

Advance Monthly Retail Sales



U.S. Department of Commerce
ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS ADMINISTRATION
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

MARCH 1994

CB-94-67

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EDT., Wednesday, April 13, 1994

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for March adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$182.3 billion, an increase of 0.4 percent ($\pm 1.2\%$) from the previous month and were 8.9 percent ($\pm 1.8\%$) above the same month a year ago. Total sales in the first quarter were 7.2 percent ($\pm 1.8\%$) above the same quarter a year ago. The January to February 1994 percent change was revised from +1.5 percent ($\pm 1.2\%$) as published in the February advance, to +1.6 percent ($\pm 0.4\%$).

Durable goods were up 17.1 percent from the previous year. Building materials were up 11.2 percent from March 1993 while automotive dealers and furniture were up 21.1 percent and 12.5 percent, respectively, in the same period.

Nondurable goods were up 4.1 percent from March 1993. General merchandise stores were up 10.4 percent from the previous year.

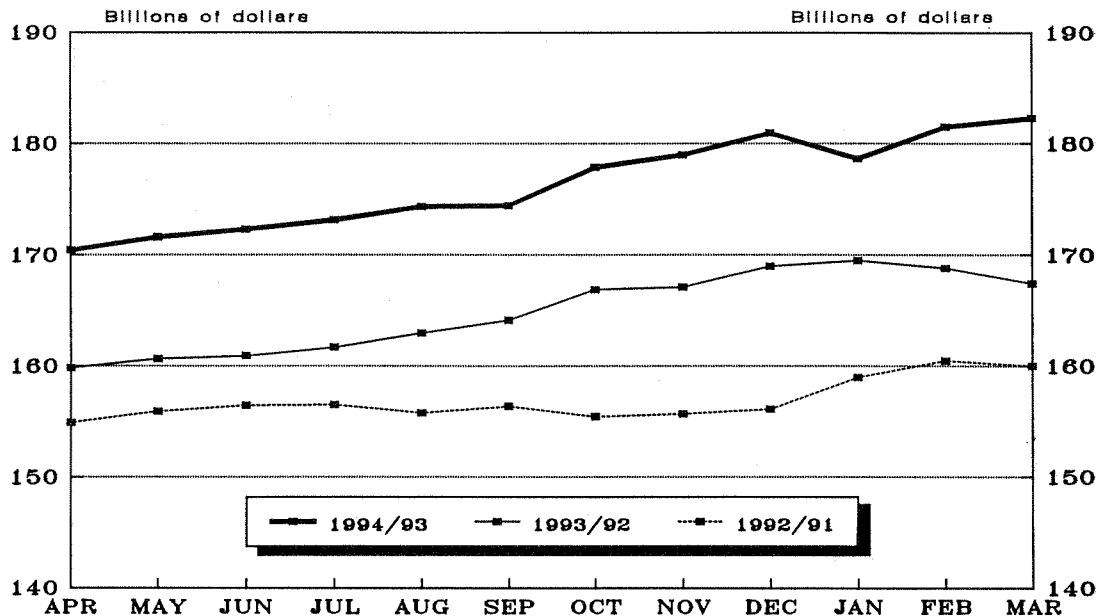
The advance estimates are based on a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail sales sample. Estimates from the advance and the subsequent full survey can differ because of the earlier reporting in the advance and because of sampling variability present in both surveys.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for April is scheduled to be released May 12, 1994 at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

April 1991 - March 1994

(Data adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)



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This report is available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's online Economic Bulletin Board. For information call (202) 482-1986. The data are also available through the Census Bureau's online information service - CENDATA. CENDATA is available from Dialog Information Services, INC. (1-800-334-2564) and CompuServe (1-800-848-8199). The CENDATA staff at the Bureau of the Census (301-763-2074) can provide content information and general guidance.

