

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. ET, Thursday, February 12, 2004.

**ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL TRADE AND FOOD SERVICES  
JANUARY 2004**

**Intention to Revise Retail Estimates:** Monthly retail sales estimates will be revised based on the results of the 2002 Annual Retail Trade Survey. Revised unadjusted and corresponding adjusted data are scheduled for release on March 30.

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for January, adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$322.9 billion, a decrease of 0.3 percent ( $\pm 0.8\%$ ) from the previous month, but up 5.0 percent ( $\pm 1.0\%$ ) from January 2003. Total sales for the November 2003 through January 2004 period were up 6.2 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ ) from the same period a year ago. The November to December 2003 percent change was revised from 0.5 percent ( $\pm 0.8\%$ ) to 0.2 percent ( $\pm 0.3\%$ ).

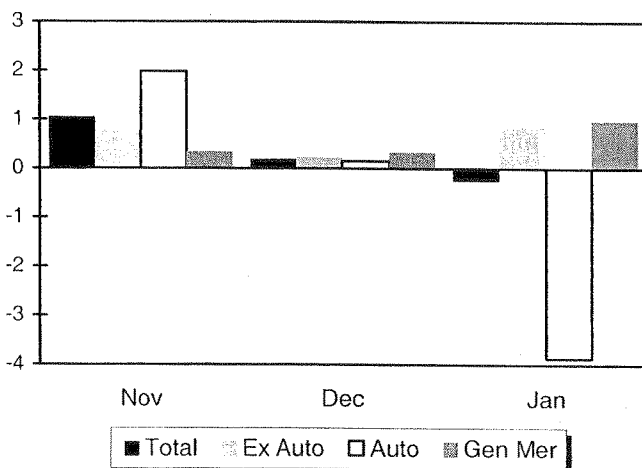
Retail trade sales were down 0.4 percent ( $\pm 0.8\%$ ) from December 2003, but were 4.5 percent ( $\pm 1.0\%$ ) above last year. Electronics and appliance stores were up 11.5 percent ( $\pm 2.5\%$ ) from January 2003 and sales of food services and drinking places were up 10.4 percent ( $\pm 2.6\%$ ) from last year.

*The advance estimates are based on a subsample of the Bureau's full retail and food services sample. A stratified random sampling method is used to select approximately 5,000 retail and food services firms whose sales are then weighted and benchmarked to represent the complete universe of over three million retail and food services firms. Responding firms account for approximately 65% of the MARTS dollar volume estimate. For an explanation of the measures of sampling variability included in this report, please see the Reliability of Estimates section on the last page of this publication.*

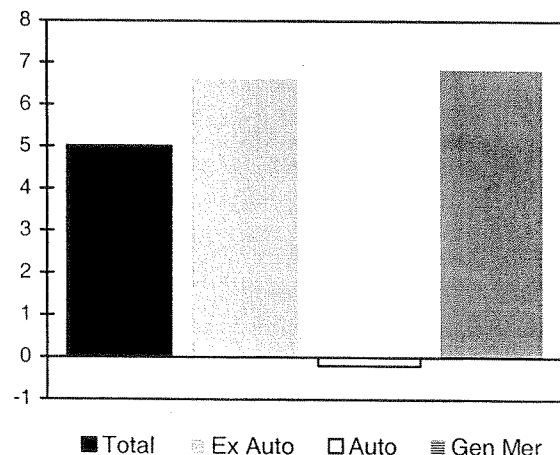
**Percent Change in Retail Sales and Food Services Sales**

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

**From Previous Month**



**From Previous Year**



The Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services for February is scheduled to be released March 11, 2004 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: 1-763-2713.

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/retail>.

**Table 1. Estimated Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services, by Kind of Business**

(In Millions of Dollars and Annual Percent Change)

