

Advance Monthly Retail Sales

CURRENT BUSINESS REPORTS

November 1988

CB 88-196

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EST, December 13, 1988

Advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for November adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$138.1 billion, an increase of 1.1 percent (+ 1.0%) from the previous month and 8.4 percent (+ 1.4%) above November 1987. Total sales in the September through November period were 1.5 percent (+ 1.7%) above the prior three months and were 6.9 percent (+ 1.8%) above the same period a year ago.

Durable goods increased 1.8 percent (+ 2.9%) from the previous month and were 10.4 percent (+ 4.2%) above the previous year. Automotive sales were up 12.7 percent from November a year ago. Building materials dealers increased 2.8 percent from October and were up 8.7 percent from November 1987. Furniture stores were up 11.6 percent from the previous year.

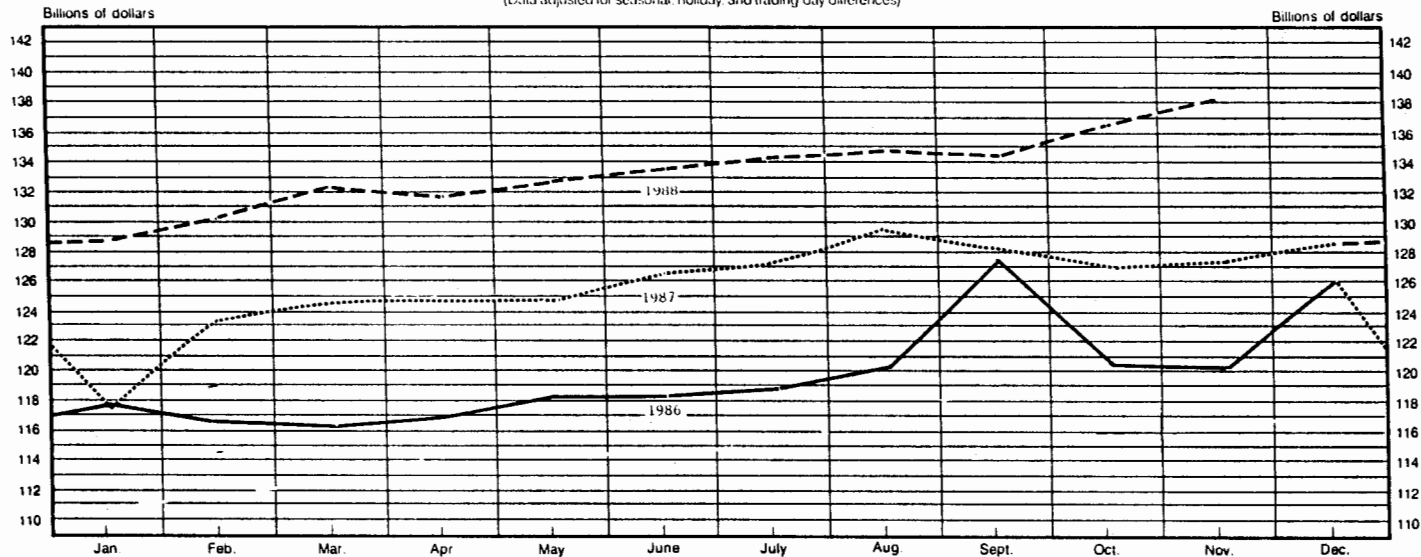
Nondurable goods increased 0.7 percent (+ 1.0%) from the previous month and were 7.3 percent (+ 1.6%) above November a year ago. General merchandise stores increased 1.1 percent from October and were up 6.6 percent from the previous year. Food stores were up 8.5 percent from November 1987, while apparel stores were up 11.2 percent in the same period.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for December is scheduled to be released January 13, 1989 at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

