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Scott Scheleur / Judy Ross Davis  
Service Sector Statistics Division  
(301) 763-2713

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## ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES April 2005

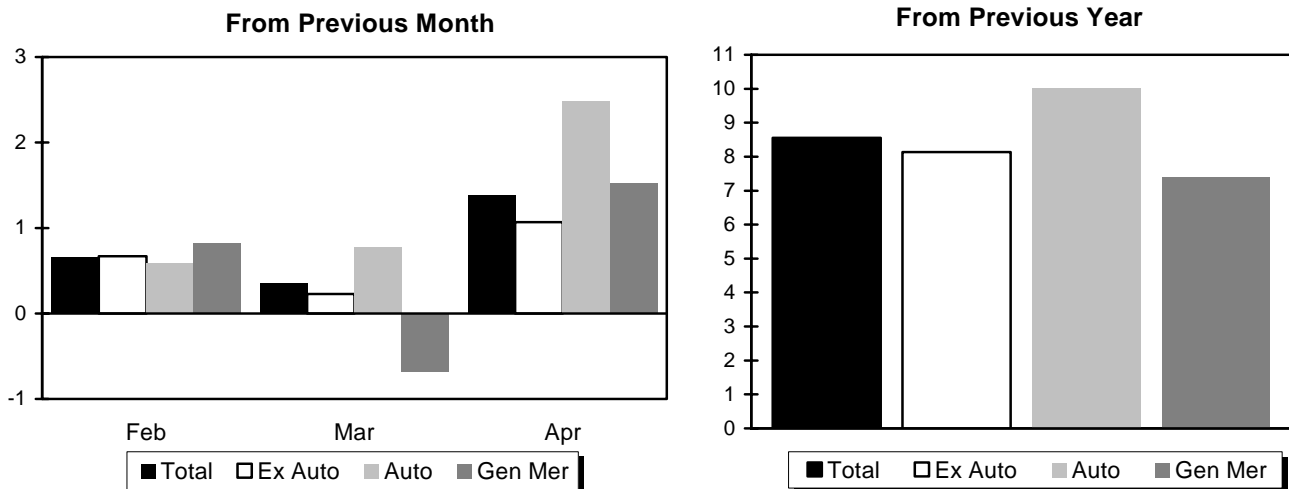
The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for April, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$344.9 billion, an increase of 1.4 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) from the previous month and up 8.6 percent ( $\pm 0.8\%$ ) from April 2004. Total sales for the February through April 2005 period were up 7.5 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ ) from the same period a year ago. The February to March 2005 percent change was revised from +0.3 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ )\* to +0.4 percent ( $\pm 0.3\%$ ).

Retail trade sales were up 1.4 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) from March and were 8.7 percent ( $\pm 1.0\%$ ) above last year. Gasoline station sales were up 19.8 percent ( $\pm 3.1\%$ ) from April 2004 and sales of nonstore retailers were up 12.4 percent ( $\pm 3.5\%$ ) from last year.

*The advance estimates are based on a subsample of the Census 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 and Food Services Sales

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



The Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services for May is scheduled to be released June 14, 2005 at 8:30 a.m. EDT.

For information, visit the Census Bureau's Web site at <<http://www.census.gov/retail>>. This report is also available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's STAT-USA (202-482-1986).

\* The 90 percent confidence interval includes zero. The Census Bureau does not have sufficient statistical evidence to conclude that the actual change is different from zero.

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

(Total sales estimates are shown in millions of dollars and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, Monthly Retail Trade Survey, and administrative records.)