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted						Adjusted <sup>1</sup>					
		1 month total		2004	2003			2002	2003			2002	
		2004	% Chg. 2003	Jan. <sup>2</sup> (a)	Dec. (p)	Nov. (r)	Jan. (r)	Dec. (r)	Jan. <sup>2</sup> (a)	Dec. (p)	Nov. (r)	Jan. (r)	Dec. (p)
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>												
	<b>total</b> .....	292,970	5.0	292,970	374,457	316,209	279,009	348,445	322,867	323,699	323,076	307,456	304,537
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	227,709	6.8	227,709	301,869	249,246	213,172	281,503	248,920	246,777	246,271	233,472	231,043
	Retail .....	263,351	4.3	263,351	343,377	286,269	252,558	319,815	291,223	292,400	291,921	278,798	275,763
	<b>GAFO<sup>3</sup></b> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	129,846	91,358	67,077	123,179	(*)	82,901	82,718	78,745	78,689
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	65,261	-0.9	65,261	72,588	66,963	65,837	66,942	73,947	76,922	76,805	73,984	73,494
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	59,246	-1.4	59,246	66,236	60,707	60,065	61,190	67,249	70,165	70,100	67,641	67,242
44111	New car dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	57,328	51,982	51,561	53,540	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,352	6,256	5,772	5,752	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	7,703	4.9	7,703	10,396	9,328	7,343	9,481	8,502	8,578	8,574	8,078	7,987
4421	Furniture stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,157	4,923	4,181	4,678	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,239	4,405	3,162	4,803	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	7,921	11.2	7,921	13,563	9,096	7,121	12,144	8,319	8,309	8,295	7,462	7,522
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	10,375	6,787	5,128	9,429	(*)	5,935	5,948	5,467	5,460
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,188	2,309	1,993	2,715	(*)	2,374	2,347	1,995	2,062
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	22,533	6.9	22,533	25,542	25,671	21,085	21,814	28,170	28,413	28,244	25,868	24,875
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	22,985	23,268	19,160	19,669	(*)	24,822	24,806	22,728	21,806
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	43,132	5.0	43,132	46,655	42,914	41,068	44,693	43,552	42,792	42,962	41,866	41,327
4451	Grocery stores .....	39,337	4.7	39,337	40,554	38,532	37,582	38,999	39,180	38,476	38,609	37,809	37,248
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,882	2,834	2,253	3,682	(*)	2,753	2,759	2,608	2,649
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	16,475	6.8	16,475	18,959	15,741	15,423	17,120	16,591	16,515	16,483	15,469	15,124
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	16,211	13,546	13,323	14,584	(*)	14,146	14,110	13,191	12,849
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	21,356	5.1	21,356	21,335	20,892	20,326	20,030	22,890	22,505	22,465	21,832	21,331
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	11,856	9.5	11,856	26,835	16,540	10,825	25,296	15,680	15,245	15,269	14,698	14,698
44811	Men's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,477	974	659	1,364	(*)	883	867	814	814
44812	Women's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,687	3,194	2,244	4,373	(*)	3,094	3,083	2,911	2,929
44814	Family clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	8,889	6,208	3,601	8,637	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,450	1,828	1,334	2,326	(*)	1,877	1,888	1,776	1,802
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	6,653	3.7	6,653	12,418	7,550	6,415	12,232	6,945	6,834	6,796	6,803	6,818
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	34,420	7.3	34,420	61,470	45,473	32,071	58,883	40,966	40,569	40,434	38,339	38,437
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	14,201	-0.3	14,201	31,243	21,082	14,247	31,854	18,114	18,017	18,018	18,175	18,336
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) <sup>4</sup> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	31,760	21,404	14,471	32,359	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	30,227	24,391	17,824	27,029	(*)	22,552	22,416	20,164	20,101
45291	Warehouse clubs & superstores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	25,038	20,620	15,304	22,352	(*)	19,113	19,022	17,080	17,024
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,189	3,771	2,520	4,677	(*)	3,439	3,394	3,084	3,077
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	8,236	1.5	8,236	11,378	8,681	8,118	10,944	8,905	8,906	8,940	8,745	8,681
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	17,805	5.2	17,805	22,238	17,420	16,926	20,236	16,756	16,812	16,654	15,654	15,642
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	14,813	11,166	9,902	13,471	(*)	10,657	10,494	9,992	9,862
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ...	29,619	12.0	29,619	31,080	29,940	26,451	28,630	31,644	31,299	31,155	28,658	28,774

(\*) Advance estimates are not available from the subsample panel for these business classifications.

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

Note: Totals include data for business classifications not shown separately.

