

Special Notice: On June 13 with the release of the advance monthly retail sales estimates for May 2001, we will begin using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) in place of the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system. In addition, we will restate the unadjusted and adjusted data series on a NAICS basis beginning with January 1992 through April 2001. These data series will also be revised based on the results of the 1999 Annual Retail Trade Survey, which was conducted on a NAICS basis, and will be released on June 1, 2001. For further information on NAICS, including publication stubs for the new release, see our web site at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/naics.html>.

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. ET, Thursday, April 12, 2001.

**ADVANCE MONTHLY RETAIL SALES
MARCH 2001**

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 \$274.1 billion, a decrease of 0.2 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from the previous month, but up 1.9 percent ($\pm 0.9\%$) from March 2000. Total sales for the January through March period were up 3.1 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from the same period a year ago. The January to February 2001 percent change was revised from -0.2 percent ($\pm 0.4\%$) to unchanged ($\pm 0.3\%$).

Durable goods decreased 0.7 percent ($\pm 1.4\%$) from February and were 1.0 percent ($\pm 1.8\%$) below last year. Building materials sales were down 3.7 percent ($\pm 4.5\%$) from March a year ago.

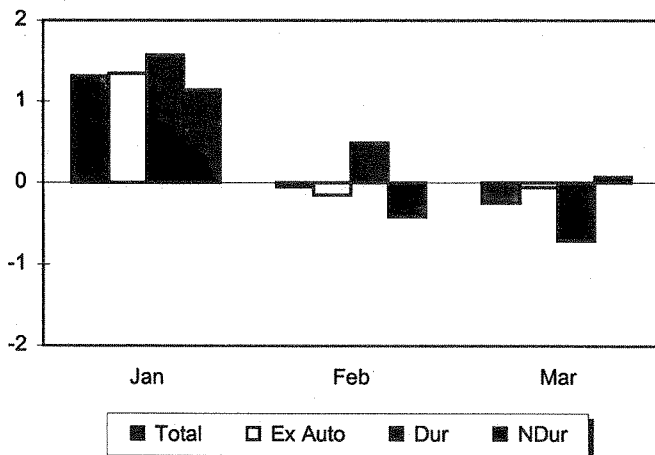
Nondurable goods increased 0.1 percent ($\pm 0.6\%$) from February and were up 3.9 percent from March 2000. Drug store sales were up 13.5 percent from last year. Eating and drinking places sales were up 4.6 percent from March a year ago.

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.

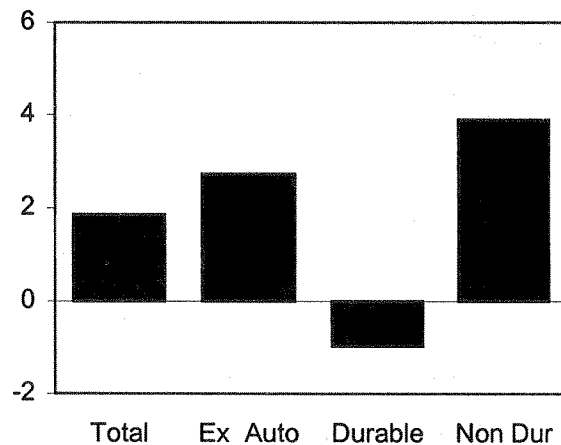
Percent Change in Retail Sales

(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 April is scheduled to be released May 11, 2001 at 8:30 a.m.