NAICS <sup>1</sup> code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted						Adjusted <sup>2</sup>					
		4 Month Total		2005			2004		2005			2004	
		2005	% Chg. 2004	Apr. <sup>3</sup> (a)	Mar. (p)	Feb. (r)	Apr.	Mar.	Apr. <sup>3</sup> (a)	Mar. (p)	Feb. (r)	Apr. (r)	Mar. (r)
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>												
	<b>total</b> .....	1,288,513	6.5	341,863	346,355	301,281	318,847	322,390	344,895	340,179	338,991	317,706	320,815
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	992,602	6.9	261,153	263,432	232,531	244,520	242,659	266,803	263,984	263,382	246,725	247,227
	Retail .....	1,160,426	6.5	308,117	312,877	270,872	287,527	290,883	311,615	307,196	305,757	286,573	289,651
	<b>GAFO<sup>4</sup></b> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	83,055	75,107	77,586	78,102	(*)	86,800	87,437	82,768	83,698
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	295,911	4.9	80,710	82,923	68,750	74,327	79,731	78,092	76,195	75,609	70,981	73,588
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	272,850	4.8	74,589	76,702	63,348	68,628	73,866	72,067	70,304	69,613	65,485	67,954
44111	New car dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	62,660	52,020	56,855	61,897	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,221	5,402	5,699	5,865	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	32,837	2.8	8,289	8,753	7,932	8,024	8,551	8,846	8,841	8,863	8,582	8,646
4421	Furniture stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,896	4,605	4,390	4,724	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,857	3,327	3,634	3,827	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	29,807	5.5	7,055	7,786	7,425	6,688	7,283	8,251	8,261	8,295	7,835	7,750
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,148	6,018	5,284	5,704	(*)	6,704	6,754	6,290	6,227
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,638	1,407	1,404	1,579	(*)	1,557	1,541	1,545	1,523
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	98,145	8.1	30,099	26,762	20,644	28,715	25,339	27,127	26,801	26,306	25,248	25,417
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	23,695	18,796	23,696	22,203	(*)	23,910	23,262	22,292	22,450
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	165,234	4.2	41,861	43,298	38,659	40,404	40,111	43,066	42,747	42,734	40,936	40,852
4451	Grocery stores .....	149,297	4.0	37,568	39,052	34,883	36,352	36,339	38,571	38,324	38,291	36,794	36,743
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,561	2,333	2,529	2,376	(*)	2,763	2,794	2,640	2,600
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	70,786	5.1	17,788	18,607	16,965	17,008	17,605	17,968	17,840	17,820	16,923	17,043
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	15,900	14,501	14,541	14,966	(*)	15,259	15,200	14,512	14,558
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	112,043	16.9	31,015	29,880	25,355	25,828	25,243	30,407	29,850	29,211	25,371	25,193
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	57,446	4.7	15,677	15,775	13,904	15,032	14,728	16,722	16,265	16,636	15,500	16,003
44811	Men's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	792	651	736	692	(*)	842	838	761	771
44812	Women's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,090	2,461	3,051	2,943	(*)	2,986	3,023	2,833	2,946
44814	Family clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,975	4,802	5,469	5,468	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,019	1,797	2,139	1,992	(*)	1,932	2,066	1,984	2,058
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	23,461	0.4	5,849	6,058	5,340	5,673	5,939	6,723	6,746	6,717	6,581	6,606
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	157,119	5.7	41,370	41,611	37,515	39,274	38,621	44,060	43,396	43,692	41,027	41,462
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	62,257	-0.3	16,612	16,561	14,915	16,713	16,470	18,066	17,832	18,190	17,784	18,186
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) <sup>5</sup> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	16,724	15,071	16,934	16,689	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	25,050	22,600	22,561	22,151	(*)	25,564	25,502	23,243	23,276
45291	Warehouse clubs & superstores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	21,767	19,686	19,355	18,981	(*)	22,211	22,070	19,995	19,896
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,283	2,914	3,206	3,170	(*)	3,353	3,432	3,248	3,380
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	34,625	4.7	8,818	9,089	8,462	8,533	8,418	9,354	9,342	9,326	8,899	8,776
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	83,012	10.8	19,586	22,335	19,921	18,021	19,314	20,999	20,912	20,548	18,690	18,315
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses ....	(*)	(*)	(*)	13,245	11,591	11,669	12,107	(*)	13,024	12,951	12,055	11,975
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ...	128,087	6.1	33,746	33,478	30,409	31,320	31,507	33,280	32,983	33,234	31,133	31,164

(\*) Advance estimates are not available for this kind of business.

