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ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES March 2009

Notice of Revision: Monthly retail sales and inventories were revised based on the results of the 2007 Annual Retail Trade Survey. The Annual Revision of Monthly Retail and Food Services showing revised data can be found on our website at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/benchmark/2009/html/annrev09.html>.

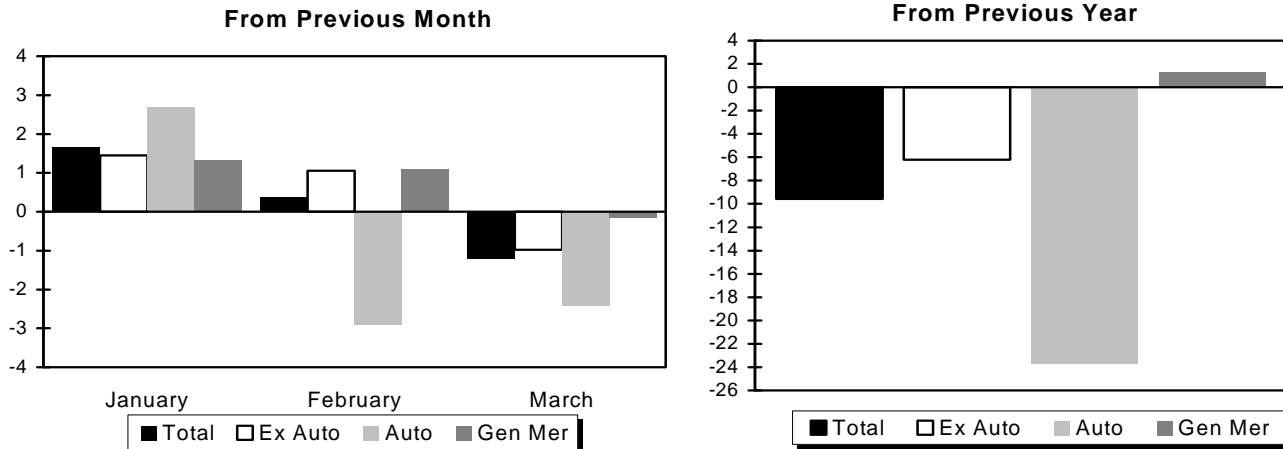
The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for March, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$344.4 billion, a decrease of 1.1 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from the previous month and 9.4 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) below March 2008. Total sales for the January through March 2009 period were down 8.8 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from the same period a year ago. The January 2009 to February 2009 percent change was revised from -0.1 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$)* to +0.3 percent ($\pm 0.3\%$)*.

Retail trade sales were down 1.1 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from February 2009 and 10.7 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) below last year. Gasoline stations sales were down 34.0 percent ($\pm 1.5\%$) from March 2008 and motor vehicle and parts dealers sales were down 23.5 percent ($\pm 2.3\%$) 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 April is scheduled to be released May 13, 2009 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 than 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 ¹ code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted							Adjusted ²				
		3 Month Total		2009			2008		2009			2008	
		2009	% Chg. 2008	Mar. ³ (a)	Feb. (p)	Jan. (r)	Mar.	Feb.	Mar. ³ (a)	Feb. (p)	Jan. (r)	Mar. (r)	Feb. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	966,116	-10.1	338,716	308,599	318,801	378,755	348,876	344,380	348,359	347,311	380,171	378,191
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	800,901	-6.8	278,617	255,952	266,332	300,572	278,636	288,203	290,844	288,038	306,746	304,410
	Retail	854,825	-11.5	299,742	273,006	282,077	340,236	313,244	305,830	309,246	308,613	342,444	340,684
	GAFO⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	83,579	84,003	93,727	87,385	(*)	96,663	95,550	98,272	97,271
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	165,215	-23.2	60,099	52,647	52,469	78,183	70,240	56,177	57,515	59,273	73,425	73,781
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	146,785	-25.5	53,483	46,750	46,552	71,769	64,304	49,659	50,926	52,720	67,011	67,405
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	35,603	36,334	56,849	51,188	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,897	5,917	6,414	5,936	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	23,094	-13.9	7,951	7,466	7,677	9,136	8,822	8,231	8,370	8,326	9,467	9,445
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,434	4,370	5,100	5,063	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,032	3,307	4,036	3,759	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	24,895	-5.5	7,796	8,492	8,607	8,659	8,857	8,535	9,066	9,007	9,427	9,199
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,857	6,964	6,886	7,146	(*)	7,279	7,254	7,609	7,375
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,635	1,643	1,773	1,711	(*)	1,787	1,753	1,818	1,824
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	61,313	-11.6	23,741	18,528	19,044	25,703	21,783	24,488	24,645	24,762	26,971	27,538
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	16,015	16,616	21,802	19,264	(*)	20,585	20,590	22,998	23,608
445	Food & beverage stores	140,814	-0.1	47,673	44,392	48,749	48,557	45,351	49,469	49,239	49,308	48,671	48,367
4451	Grocery stores	127,060	-0.5	42,888	39,933	44,239	43,824	40,970	44,123	43,931	44,063	43,649	43,400
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,959	3,106	3,176	2,976	(*)	3,578	3,591	3,452	3,421
446	Health & personal care stores	62,399	2.2	21,504	19,985	20,910	20,779	20,078	21,124	21,037	20,910	20,233	20,260
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	16,558	17,370	17,184	16,712	(*)	17,320	17,198	16,765	16,762
447	Gasoline stations	76,454	-34.1	27,115	24,145	25,194	41,281	36,789	27,896	28,339	27,474	42,253	41,523
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	45,569	-6.4	16,541	15,171	13,857	18,119	16,128	17,939	18,266	17,775	18,901	18,655
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	623	652	816	722	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,417	2,299	3,406	2,785	(*)	3,044	2,982	3,349	3,359
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,713	5,461	6,751	5,680	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,918	1,663	2,285	1,999	(*)	2,215	2,087	2,201	2,221
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	19,367	-1.8	6,449	5,752	7,166	6,649	6,024	7,287	7,355	7,350	7,396	7,311
452	General merchandise stores	133,847	-0.3	46,841	43,611	43,395	47,929	44,205	50,146	50,229	49,643	49,509	49,204
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	40,277	-8.1	14,407	13,169	12,701	15,938	14,490	16,057	16,106	15,965	16,990	17,103
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁵	(*)	(*)	(*)	13,523	13,038	16,384	14,891	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	30,442	30,694	31,991	29,715	(*)	34,123	33,678	32,519	32,101
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	27,137	27,618	28,442	26,426	(*)	30,253	29,954	28,875	28,385
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,305	3,076	3,549	3,289	(*)	3,870	3,724	3,644	3,716
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	26,010	-5.4	8,972	8,620	8,418	9,224	9,025	9,519	9,736	9,214	9,867	9,715
454	Nonstore retailers	75,848	-4.7	25,060	24,197	26,591	26,017	25,942	25,019	25,449	25,571	26,324	25,686
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	16,346	17,843	16,855	16,401	(*)	18,264	18,301	17,912	17,504
722	Food services & drinking places ...	111,291	2.0	38,974	35,593	36,724	38,519	35,632	38,550	39,113	38,698	37,727	37,507

