

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. ET, Thursday August 12, 1999

**ADVANCE MONTHLY RETAIL SALES  
JULY 1999**

**Notice of Revised Data:** Monthly retail sales estimates were revised based on the preliminary results of the 1997 Census of Retail Trade. The press release containing revised data was released on July 30, 1999.

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for July adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$248.7 billion, an increase of 0.7 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) from the previous month and up 9.1 percent ( $\pm 0.9\%$ ) from July 1998. Total sales for the May through July period were up 8.2 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) from the same period a year ago. The May to June 1999 percent change was revised from +0.1 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) to -0.2 percent ( $\pm 0.4\%$ ).

Durable goods increased 1.6 percent ( $\pm 1.4\%$ ) from June and were 11.8 percent above last year. Automotive sales were up 15.3 percent from July a year ago, while building materials sales were up 9.7 percent during the same period.

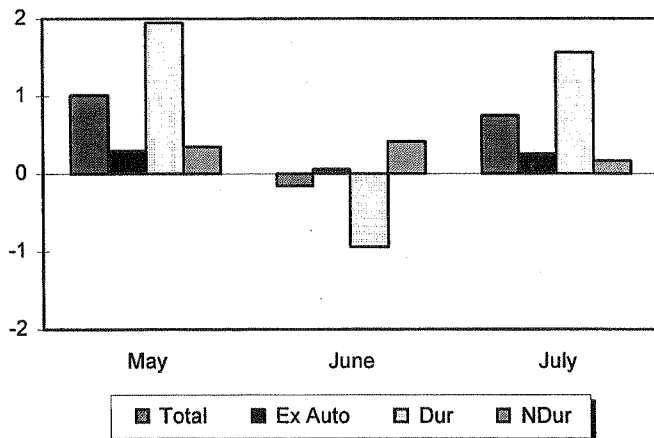
Nondurable goods increased 0.2 percent ( $\pm 0.6\%$ ) from June and were up 7.2 percent from July 1998. Drug store sales were up 12.0 percent from July a year ago.

*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.*

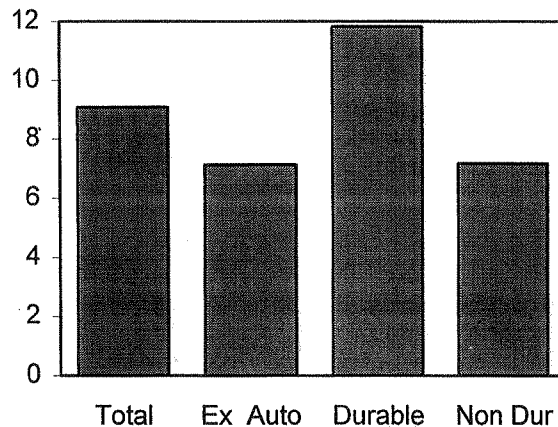
**Percent Change in Retail Sales**

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

**From Previous Month**



**From Previous Year**



The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for August is scheduled to be released September 14, 1999 at 8:30 a.m.

Address inquiries concerning this report to Ronald Plencykoski, Service Sector Statistics Division, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC 20233. Telephone: 301-457-2713 or 301-457-2666.

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 on the Internet - <http://www.census.gov/svsd/www/advtable.html>.

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

(In Millions of Dollars and Annual Percent Change)

