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FIRST QUARTER 2008 DATA FROM THE QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REPORT LARGE U.S. RETAIL TRADE CORPORATIONS

After-Tax Profits and Sales, First Quarter 2008 - Not Seasonally Adjusted

In the first quarter of 2008, **after-tax profits** of U.S. retail corporations with assets of \$50 million and over totaled \$11.5 billion. First quarter 2008 after-tax profits were down \$5.9 (± 0.1) billion, or 33.8 percent ($\pm 0.4\%$), from the \$17.4 billion recorded in fourth quarter 2007, and down \$2.8 (± 0.1) billion, or 19.6 percent ($\pm 0.2\%$), from the \$14.4 billion recorded in the first quarter of 2007.

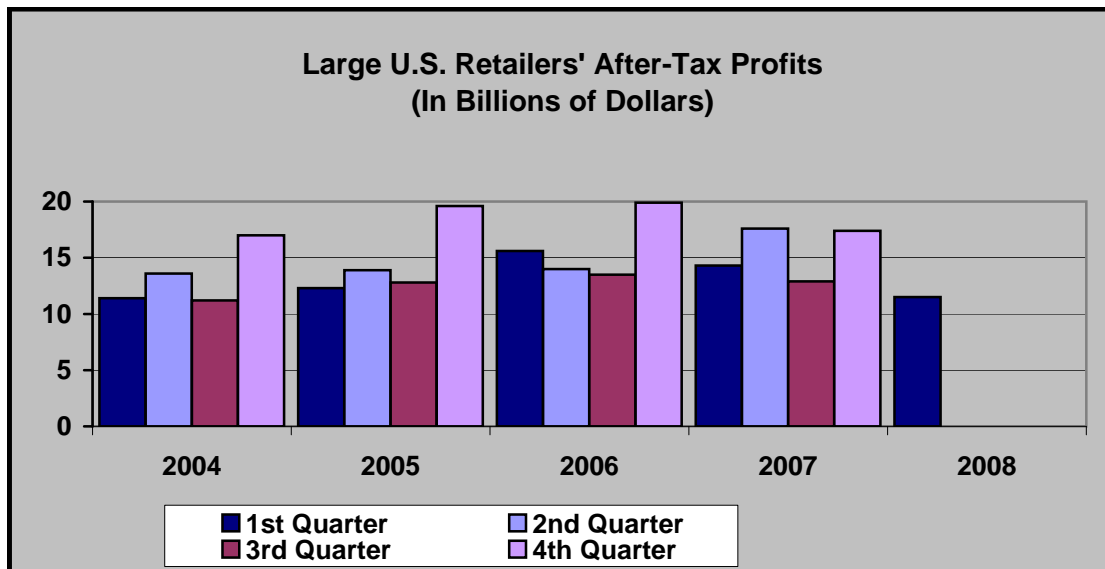
Sales in the first quarter of 2008, at \$514.1 billion, were down \$37.9 (± 2.6) billion, or 6.9 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$), from the \$552.0 billion recorded in the fourth quarter of 2007, but up \$16.4 (± 5.5) billion, or 3.3 percent ($\pm 1.1\%$), from the \$497.6 billion recorded in the first quarter of 2007.

After-tax profits for these corporations averaged 2.2 cents per dollar of sales for the first quarter of 2008, down 1.0 (± 0.1) cents from the 3.2 cents recorded in the fourth quarter of 2007, and down 0.7 (± 0.1) cents from the 2.9 cents recorded in the first quarter of 2007.

The annual rate of after-tax profits on stockholders' equity in the first quarter of 2008 was 11.4 percent, down 5.5 percent ($\pm 0.1\%$) from the 16.9 percent recorded in the fourth quarter of 2007, and down 2.3 percent ($\pm 0.1\%$) from the 13.7 percent recorded in the first quarter of 2007.

Retail Trade Corporations After-Tax Profits, 2004-2008 – Not Seasonally Adjusted

First quarter after-tax profits of U.S. retail trade corporations (not seasonally adjusted) in 2008 were at their lowest level since first quarter 2004.