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

(NA) Not available. (S) Suppressed. (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 ¹					
		Mar. 2009 Advance from --		Feb. 2009 Preliminary from --		Jan. 2009 through Mar. 2009 from --	
		Feb. 2009 (p)	Mar. 2008 (r)	Jan. 2009 (r)	Feb. 2008 (r)	Oct. 2008 through Dec. 2008	Jan. 2008 through Mar. 2008
	Retail & food services, total	-1.1	-9.4	0.3	-7.9	-1.2	-8.8
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	-0.9	-6.0	1.0	-4.5	-1.1	-5.5
	Retail	-1.1	-10.7	0.2	-9.2	-1.5	-10.0
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	-2.3	-23.5	-3.0	-22.0	-1.8	-22.3
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	-2.5	-25.9	-3.4	-24.4	-2.0	-24.7
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	-1.7	-13.1	0.5	-11.4	-2.8	-12.8
443	Electronics & appliance stores	-5.9	-9.5	0.7	-1.4	0.7	-5.1
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	-0.6	-9.2	-0.5	-10.5	-4.5	-9.9
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.5	1.6	-0.1	1.8	0.6	1.9
4451	Grocery stores	0.4	1.1	-0.3	1.2	0.5	1.4
446	Health & personal care stores	0.4	4.4	0.6	3.8	1.0	4.0
447	Gasoline stations	-1.6	-34.0	3.1	-31.8	-12.6	-33.4
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	-1.8	-5.1	2.8	-2.1	3.2	-4.5
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	-0.9	-1.5	0.1	0.6	2.5	-0.7
452	General merchandise stores.....	-0.2	1.3	1.2	2.1	1.2	1.5
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	-0.3	-5.5	0.9	-5.8	-1.4	-6.0
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	-2.2	-3.5	5.7	0.2	-1.0	-3.9
454	Nonstore retailers	-1.7	-5.0	-0.5	-0.9	-0.4	-2.6
722	Food services & drinking places	-1.4	2.2	1.1	4.3	1.1	3.1

(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 ± 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 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 ⁽¹⁾ for Current Mo. (%)	Median standard error ⁽¹⁾ for Percent change			Revision for month-to-month change ⁽²⁾	
			Previous Mo. to Current Mo.	Previous Qtr. to Current Qtr.	Current Mo. to same Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	Retail & food services,						
	total	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.2
	Retail	0.7	0.4	0.2	0.4	-0.1	0.3
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	2.1	1.4	0.7	1.4	0.1	1.1
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	2.3	1.6	0.7	1.4	0.1	1.2
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	2.9	2.1	0.9	2.2	-0.2	0.4
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.5	0.7	0.6	1.1	-0.2	0.7
444	Building material & garden eq. &... supplies dealers	2.4	1.4	0.9	1.6	0.1	0.4
445	Food & beverage stores	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.6	-0.1	0.3
4451	Grocery stores	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.6	-0.1	0.3
446	Health & personal care stores	1.8	0.4	0.4	0.9	-0.1	0.1
447	Gasoline stations	2.1	0.6	0.4	0.9	-0.3	0.5
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	2.0	0.7	0.6	1.0	0.0	0.7
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	2.4	1.4	1.2	1.6	-0.1	0.4
452	General merchandise stores	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.1	0.2
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	3.8	3.1	1.6	3.5	0.2	1.1
454	Nonstore retailers	1.6	1.0	0.6	1.3	0.1	0.6
722	Food services & drinking places ..	1.9	0.9	0.7	1.4	0.4	0.6

- (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 revisions 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>