January 1986-November 1988

(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. 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 | | | | |
|---------------|---|------------------------|------------|------------|---------|---------|------------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | | 1988 | | | 1987 | | 1988 | | | 1987 | |
| | | Nov. ² adv. | Oct. prel. | Sep. final | Nov. | Oct. | Nov. ² adv. | Oct. prel. | Sep. final | Nov. ³ | Oct. ⁴ |
| | Retail trade, total..... | 138,962 | 134,601 | 131,646 | 126,897 | 128,298 | 138,052 | 136,532 | 134,341 | 127,324 | 127,036 |
| | Total (excl. auto group).. | 110,908 | 105,858 | 102,824 | 102,380 | 101,270 | 107,132 | 106,227 | 105,368 | 99,884 | 99,295 |
| | Durable goods, total..... | 50,023 | 49,490 | 49,463 | 44,732 | 46,755 | 51,968 | 51,059 | 49,797 | 47,066 | 47,063 |
| 52 | Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.. | 6,957 | 7,489 | 7,431 | 6,359 | 7,172 | 7,202 | 7,003 | 7,020 | 6,627 | 6,619 |
| 521,3 | Building mat. and supply stores. | (*) | 5,703 | 5,699 | 4,801 | 5,446 | (*) | 5,237 | 5,243 | 4,980 | 4,929 |
| 525 | Hardware stores..... | (*) | 1,331 | 1,294 | 1,178 | 1,276 | (*) | 1,315 | 1,326 | 1,213 | 1,234 |
| 55 ex. 554 | Automotive dealers..... | 28,054 | 28,743 | 28,822 | 24,517 | 27,028 | 30,920 | 30,305 | 28,973 | 27,440 | 27,741 |
| 551,2,5,6,7,9 | Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers..... | 25,486 | 26,193 | 26,281 | 22,221 | 24,508 | 28,444 | 27,865 | 26,520 | 25,137 | 25,397 |
| 551 | Motor vehicle (franchised).... | (*) | 23,242 | 23,492 | 20,229 | 22,158 | (*) | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) |
| 553 | Auto and home supply stores.... | (*) | 2,550 | 2,541 | 2,296 | 2,520 | (*) | 2,440 | 2,453 | 2,303 | 2,344 |
| 57 | Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores..... | 8,503 | 7,674 | 7,475 | 7,399 | 7,075 | 7,830 | 7,740 | 7,657 | 7,015 | 6,953 |
| 571 | Furniture and home furnishings.. | (*) | 4,058 | 3,907 | 3,877 | 3,834 | (*) | 4,006 | 3,911 | 3,696 | 3,694 |
| 5722,32 | Household appliance, radio, and TV stores..... | (*) | 3,107 | 3,054 | 3,051 | 2,789 | (*) | 3,203 | 3,222 | 2,857 | 2,795 |
| 5722 | Household appliance stores.... | (*) | 911 | 884 | 991 | 882 | (*) | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) |
| | Nondurable goods, total..... | 88,939 | 85,111 | 82,183 | 82,165 | 81,543 | 86,084 | 85,473 | 84,544 | 80,258 | 79,973 |
| 53 | General merchandise group stores.. | 18,886 | 15,331 | 13,966 | 17,533 | 14,826 | 15,784 | 15,611 | 15,211 | 14,809 | 14,725 |
| 531 | Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.) | 15,880 | 12,995 | 11,828 | 14,685 | 12,433 | 13,266 | 13,166 | 12,801 | 12,382 | 12,298 |
| 531 | Dept. stores (in. leased depts.) | (*) | 13,422 | 12,250 | 15,146 | 12,867 | (*) | 13,571 | 13,229 | 12,792 | 12,702 |
| 533 | Variety stores..... | (*) | 691 | 614 | 710 | 673 | (*) | 730 | 703 | 703 | 700 |
| 539 | Misc. general mdse. stores..... | (*) | 1,645 | 1,524 | 2,138 | 1,720 | (*) | 1,715 | 1,707 | 1,724 | 1,727 |
| 54 | Food stores..... | 27,810 | 28,012 | 27,806 | 25,431 | 26,895 | 28,484 | 28,278 | 27,974 | 26,256 | 26,327 |
| 541 | Grocery stores..... | 26,244 | 26,429 | 26,222 | 23,947 | 25,369 | 26,889 | 26,669 | 26,354 | 24,739 | 24,799 |
| 554 | Gasoline service stations..... | 8,799 | 9,166 | 9,087 | 8,595 | 9,012 | 8,951 | 9,075 | 9,042 | 8,815 | 8,801 |
| 56 | Apparel and accessory stores..... | 8,118 | 7,140 | 6,847 | 7,132 | 6,748 | 7,327 | 7,204 | 7,085 | 6,591 | 6,620 |
| 561 | Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores..... | (*) | 792 | 690 | 832 | 781 | (*) | 791 | 774 | 723 | 769 |
| 562,3,8 | Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers..... | (*) | 2,803 | 2,660 | 2,800 | 2,710 | (*) | 2,753 | 2,720 | 2,574 | 2,598 |
| 565 | Family clothing stores..... | (*) | 1,801 | 1,678 | 1,869 | 1,645 | (*) | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) |
| 566 | Shoe stores..... | (*) | 1,233 | 1,296 | 1,215 | 1,193 | (*) | 1,276 | 1,281 | 1,215 | 1,197 |
| 58 | Eating and drinking places..... | 12,850 | 13,612 | 13,415 | 11,936 | 12,699 | 13,569 | 13,437 | 13,375 | 12,577 | 12,377 |
| 591 | Drug and proprietary stores..... | 5,005 | 4,926 | 4,808 | 4,640 | 4,733 | 5,165 | 5,099 | 5,066 | 4,823 | 4,795 |
| 592 | Liquor stores..... | (*) | 1,510 | 1,516 | 1,638 | 1,653 | (*) | 1,535 | 1,561 | 1,648 | 1,637 |
| 5961 (pt.) | Mail-order houses (department store merchandise)..... | (*) | 348 | 276 | 386 | 357 | (*) | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) |
| 53,56,57 | GAF ⁴ | (*) | 34,784 | 32,915 | 37,590 | 33,171 | (*) | 35,630 | 35,038 | 33,434 | 33,150 |