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

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted ¹				
		1994			1993		1994			1993	
		Mar. ² adv.	Feb. prel.	Jan. final	Mar.	Feb.	Mar. ² adv.	Feb. prel.	Jan. final	Mar. ¹	Feb. ¹
	Retail trade, total.....	181,064	156,182	155,452	164,642	145,030	182,265	181,510	178,643	167,445	168,830
	Total (excl. auto group)...	135,641	118,417	120,286	126,958	113,651	139,491	138,930	137,147	132,116	133,418
	Durable goods, total.....	72,570	60,610	58,349	61,834	52,536	71,511	70,711	69,615	61,057	61,469
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	9,605	7,332	7,547	8,592	6,943	10,111	9,714	10,037	9,092	9,201
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.....	(*)	5,641	5,659	6,415	5,314	(*)	7,279	7,340	6,746	6,875
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	870	954	967	790	(*)	1,149	1,154	1,047	1,044
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	45,423	37,765	35,166	37,684	31,379	42,774	42,580	41,496	35,329	35,412
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	42,119	35,012	32,409	34,632	28,766	39,437	39,251	38,218	32,246	32,249
551	Motor vehicle (franchised).....	(*)	31,680	29,587	30,895	25,847	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	2,753	2,757	3,052	2,613	(*)	3,329	3,278	3,083	3,163
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	9,917	8,707	8,885	8,757	7,834	10,068	9,983	9,706	8,951	8,970
571	Furniture and home furnishings.....	(*)	4,248	4,187	4,513	4,044	(*)	4,833	4,627	4,554	4,595
5722,31,4	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores.....	(*)	3,614	3,845	3,366	2,967	(*)	4,202	4,139	3,481	3,450
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	702	746	739	658	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	108,494	95,572	97,103	102,808	92,494	110,754	110,799	109,028	106,388	107,361
53	General merchandise group stores.....	21,801	17,849	17,114	19,174	16,452	23,424	23,386	23,054	21,225	21,688
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts).....	16,705	13,375	12,761	14,287	12,064	17,962	17,857	17,626	15,752	16,193
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) ³	(*)	13,745	13,112	14,736	12,457	(*)	18,254	18,011	16,337	16,654
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	413	369	542	483	(*)	534	516	618	626
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	4,061	3,984	4,345	3,905	(*)	4,995	4,912	4,855	4,869
54	Food stores.....	33,324	30,125	31,980	31,846	29,406	33,313	33,565	33,342	32,286	32,760
541	Grocery stores.....	31,513	28,467	30,335	30,224	27,848	31,482	31,700	31,468	30,622	31,011
554	Gasoline service stations.....	10,529	9,794	10,184	10,923	10,026	11,095	11,155	10,962	11,438	11,432
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	8,673	6,541	6,207	7,762	6,423	8,960	8,936	8,554	8,467	8,778
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	599	640	582	508	(*)	815	766	681	694
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores.....	(*)	2,414	2,199	2,971	2,484	(*)	3,262	2,944	3,154	3,357
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	1,944	1,828	2,241	1,851	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,093	1,075	1,355	1,096	(*)	1,429	1,411	1,407	1,438
58	Eating and drinking places.....	17,944	16,108	15,872	17,070	15,337	17,926	17,958	17,309	17,139	17,117
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	6,982	6,290	6,598	6,734	6,281	6,859	6,734	6,902	6,687	6,732
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,450	1,491	1,676	1,533	(*)	1,716	1,704	1,812	1,814
5961	Total mail order.....	(*)	2,160	2,456	2,498	2,089	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAF ⁴	(*)	38,141	37,214	40,626	35,291	(*)	48,690	47,669	44,474	45,221
594											

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

NA Not available.

¹Revised.

¹Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes. 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-94-02.

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 (general merchandise, apparel, furniture, and miscellaneous shopping goods stores).

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, but not for price changes)

SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change					
		Mar. 1994 advance from—		Feb. 1994 preliminary from—		Jan. 1994 through Mar. 1994 from—	
		Feb. 1994 prelim.	Mar. 1993 final	Jan. 1994 final	Feb. 1993 final	Oct. 1993 through Dec. 1993	Jan. 1993 through Mar. 1993
	Retail trade, total.....	+0.4	+8.9	+1.6	+7.5	+0.9	+7.2
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	+0.4	+5.6	+1.3	+4.1	+0.1	+4.2
	Durable goods, total.....	+1.1	+17.1	+1.6	+15.0	+1.3	+14.2
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+4.1	+11.2	-3.2	+5.6	-4.0	+8.6
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+0.5	+21.1	+2.6	+20.2	+3.3	+18.7
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+0.5	+22.3	+2.7	+21.7	+3.2	+19.8
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+0.9	+12.5	+2.9	+11.3	-0.7	+9.8
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.0	+4.1	+1.6	+3.2	+0.6	+3.2
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+0.2	+10.4	+1.4	+7.8	+2.3	+8.1
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	+0.6	+14.0	+1.3	+10.3	+3.3	+10.6
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ¹	(NA)	(NA)	+1.3	+9.6	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	-0.8	+3.2	+0.7	+2.5	+0.6	+2.9
541	Grocery stores.....	-0.7	+2.8	+0.7	+2.2	+0.9	+2.6
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-0.5	-3.0	+1.8	-2.4	+1.6	-2.5
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+0.3	+5.8	+4.5	+1.8	-1.3	+0.7
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.2	+4.6	+3.7	+4.9	-1.3	+3.4
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+1.9	+2.6	-2.4	0.0	+0.6	+2.7

NA Not available.

¹Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

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

To obtain space for additional charts, this table has been discontinued. These data are published in the Monthly Retail Trade, Sales and Inventories Report.

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

Sample Design and Reliability of Data

The advance estimates are based on a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail sales sample. Estimates from the advance and the subsequent full survey can differ because of the earlier reporting in the advance and because of sampling variability present in both surveys.

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 -1.0 percent to +0.4 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 February 1994 and final estimates for January 1994 based on the full sample are published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for February (BR-94-02). 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 margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, indicates a range about the estimate which corresponds to a 90 percent confidence interval. If, for example, the estimate is up 0.8 percent and the margin of sampling error is 1.2 percentage points above or below the estimate, then the indicated range is -0.4 percent to +2.0 percent. 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	Avg. of absolute diff.	
		Range ¹		Median	Median	Median	Median	From	To		
		From	To								
	Retail trade, total.....	0.8	1.1	0.9	1.0	0.9	1.0	-1.0	+0.4	+0.1	0.3
	Total (excl. auto).....	0.8	0.9	0.8	1.0	0.8	0.9	-0.7	+1.3	+0.1	0.4
	Durable goods, total.....	1.8	2.8	2.2	2.5	2.2	2.3	-2.5	+2.2	+0.2	0.7
52	Building materials, group stores.....	1.2	2.0	1.7	3.3	2.5	2.5	-3.4	+4.0	+0.4	2.0
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	2.2	4.1	3.1	3.4	3.6	3.3	-3.0	+2.6	+0.5	1.0
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	1.6	4.1	2.9	4.8	3.9	3.5	-3.2	+2.6	+0.5	1.1
57	Furniture, home furn., and equipment stores.....	1.8	4.3	2.4	4.5	4.2	3.1	-2.5	+2.3	-0.2	1.2
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.7	0.9	0.8	1.0	0.8	0.9	-0.6	+0.9	+0.2	0.4
53	General merch. group, total.....	0.2	0.8	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.5	-1.4	+1.7	+0.1	0.7
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.).....	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	-1.7	+1.6	+0.1	0.8
54	Food stores.....	0.9	1.5	1.0	1.7	1.4	1.5	-0.5	+0.6	0.0	0.4
541	Grocery stores.....	0.2	0.9	0.3	1.8	1.3	1.5	-0.5	+0.7	0.0	0.3
554	Gasoline service stations.....	1.1	4.7	1.3	3.3	2.6	2.8	-1.4	+1.9	+0.3	0.8
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.1	2.9	2.0	3.0	2.6	2.0	-2.7	+4.8	+0.5	1.5
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.6	1.3	0.9	3.1	2.7	2.7	-0.9	+2.3	+0.3	0.8
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	0.5	3.2	0.8	2.4	1.7	2.0	-3.7	+1.1	+0.1	1.0

¹The ranges of sampling variability shown are based on sales estimates not adjusted for seasonal variation, holiday, and trading-day differences for the data months of November 1990 - March 1991.

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 1993 - February 1994. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period April 1990 - March 1991.

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 of the measures of sampling variability.

