, total.....	49,248	47,218	46,940	46,491	46,650	43,743
53	General merchandise group stores.....	15,252	12,900	14,495	12,844	12,866	12,013
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	13,583	11,567	12,836	11,462	11,475	10,679
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	14,538	12,425	13,836	12,279	12,314	11,511
533	Variety stores.....	575	554	542	571	582	528
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	1,094	779	1,117	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	14,182	14,925	13,866	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	13,986	14,727	13,652	14,389	14,382	13,734
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	4,221	3,893	4,040	3,823	3,895	3,573
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	1,776	1,671	1,747	1,606	1,656	1,541
566	Shoe stores.....	806	777	788	793	782	751
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	2,500	2,534	2,344	2,599	2,604	2,427

NA Not available. ² Revised

¹Data 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, BR-87-11.

²Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

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 +1.0 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 1987 and final estimates for October 1987 based on the full sample will be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for November (BR-87-11). 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.

Whenever a statement such as "up 0.8 percent (+1.3%)" appears in the text, this indicates a range from -0.5 percent to +2.1 percent. All ranges given are 90 percent confidence intervals. If the range contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. The Monthly Retail Trade Report includes explanations of confidence intervals and sampling variability along with 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	+1.0	0.0	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
531,2,3, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	0.5	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, December 1986-November 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.