| SIC code       | Kind of business   | Not adjusted     |                  |                       |                |                |                | Adjusted <sup>1</sup> |                       |                |                |                |                |
|----------------|--|------------------|------------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                |  | 7 month total    |                  | 1999                  |                |                | 1998           |                       | 1999                  |                |                | 1998           |                |
|                |  | 1999             | Change from 1998 | July <sup>2</sup> (a) | June (p)       | May (r)        | July           | June                  | July <sup>2</sup> (a) | June (p)       | May (r)        | July (r)       | June (r)       |
|                | <b>Retail trade, total.....</b>                                  | <b>1,669,838</b> | <b>8.2</b>       | <b>254,116</b>        | <b>252,321</b> | <b>254,372</b> | <b>232,611</b> | <b>234,836</b>        | <b>248,690</b>        | <b>246,841</b> | <b>247,228</b> | <b>227,982</b> | <b>229,878</b> |
|                | Total (excl. auto dealers).....                                  | 1,233,884        | 7.6              | 187,496               | 184,605        | 188,266        | 174,451        | 171,532               | 186,062               | 185,593        | 185,484        | 173,672        | 172,609        |
|                | <b>Durable goods, total.....</b>                                 | <b>714,121</b>   | <b>9.6</b>       | <b>109,528</b>        | <b>110,969</b> | <b>109,416</b> | <b>98,245</b>  | <b>103,681</b>        | <b>104,513</b>        | <b>102,904</b> | <b>103,884</b> | <b>93,458</b>  | <b>96,092</b>  |
| 52             | Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers. | 106,208          | 11.7             | 16,905                | 17,518         | 17,916         | 15,448         | 16,028                | 15,121                | 14,970         | 15,215         | 13,782         | 13,630         |
| 521,3          | Building mat. and supply stores..                                | (*)              | (*)              | (*)                   | 13,002         | 12,853         | 11,784         | 11,827                | (*)                   | 11,346         | 11,405         | 10,401         | 10,249         |
| 525            | Hardware stores.....   | (*)              | (*)              | (*)                   | 1,422          | 1,494          | 1,316          | 1,384                 | (*)                   | 1,262          | 1,308          | 1,213          | 1,224          |
| 55 ex. 554     | Automotive dealers.....  | 435,954          | 10.1             | 66,620                | 67,716         | 66,106         | 58,160         | 63,304                | 62,628                | 61,248         | 61,744         | 54,310         | 57,269         |
| 551,2,5, 6,7,9 | Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....          | 413,787          | 10.5             | 63,203                | 64,296         | 62,798         | 54,745         | 59,963                | 59,513                | 58,081         | 58,526         | 51,211         | 54,167         |
| 551            | Motor vehicle (franchised)...                                    | (*)              | (*)              | (*)                   | 54,715         | 53,263         | 46,590         | 51,643                | (*)                   | (NA)           | (NA)           | (NA)           | (NA)           |
| 553            | Auto and home supply stores....                                  | (*)              | (*)              | (*)                   | 3,420          | 3,308          | 3,415          | 3,341                 | (*)                   | 3,167          | 3,218          | 3,099          | 3,102          |
| 57             | Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....           | 87,990           | 7.5              | 13,266                | 12,942         | 12,631         | 12,413         | 11,986                | 13,551                | 13,552         | 13,476         | 12,712         | 12,539         |
| 571            | Furniture and home furnishings                                   | (*)              | (*)              | (*)                   | 6,187          | 6,053          | 5,978          | 5,797                 | (*)                   | 6,275          | 6,215          | 5,948          | 5,879          |
| 5722,31,4      | Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores.....          | (*)              | (*)              | (*)                   | 5,842          | 5,655          | 5,547          | 5,281                 | (*)                   | 6,255          | 6,235          | 5,754          | 5,636          |
| 5722           | Household appliance stores.                                      | (*)              | (*)              | (*)                   | 1,056          | 910            | 1,030          | 991                   | (*)                   | (NA)           | (NA)           | (NA)           | (NA)           |
|                | <b>Nondurable goods, total.....</b>                              | <b>955,717</b>   | <b>7.3</b>       | <b>144,588</b>        | <b>141,352</b> | <b>144,956</b> | <b>134,366</b> | <b>131,155</b>        | <b>144,177</b>        | <b>143,937</b> | <b>143,344</b> | <b>134,524</b> | <b>133,786</b> |