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

NA Not available. [†]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-88-10.

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.

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

⁴ 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 | | | | | |
|---------------|---|--------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | Nov. 1988 advance from-- | | Oct. 1988 preliminary from-- | | Sep. 1988 through Nov. 1988 | |
| | | Oct. 1988 prelim. | Nov. 1987 final | Sep. 1988 final | Oct. 1987 final | June 1988 through Aug. 1988 | Sep. 1987 through Nov. 1987 |
| | Retail trade, total..... | +1.1 | +8.4 | +1.6 | +7.5 | +1.5 | +6.9 |
| | Total (excl. automotive group).... | +0.9 | +7.3 | +0.8 | +7.0 | +1.6 | +6.7 |
| | Durable goods, total..... | +1.8 | +10.4 | +2.5 | +8.5 | +0.7 | +7.3 |
| 52 | Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..... | +2.8 | +8.7 | -0.2 | +5.8 | +1.8 | +7.2 |
| 55 ex. 554 | Automotive dealers..... | +2.0 | +12.7 | +4.6 | +9.2 | +1.5 | +7.5 |
| 551,2,5,6,7,9 | Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers..... | +2.1 | +13.2 | +5.1 | +9.7 | +1.7 | +7.6 |
| 57 | Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores..... | +1.2 | +11.6 | +1.1 | +11.3 | +0.1 | +10.4 |
| | Nondurable goods, total..... | +0.7 | +7.3 | +1.1 | +6.9 | +2.0 | +6.6 |
| 53 | General merchandise group stores..... | +1.1 | +6.6 | +2.6 | +6.0 | +2.7 | +5.5 |
| 531 | Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.)..... | +0.8 | +7.1 | +2.9 | +7.1 | +3.2 | +6.4 |
| 531 | Dept. stores (in. leased dept.)..... | (NA) | (NA) | +2.6 | +6.8 | (NA) | (NA) |
| 54 | Food stores..... | +0.7 | +8.5 | +1.1 | +7.4 | +1.9 | +7.3 |
| 541 | Grocery stores..... | +0.8 | +8.7 | +1.2 | +7.5 | +2.1 | +7.4 |
| 554 | Gasoline service stations..... | -1.4 | +1.5 | +0.4 | +3.1 | -0.1 | +2.3 |
| 56 | Apparel and accessory stores..... | +1.7 | +11.2 | +1.7 | +8.8 | +4.6 | +8.8 |
| 58 | Eating and drinking places..... | +1.0 | +7.9 | +0.5 | +8.6 | +3.0 | +8.4 |
| 591 | Drug and proprietary stores..... | +1.3 | +7.1 | +0.7 | +6.3 | +2.5 | +6.6 |

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 | | |
|----------|---|-------------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| | | Oct. 1988 prelim. | Sep. 1988 final | Oct. 1987 | Oct. 1988 prelim. | Sep. 1988 final | Oct. ^F 1987 |
| | Retail trade, total..... | 50,359 | 48,243 | 48,517 | 51,069 | 50,295 | 47,939 |
| 53 | General merchandise group stores..... | 14,269 | 12,989 | 13,642 | 14,556 | 14,174 | 13,588 |
| 531 | Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.)..... | 12,582 | 11,446 | 12,052 | 12,722 | 12,374 | 11,909 |
| 531 | Dept. stores (in. leased dept.)..... | 12,986 | 11,845 | 12,462 | 13,130 | 12,792 | 12,314 |
| 533 | Variety stores..... | 561 | 493 | 539 | 599 | 576 | 567 |
| 539 | Miscellaneous general merchandise stores..... | 1,126 | 1,050 | 1,051 | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) |
| 54 | Food stores..... | 15,768 | 15,615 | 15,535 | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) |
| 541 | Grocery stores..... | 15,560 | 15,409 | 15,323 | 15,765 | 15,533 | 14,935 |
| 56 | Apparel and accessory stores..... | 3,761 | 3,641 | 3,598 | 3,836 | 3,769 | 3,577 |
| 562,3,8 | Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers..... | 1,476 | 1,401 | 1,470 | 1,483 | 1,450 | 1,444 |
| 566 | Shoe stores..... | 759 | 811 | 714 | 804 | 814 | 729 |
| 591 | Drug stores and proprietary stores..... | 2,834 | 2,772 | 2,684 | 2,993 | 2,958 | 2,784 |

NA Not available. ^F 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-88-10.