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

(1) For a full description of the NAICS codes used in this table, see <http://www.census.gov/epcd/www/naics.html>

(2) Estimates are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variation and for 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. The factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted estimates shown in this table. Year-to-date seasonally adjusted sales estimates are not tabulated. Adjustment factors and explanatory material can be found on the Internet at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>

(3) Advance estimates are based on early reports obtained from a small sample of firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey (MRTS) sample. All other estimates are from the MRTS sample

(4) GAFO represents firms which specialize in department store types of merchandise and is comprised of furniture & home furnishings (442), electronics & appliances (443), clothing & accessories (448), sporting goods, hobby, book, and music (451), general merchandise (452), office supply, stationery, and gift stores (4532).

(5) Estimates include data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line are not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

Note: Table 3 provides estimated measures of sampling variability. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>

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

(Estimates are shown as percents and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, Monthly Retail Trade Survey, and administrative records.)

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Percent Change <sup>1</sup>					
		Apr. 2005 Advance from --		Mar. 2005 Preliminary from --		Feb. 2005 through Apr. 2005 from --	
		Mar. 2005 (p)	Apr. 2004 (r)	Feb. 2005 (r)	Mar. 2004 (r)	Nov. 2004 through Jan. 2005	Feb. 2004 through Apr. 2004
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>						
	<b>total</b> .....	1.4	8.6	0.4	6.0	1.8	7.5
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ....	1.1	8.1	0.2	6.8	1.9	7.9
	Retail .....	1.4	8.7	0.5	6.1	1.9	7.6
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	2.5	10.0	0.8	3.5	1.5	6.4
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	2.5	10.1	1.0	3.5	1.6	6.3
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	0.1	3.1	-0.2	2.3	1.0	3.5
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	-0.1	5.3	-0.4	6.6	3.1	6.5
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	1.2	7.4	1.9	5.4	2.1	8.7
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	0.7	5.2	0.0	4.6	1.1	5.2
4451	Grocery stores .....	0.6	4.8	0.1	4.3	0.7	4.8
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	0.7	6.2	0.1	4.7	2.2	6.1
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	1.9	19.8	2.2	18.5	4.1	18.4
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	2.8	7.9	-2.2	1.6	2.6	5.3
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	-0.3	2.2	0.4	2.1	1.4	1.6
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	1.5	7.4	-0.7	4.7	1.6	6.3
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	1.3	1.6	-2.0	-1.9	-0.4	0.3
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	0.1	5.1	0.2	6.4	1.0	6.5
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	0.4	12.4	1.8	14.2	1.3	12.5
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ....	0.9	6.9	-0.8	5.8	1.4	6.9

(p) Preliminary estimates. (r) Revised estimates.

(1) Estimates shown in this table are derived from adjusted estimates provided in Table 1 of this report.

Note: Table 3 provides estimated measures of sampling variability. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Survey Description

The U.S. Census Bureau conducts the Advance Monthly Retail Trade and Food Services Survey (MARTS) to provide an early estimate of monthly sales by kind of business for retail and food service firms located in the United States. Each month, questionnaires are mailed to a probability sample of approximately 5,000 employer firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey (MRTS). Firms responding to MARTS account for approximately 65% of the total national sales estimate. Advance sales estimates are computed using a link relative estimator. The change in sales from the previous month is estimated using only units that have reported data for both the current and

previous month. There is no imputation or adjustment for nonrespondents in MARTS. The total sales estimate is derived by multiplying this ratio by the preliminary sales estimate for the previous month (derived from the larger MRTS sample). Detailed industry estimates are summed to derive total estimates at broad industry levels. The monthly estimates are adjusted using annual survey estimates and for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences. Additional information on MARTS and MRTS can be found on the Census Bureau website at: <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>.