| 53             | General merchandise group stores.                                | 198,579          | 9.0              | 29,843                | 30,135         | 31,241         | 27,217         | 27,639                | 31,878                | 31,560         | 31,386         | 29,159         | 29,252         |
| 531            | Dept. stores (ex. leased depts)..                                | 154,335          | 8.2              | 22,972                | 23,298         | 24,411         | 21,193         | 21,502                | 24,888                | 24,706         | 24,558         | 22,961         | 23,021         |
| 531            | Dept. stores (in. leased depts) <sup>3</sup> ..                  | (*)              | (*)              | (*)                   | 23,825         | 24,895         | 21,633         | 21,960                | (*)                   | 25,140         | 24,992         | 23,466         | 23,437         |
| 533            | Variety stores.....  | (*)              | (*)              | (*)                   | 1,085          | 1,109          | 899            | 869                   | (*)                   | 1,159          | 1,141          | 936            | 937            |
| 539            | Misc. general mdse. stores.....                                  | (*)              | (*)              | (*)                   | 5,752          | 5,721          | 5,125          | 5,268                 | (*)                   | 5,695          | 5,687          | 5,262          | 5,294          |
| 54             | Food stores.....   | 263,073          | 5.0              | 40,233                | 38,155         | 39,260         | 38,293         | 36,198                | 38,269                | 38,241         | 38,264         | 36,653         | 36,496         |
| 541            | Grocery stores.....  | 249,343          | 5.1              | 38,174                | 36,150         | 37,189         | 36,300         | 34,242                | 36,218                | 36,222         | 36,211         | 34,670         | 34,518         |
| 554            | Gasoline service stations.....                                   | 98,269           | 4.1              | 15,591                | 15,137         | 15,068         | 14,716         | 14,313                | 14,544                | 14,375         | 14,447         | 13,740         | 13,554         |
| 56             | Apparel and accessory stores.....                                | 70,603           | 7.1              | 10,887                | 10,601         | 11,200         | 10,119         | 9,844                 | 11,364                | 11,413         | 11,459         | 10,711         | 10,564         |
| 561            | Men's and boy's clothing and furnishings stores.....             | (*)              | (*)              | (*)                   | 941            | 940            | 812            | 868                   | (*)                   | 1,000          | 980            | 929            | 927            |
| 562,3          | Women's clothing, specialty stores.....                          | (*)              | (*)              | (*)                   | 2,952          | 3,237          | 2,668          | 2,712                 | (*)                   | 3,078          | 3,107          | 2,909          | 2,828          |
| 565            | Family clothing stores.....                                      | (*)              | (*)              | (*)                   | 4,046          | 4,233          | 3,986          | 3,729                 | (*)                   | (NA)           | (NA)           | (NA)           | (NA)           |
| 566            | Shoe stores.....   | (*)              | (*)              | (*)                   | 1,795          | 1,879          | 1,793          | 1,744                 | (*)                   | 1,802          | 1,805          | 1,788          | 1,753          |
| 58             | Eating and drinking places.....                                  | 163,533          | 7.0              | 25,088                | 24,216         | 24,759         | 23,314         | 22,734                | 23,535                | 23,625         | 23,580         | 22,099         | 22,158         |
| 591            | Drug and proprietary stores.....                                 | 67,351           | 11.8             | 9,773                 | 9,773          | 9,869          | 8,743          | 8,652                 | 9,983                 | 9,983          | 9,810          | 8,912          | 8,811          |
| 592            | Liquor stores.....   | (*)              | (*)              | (*)                   | 2,234          | 2,288          | 2,177          | 2,028                 | (*)                   | 2,252          | 2,272          | 2,058          | 2,038          |
| 5961           | Total mail order.....  | (*)              | (*)              | (*)                   | 6,494          | 6,283          | 5,517          | 5,354                 | (*)                   | 7,264          | 7,012          | 6,234          | 5,929          |
| 53,56,57, 594  | GAF <sup>4</sup> .....   | (*)              | (*)              | (*)                   | 61,537         | 62,886         | 57,088         | 57,058                | (*)                   | 65,105         | 64,955         | 60,791         | 60,676         |