ACCESS TO QFR DATA

This press release can be viewed today in portable document format (.pdf) at our QFR internet website http://www.census.gov/csd/qfr/view/qfr_rt.pdf. Data in the release are drawn from a more comprehensive data set published in the *Quarterly Financial Report for Manufacturing, Mining, and Trade Corporations – Second quarter 2008* (QFR-08-2). This quarterly publication will be available for downloading at our QFR internet website <http://www.census.gov/csd/qfr/pub.html> on September 8, 2008. The quarterly publication includes summary statements of income and retained earnings, balance sheets, and related financial and operating ratios for manufacturing, mining, and trade corporations. Data presented are classified by industry and asset size.

SAMPLING

Data in this press release are based on quarterly financial reports from approximately 600 U.S. corporations. The data are estimated from a sample survey and therefore are subject to sampling variability as well as nonsampling variability such as response error, nonreporting, and coverage errors. Estimates of sampling variability are presented in this release. A statement such as "up \$2.5 (± 0.2) billion," appearing in the text, indicates the range (+\$2.3 to +\$2.7 billion) in which the actual change is likely to have occurred.

The range given for the change is a 90% confidence interval that accounts only for sampling variability. If the range had contained zero (0), it would have been uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease; that is, the change would not have been statistically significant. For any comparison cited without a confidence interval, the change is statistically significant at the 90% confidence level. The quarterly publication, *Quarterly Financial Report for Manufacturing, Mining, and Trade Corporations - Second quarter 2008* (QFR-08-2), includes more detailed explanations of confidence intervals and sampling variability, along with additional measures of sampling variability.

Schedule of Release Dates for Calendar Year 2008		
Reference Quarter	Manufacturing, Mining, and Wholesale Trade	Retail Trade
Second Quarter 2008	September 8, 2008	October 8, 2008
Third Quarter 2008	December 8, 2008	

Table 1. U. S. Retail Trade Corporations - Assets \$50 Million and Over - Income Statement

Item	1Q	4Q	1Q
	2008	2007 ¹	2007 ¹
	(million dollars)		
Net sales, receipts, and operating revenues	514,086	552,025	497,640
Less: Depreciation, depletion, and amortization	9,879	10,033	9,417
Less: All other operating costs and expenses	483,988	514,840	465,593
Income (or loss) from operations	20,220	27,151	22,630
Interest expense	4,438	4,546	3,969
Net nonoperating income (expense)	3,370	3,982	3,165
Income (or loss) before income taxes	19,152	26,588	21,826
Less: Provision for current and deferred domestic income taxes	7,604	9,158	7,466
Income (or loss) after income taxes	11,548	17,429	14,361
Cash dividends charged to retained earnings in current quarter	6,533	2,627	6,665
Net income retained in business	5,015	14,803	7,696
Retained earnings at beginning of quarter	285,398	304,711	295,244
Other direct credits (or charges) to retained earnings (net)	(5,474)	(31,595)	(4,368)
Retained earnings at end of quarter	284,938	287,919	298,572

¹Revised.**Table 2. U. S. Retail Trade Corporations - Assets \$50 Million and Over - Income Statement Ratios**

Item	1Q	4Q	1Q
	2008	2007 ¹	2007 ¹
	(cents per dollar of sales)		
Net sales, receipts, and operating revenues	100.00	100.00	100.00
Less: Depreciation, depletion, and amortization	1.92	1.82	1.89
Less: All other operating costs and expenses	94.15	93.26	93.56
Income (or loss) from operations	3.93	4.92	4.55
Interest expense	0.86	0.82	0.80
Net nonoperating income (expense)	0.66	0.72	0.64
Income (or loss) before income taxes	3.73	4.82	4.39
Less: Provision for current and deferred domestic income taxes	1.48	1.66	1.50
Income (or loss) after income taxes	2.25	3.16	2.89

¹Revised.**Table 3. U. S. Retail Trade Corporations - Assets \$50 Million and Over - Operating Ratios**

Item	1Q	4Q	1Q
	2008	2007 ¹	2007 ¹
	(percent)		
Annual rate of profit on stockholders' equity at end of period:			
Before income taxes	18.91	25.86	20.80
After income taxes	11.40	16.95	13.68
Annual rate of profit on total assets:			
Before income taxes	7.67	10.59	9.02
After income taxes	4.63	6.94	5.93

¹Revised.