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

## Reliability of Estimates

Because the estimates presented in this report are based on a sample survey, they contain sampling error and nonsampling error.

Sampling error is the difference between the estimate and the result that would be obtained from a complete enumeration of the sampling frame conducted under the same survey conditions. This error occurs because only a subset of the entire sampling frame is measured in a sample survey. Standard errors and coefficients of variation (CV), as given in Table 3 of this report, are estimated measures of sampling variation.

The margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is a 90 percent confidence interval. If, for example, the percent change estimate is +1.2 percent and its estimated standard error is 0.9 percent, then the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 1.65 \times 0.9$  percent or  $\pm 1.5$  percent, and the 90 percent confidence interval is -0.3 percent to +2.7 percent. If the interval contains 0, then one does not have sufficient statistical evidence to conclude at the 90

percent confidence level that the change is different from zero and therefore the change is not statistically significant. Estimated changes shown in the text are statistically significant unless otherwise noted. For a monthly total, the median estimated coefficient of variation is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated value  $\pm 1.65 \times CV \times$  (the estimated monthly total). The Census Bureau recommends that individuals using estimates in this report incorporate this information into their analyses, as sampling error could affect the conclusions drawn from the estimates.

Nonsampling error encompasses all other factors that contribute to the total error of a sample survey estimate. This type of error can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, mistakes in the recording and coding of data, and other errors of collection, response, coverage, or processing. Although nonsampling error is not measured directly, the Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the process to minimize this type of error.

**Table 3. Estimated Measures of Sampling Variability and Revision to Advance Estimates**

(Estimates are shown as percents and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey and Monthly Retail Trade Survey)

NAICS Code	Kind of Business	Median CV <sup>(1)</sup> for Current Mo. (%)	Median standard error <sup>(1)</sup> for Percent change			Revision for month-to-month change <sup>(2)</sup>	
			Previous Mo. to Current Mo.	Previous Qtr. to Current Qtr.	Current Mo. to same Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>						
	total .....	0.7	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2
	<b>Retail .....</b>	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.1
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers .....</b>	1.8	1.4	0.6	1.7	0.4	0.3
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	1.9	1.5	0.7	1.9	0.4	0.3
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores.....</b>	3.7	1.4	1.2	2.0	-0.1	0.6
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores .....</b>	2.1	0.7	0.5	1.0	0.2	0.2
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp;....</b>						
	<b>supplies dealers.....</b>	1.9	1.0	0.6	1.3	0.4	0.4
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores.....</b>	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
4451	Grocery stores .....	0.9	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.1
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores .....</b>	3.1	0.4	0.4	0.8	0.1	0.3
447	<b>Gasoline stations .....</b>	1.6	0.7	0.5	1.9	0.2	0.3
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories</b>						
	<b>stores .....</b>	1.5	0.7	0.5	0.9	0.0	0.3
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp;</b>						
	<b>music stores.....</b>	2.7	1.8	1.3	1.8	-0.2	0.6
452	<b>General merchandise stores.....</b>	0.3	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	0.1
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers .....</b>	3.4	2.9	1.7	3.5	0.2	0.6
454	<b>Nonstore retailers .....</b>	4.0	1.7	0.9	2.1	0.2	0.6
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places ..</b>	2.6	0.6	0.7	1.4	0.2	0.3

(1) Estimated measures of sampling variability are based on estimates not adjusted for seasonal variation or holiday or trading-day differences. Medians are based on estimates for the most recent 12 months.

(2) These columns provide measures of the difference between the advance-to-preliminary and preliminary-to-final estimates of month-to-month change for the same pair of months as measured by the Advance sample and MRTS sample. The average and median differences are based on estimates for the most recent 12 months.

Note: Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>