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

NA Not available. (a) Advance estimates. (p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

(1) Data 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-99-06.

(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 (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 <sup>1</sup> |               |                               |               |                                    |                            |
|---------------|---|-----------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
|               |   | July 1999 Advance from --   |               | June 1999 Preliminary from -- |               | May 1999 through July 1999 from -- |                            |
|               |   | June 1999 (p)               | July 1998 (r) | May 1999 (r)                  | June 1998 (r) | Feb. 1999 through Apr. 1999        | May 1998 through July 1998 |
|               | <b>Retail trade, total .....</b>  | <b>0.7</b>                  | <b>9.1</b>    | <b>-0.2</b>                   | <b>7.4</b>    | <b>1.5</b>                         | <b>8.2</b>                 |
|               | Total (excl. automotive dealers) .....                                    | 0.3                         | 7.1           | 0.1                           | 7.5           | 1.1                                | 7.4                        |
|               | <b>Durable goods, total .....</b>   | <b>1.6</b>                  | <b>11.8</b>   | <b>-0.9</b>                   | <b>7.1</b>    | <b>1.4</b>                         | <b>9.4</b>                 |
| 52            | Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers .... | 1.0                         | 9.7           | -1.6                          | 9.8           | -1.4                               | 10.0                       |
| 55 ex. 554    | Automotive dealers.....   | 2.3                         | 15.3          | -0.8                          | 6.9           | 2.6                                | 10.7                       |
| 551,2,5,6,7,9 | Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....                   | 2.5                         | 16.2          | -0.8                          | 7.2           | 2.9                                | 11.2                       |
| 57            | Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....                    | 0.0                         | 6.6           | 0.6                           | 8.1           | 1.0                                | 7.6                        |
|               | <b>Nondurable goods, total.....</b>                                       | <b>0.2</b>                  | <b>7.2</b>    | <b>0.4</b>                    | <b>7.6</b>    | <b>1.6</b>                         | <b>7.3</b>                 |
| 53            | General merchandise group stores.....                                     | 1.0                         | 9.3           | 0.6                           | 7.9           | 1.0                                | 8.2                        |
| 531           | Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....                                      | 0.7                         | 8.4           | 0.6                           | 7.3           | 0.8                                | 7.4                        |
| 531           | Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) <sup>2</sup> .....                        | (NA)                        | (NA)          | 0.6                           | 7.3           | (NA)                               | (NA)                       |
| 54            | Food stores.....  | 0.1                         | 4.4           | -0.1                          | 4.8           | 1.0                                | 4.8                        |
| 541           | Grocery stores.....   | 0.0                         | 4.5           | 0.0                           | 4.9           | 1.0                                | 4.9                        |
| 554           | Gasoline service stations.....  | 1.2                         | 5.9           | -0.5                          | 6.1           | 3.4                                | 6.1                        |
| 56            | Apparel and accessory stores.....   | -0.4                        | 6.1           | -0.4                          | 8.0           | 1.5                                | 7.4                        |
| 58            | Eating and drinking places.....   | -0.4                        | 6.5           | 0.2                           | 6.6           | 0.8                                | 6.7                        |
| 591           | Drug and proprietary stores.....  | 0.0                         | 12.0          | 1.8                           | 13.3          | 2.4                                | 12.2                       |

NA Not available. (p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

(1) Percent change rounded to nearest tenth.

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

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

### 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 each survey. The margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is a 90% confidence interval. If, for example, the trend estimate is +1.2% and the standard error is 0.9%, then the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 1.65 \times 0.9\%$  or  $\pm 1.5\%$ , and the 90% confidence interval is -0.3% to +2.7%. If the interval contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. For monthly level, the coefficient of variation (CV) is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated value  $\pm 1.65 \times CV \times$  (the estimated value).

Estimates of sampling variability are given in Table 3. They are based on two components. The first component is a measure of the average

difference between the Advance and the Preliminary estimates. The second reflects the variability of the Preliminary estimate. Additionally, both the Advance and the full survey are subject to nonsampling errors. Such errors can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, and response errors, among others. Precautionary steps are taken to minimize these errors, but their magnitude is not directly measured.