² Includes 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).



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 -0.6 percent to +0.9 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.3 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 October 1988 and final estimates for September 1988 based on the full sample will be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for October (BR-88-10). 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 ($\pm 1.0\%$)" appears in the text, this indicates a range from -0.2 percent to +1.8 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 | | | | | | Preliminary-to-final percent change minus the Advance-to-preliminary percent change | | | |
|---------------|---|--|-----|--------------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------|---|------|-------------------------|-----|
| | | Advance-to-preliminary ratio | | Ratio to same month a year ago | Dollar volume sales est. | Ratio of current quarter to prev. quarter | Range ² | | Mean | Aver. of absolute diff. | |
| | | Range ¹ | | Median | Median | Median | Median | From | To | | |
| | | From | To | | | | | | | | |
| | Retail trade, total..... | 0.6 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 0.9 | 0.8 | 1.0 | -0.6 | +0.9 | +0.1 | 0.3 |
| | Total (excl. auto).. | 0.5 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.8 | 0.7 | 0.9 | -1.0 | +1.8 | 0.0 | 0.4 |
| | Durable goods, total.. | 1.4 | 1.7 | 1.6 | 2.3 | 1.7 | 2.2 | -1.6 | +1.8 | +0.3 | 1.0 |
| 52 | Building materials, group stores..... | 0.6 | 3.6 | 1.6 | 3.9 | 3.3 | 3.1 | -5.2 | +1.5 | -0.9 | 1.6 |
| 55 ex. 554 | Automotive dealers..... | 1.7 | 2.2 | 1.9 | 3.1 | 2.3 | 3.0 | -2.1 | +2.7 | +0.4 | 1.2 |
| 551,2,5,6,7,9 | Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers..... | 1.2 | 2.2 | 1.5 | 3.7 | 2.4 | 3.2 | -2.5 | +2.8 | +0.3 | 1.2 |
| 57 | Furniture, home furn. and equipment stores..... | 1.6 | 2.3 | 1.9 | 3.7 | 3.3 | 2.7 | -3.3 | +4.4 | +0.5 | 1.5 |
| | Nondur. stores, total... | 0.5 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 1.0 | 0.7 | 0.9 | -0.8 | +0.7 | 0.0 | 0.4 |
| 53 | General merch. group, total. | 0.2 | 0.5 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.5 | -2.6 | +1.8 | -0.2 | 0.8 |
| 531 | Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)..... | 0.0 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.1 | -2.1 | +2.0 | -0.2 | 0.8 |
| 54 | Food stores..... | 0.8 | 1.4 | 1.0 | 1.6 | 1.3 | 1.6 | -0.9 | +0.8 | +0.1 | 0.3 |
| 541 | Grocery stores..... | 0.3 | 1.1 | 0.5 | 1.8 | 1.4 | 1.6 | -0.8 | +0.9 | +0.1 | 0.3 |
| 554 | Gasoline service stations... | 0.7 | 1.2 | 0.8 | 3.0 | 2.2 | 2.8 | -1.4 | +2.3 | -0.1 | 1.0 |
| 56 | Apparel and acc. stores..... | 1.2 | 3.4 | 1.5 | 2.4 | 1.8 | 1.8 | -2.8 | +2.2 | -0.5 | 1.3 |
| 58 | Eating and drinking | 0.8 | 1.3 | 1.1 | 2.7 | 2.3 | 2.6 | -1.7 | +1.8 | +0.3 | 0.9 |
| 591 | Drug and proprietary | 0.4 | 0.7 | 0.5 | 2.3 | 1.7 | 2.1 | -1.6 | +1.3 | -0.1 | 0.7 |

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 March - July 1988.

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 1987- October 1988. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period May 1987-April 1988.

Note: Coefficients of variation for the ratio of current quarter to current quarter a-year-ago estimates are approximately the same as those for the ratio of current quarter to previous quarter. See appendix B, Reliability of Data, in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for a discussion on the measures of sampling variability.