- 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 released on the Internet at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>.
- 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.
- GAFO represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise (furniture & home furnishings (442), electronics & appliances(443), clothing & accessories(448), sporting goods, hobby, book, music (451), general merchandise(452), office supplies, stationery, and gift stores(4532)).
- Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

**Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services, by Kind of Business**

(Adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Percent Change <sup>1</sup>					
		Jan. 2004 Advance from --		Dec. 2003 Preliminary from --		Nov. 2003 through Jan. 2004 from --	
		Dec. 2003 (p)	Jan. 2003 (r)	Nov. 2003 (r)	Dec. 2002 (r)	Aug. 2003 through Oct. 2003	Nov. 2002 through Jan. 2003
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>						
	<b>total</b> .....	-0.3	5.0	0.2	6.3	1.0	6.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ....	0.9	6.6	0.2	6.8	1.5	6.8
	Retail .....	-0.4	4.5	0.2	6.0	0.8	5.7
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	-3.9	-0.1	0.2	4.7	-0.7	4.0
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	-4.2	-0.6	0.1	4.3	-0.8	3.8
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	-0.9	5.2	0.0	7.4	-0.4	6.4
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	0.1	11.5	0.2	10.5	1.4	10.8
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	-0.9	8.9	0.6	14.2	1.9	11.5
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	1.8	4.0	-0.4	3.5	0.6	3.8
4451	Grocery stores .....	1.8	3.6	-0.3	3.3	0.7	3.4
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	0.5	7.3	0.2	9.2	1.6	8.2
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	1.7	4.8	0.2	5.5	2.6	6.0
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	2.9	6.7	-0.2	5.0	2.3	6.0
	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	1.6	2.1	0.6	0.2	-0.1	0.2
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	1.0	6.9	0.3	5.5	0.7	5.9
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.5	-0.3	0.0	-1.7	-1.3	-1.4
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	0.0	1.8	-0.4	2.6	1.3	3.0
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	-0.3	7.0	0.9	7.5	2.1	7.4
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ....	1.1	10.4	0.5	8.8	3.0	10.0

(p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

(1) Percent change rounded to nearest tenth.

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

### Reliability of Estimates

**Source of Data:** The Census Bureau conducts the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey each month to provide an early indication of sales of retail and food service companies. The Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey is a voluntary survey of a sub-sample of about 5,000 firms selected from the Monthly Retail Trade Survey. Firms responding to this survey account for approximately 65% of the dollar volume estimate.

**Reliability of Estimates:** The reliability of the estimates is a function of sampling and nonsampling errors. The margin of sampling error, as included on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is a 90% confidence

interval. If for example, the trend estimated 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. Nonsampling error, on the other hand, can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, and response errors. Although not directly measured, precautionary steps are taken to minimize nonsampling error. Additional survey information is available at [www.census.gov/retail](http://www.census.gov/retail).

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

NAICS Code	Kind of Business	Level of sales: Median CV <sup>(2)</sup> for Current Mo. (%)	Trend (percent change): Median standard error <sup>(2)</sup> for			Revision for month- to-month change <sup>(1)</sup>	
			Current Mo. to Previous Mo.	Current Qtr. to Previous Qtr.	Current Mo. to Current Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>						
	total .....	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.2	0.3
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.2
	<b>Retail .....</b>	0.8	0.5	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.3
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers .....</b>	2.0	1.5	0.5	1.7	0.2	0.9
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	2.1	1.6	0.6	1.9	0.2	1.0
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores .....</b>	3.6	1.4	1.2	1.9	0.4	0.8
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores ....</b>	1.7	0.6	0.7	1.5	0.2	0.6
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; ..</b>						
	supplies dealers .....	2.1	1.1	0.6	1.3	0.1	0.5
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores .....</b>	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.3
4451	Grocery stores .....	0.9	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.3
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores .....</b>	3.0	0.5	0.5	1.0	0.0	0.2
447	<b>Gasoline stations .....</b>	1.8	0.7	0.4	1.2	0.4	0.5
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories</b>						
	stores .....	1.4	0.6	0.7	1.2	0.5	0.7
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp;</b>						
	music stores .....	2.4	1.7	2.2	1.8	0.1	0.8
452	<b>General merchandise stores .....</b>	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.) .....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers .....</b>	3.9	3.2	1.4	3.5	0.3	0.6
454	<b>Nonstore retailers .....</b>	4.5	2.2	1.7	2.6	0.2	0.8
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places ..</b>	2.2	0.8	1.0	1.6	0.2	0.5



(1) These columns measure the difference between the estimates of trend for the same pair of data months, i.e. the difference between the Advance/Preliminary ratio and the Preliminary/Final ratio estimates. Revisions are based on estimates from the 12 most recent months.

(2) Medians are based on estimates from the 12 most recent months.