Address inquiries concerning this report to Scott Scheleur, 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 ¹					
		3 month total		2001			2000		2001			2000	
		2001	Change from 2000	Mar. ² (a)	Feb. (p)	Jan. (r)	Mar.	Feb.	Mar. ² (a)	Feb. (p)	Jan. (r)	Mar. (r)	Feb. (r)
	Retail trade, total.....	766,331	2.5	277,607	243,780	244,944	273,112	244,951	274,093	274,779	274,912	269,108	266,799
	Total (excl. auto dealers).....	567,888	3.6	203,771	180,152	183,965	198,200	178,248	207,180	207,312	207,632	201,690	198,627
	Durable goods, total.....	316,620	-0.6	116,502	101,355	98,763	118,242	105,562	111,687	112,485	111,932	112,776	112,663
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.	38,689	-1.2	14,888	11,910	11,891	15,698	12,113	15,541	15,728	15,427	16,137	15,201
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores..	(*)	(*)	(*)	9,752	9,773	12,481	9,790	(*)	12,519	12,309	12,775	11,968
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,054	1,072	1,270	1,003	(*)	1,385	1,309	1,344	1,281
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	198,443	-0.7	73,836	63,628	60,979	74,912	66,703	66,913	67,467	67,280	67,418	68,172
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	188,810	-0.7	70,280	60,586	57,944	71,322	63,595	63,430	63,909	63,815	63,909	64,695
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	(*)	(*)	51,460	49,351	60,418	54,306	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,042	3,035	3,590	3,108	(*)	3,558	3,465	3,509	3,477
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	40,671	-0.7	14,183	12,929	13,559	14,285	13,436	14,326	14,425	14,454	14,489	14,418
571	Furniture and home furnishings.	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,238	6,450	6,952	6,382	(*)	7,049	7,088	6,966	6,929
5722,31,4	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,735	6,158	6,279	6,120	(*)	6,288	6,290	6,440	6,469
5722	Household appliance stores.	(*)	(*)	(*)	909	971	975	892	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	449,711	4.7	161,105	142,425	146,181	154,870	139,389	162,406	162,294	162,980	156,332	154,136
53	General merchandise group stores.	86,503	3.0	32,148	27,576	26,779	31,200	27,308	34,444	34,337	34,667	33,410	33,181
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts)..	66,166	1.9	24,681	21,077	20,408	24,124	21,056	26,625	26,512	26,817	26,024	25,867
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) ³ ..	(*)	(*)	(*)	21,435	20,751	24,576	21,456	(*)	26,965	27,372	26,398	26,366
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,287	1,146	1,268	1,142	(*)	1,507	1,547	1,311	1,302
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,212	5,225	5,808	5,110	(*)	6,318	6,303	6,075	6,012
54	Food stores.....	118,749	4.7	41,794	37,536	39,419	39,770	36,506	41,465	41,563	41,270	39,678	39,198
541	Grocery stores.....	112,646	4.6	39,655	35,533	37,458	37,747	34,574	39,262	39,350	39,059	37,597	37,136
554	Gasoline service stations.....	50,122	1.1	17,374	15,896	16,852	18,313	15,971	17,710	18,064	18,159	18,554	17,609
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	30,173	5.5	11,849	9,540	8,784	11,291	9,147	12,304	12,391	12,323	11,827	11,625
561	Men's and boy's clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	739	780	833	718	(*)	976	973	937	925
562,3	Women's clothing, accessory stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,723	2,500	3,223	2,513	(*)	3,491	3,453	3,316	3,153
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,591	3,309	4,299	3,499	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,484	1,333	1,812	1,513	(*)	1,823	1,826	1,817	1,814
58	Eating and drinking places.....	75,854	4.6	27,519	24,097	24,238	25,962	23,643	26,588	26,422	26,635	25,428	25,046
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	34,957	12.5	12,244	11,131	11,582	10,851	10,152	12,004	11,829	11,723	10,576	10,434
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,189	2,250	2,327	2,101	(*)	2,612	2,635	2,455	2,435
5961	Total mail order.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,613	8,620	8,953	7,690	(*)	8,946	9,112	8,777	8,602
53,56,57, 594	GAF ⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	58,267	57,045	64,722	57,756	(*)	71,143	71,274	68,987	68,444

* 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-12-ARIMA 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-01-02.

(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 ¹					
		Mar. 2001 Advance from --		Feb. 2001 Preliminary from --		Jan. 2001 through Mar. 2001 from --	
		Feb. 2001 (p)	Mar. 2000 (r)	Jan. 2001 (r)	Feb. 2000 (r)	Oct. 2000 through Dec. 2000	Jan. 2000 through Mar. 2000
	Retail trade, total	-0.2	1.9	0.0	3.0	1.1	3.1
	Total (excl. automotive dealers)	-0.1	2.7	-0.2	4.4	1.2	4.3
	Durable goods, total	-0.7	-1.0	0.5	-0.2	1.2	-0.2
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers	-1.2	-3.7	2.0	3.5	2.0	0.1
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-0.8	-0.7	0.3	-1.0	0.9	-0.6
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	-0.7	-0.7	0.1	-1.2	1.0	-0.6
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-0.7	-1.1	-0.2	0.0	0.6	0.1
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.1	3.9	-0.4	5.3	1.1	5.5
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.3	3.1	-1.0	3.5	0.9	3.8
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	0.4	2.3	-1.1	2.5	0.5	2.6
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ²	(NA)	(NA)	-1.5	2.3	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	-0.2	4.5	0.7	6.0	1.3	5.7
541	Grocery stores.....	-0.2	4.4	0.7	6.0	1.1	5.6
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-2.0	-4.5	-0.5	2.6	-2.1	1.9
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-0.7	4.0	0.6	6.6	2.0	6.4
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.6	4.6	-0.8	5.5	3.1	5.6
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	1.5	13.5	0.9	13.4	3.8	13.2

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.

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



- (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.