Preliminary estimates for the current month and final estimates for the previous month based on the full sample are published next month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report. This report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and additional measures of sampling variability. It will also present a description of revisions and the techniques used in developing the estimates, and an explanation of confidence intervals and sampling variability (Appendix B, Reliability of Data).

**Table 3. Measures of Variability of and Revision to Advance Estimates for Level and Trend**

| SIC code      | Kind of Business                                    | Level of sales:<br>Estimated<br>CV <sup>1</sup> for<br>Current Mo.<br>(x 100) | Trend (percent change):<br>Estimated standard error <sup>1</sup> for |                                     |   | Revision for month-<br>to-month change <sup>2</sup> |                                |
|---------------|---|---|--|-------------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------------|
|               |   |   | Current Mo.<br>to<br>Previous Mo.                                    | Current Qtr.<br>to<br>Previous Qtr. | Current Mo.<br>to Current<br>Mo. Last Yr. | Average<br>revision                                 | Median<br>absolute<br>revision |
|               | <b>Retail trade, total.....</b>                     | <b>7.0</b>  | <b>0.4</b>   | <b>0.3</b>                          | <b>0.6</b>                                | <b>0.1</b>  | <b>0.3</b>                     |
|               | Total (excl. auto dealers) .....                    | 1.0   | 0.6  | 0.3                                 | 0.7                                       | 0.2   | 0.3                            |
|               | <b>Durable goods, total .....</b>                   | <b>1.4</b>  | <b>0.9</b>   | <b>0.6</b>                          | <b>1.1</b>                                | <b>0.1</b>  | <b>0.4</b>                     |
| 52            | Building materials, group stores .....              | 3.5   | 1.9  | 1.1                                 | 2.7                                       | 0.4   | 1.0                            |
| 55 ex. 554    | Automotive dealers.....                             | 1.6   | 1.2  | 0.8                                 | 1.5                                       | 0.0   | 0.5                            |
| 551,2,5,6,7,9 | Motor vehicle and misc.<br>automotive dealers.....  | 1.8   | 1.3  | 0.9                                 | 1.6                                       | -0.1  | 0.6                            |
| 57            | Furniture, home furn, and<br>equipment stores ..... | 2.0   | 1.4  | 0.7                                 | 1.8                                       | 0.2   | 0.6                            |
|               | <b>Nondurable goods, total.....</b>                 | <b>1.1</b>  | <b>0.4</b>   | <b>0.2</b>                          | <b>0.5</b>                                | <b>0.2</b>  | <b>0.3</b>                     |
| 53            | General merch. group, total.....                    | 0.6   | 0.6  | 0.2                                 | 0.6                                       | 0.0   | 0.3                            |
| 531           | Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)...                 | 0.4   | 0.5  | 0.1                                 | 0.4                                       | 0.0   | 0.3                            |
| 54            | Food stores.....                                    | 1.2   | 0.2  | 0.3                                 | 0.6                                       | 0.2   | 0.3                            |
| 541           | Grocery stores .....                                | 1.2   | 0.2  | 0.3                                 | 0.6                                       | 0.2   | 0.3                            |
| 554           | Gasoline service stations .....                     | 2.2   | 1.2  | 1.4                                 | 1.4                                       | 0.3   | 0.9                            |
| 56            | Apparel and accessory stores .....                  | 1.9   | 1.5  | 0.6                                 | 1.6                                       | -0.1  | 0.9                            |
| 58            | Eating and drinking places .....                    | 5.1   | 1.0  | 0.9                                 | 2.2                                       | 0.4   | 0.5                            |
| 591           | Drug and proprietary stores .....                   | 1.7   | 0.8  | 0.4                                 | 1.2                                       | 0.1   | 0.3                            |



- (1) The coefficients of variation (CVs) for level of sales and the standard errors for trends are medians based on estimates for the preceding 12 months.
- (2) These columns measure the difference between the Advance/Preliminary ratio and the Preliminary/Final ratio estimates -- i.e., the difference between estimates of trend for the same pair of data months. The revisions are based on the latest 12 months of data.