

For immediate release

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ADVANCE REPORT ON RETAIL TRADE, MAY 1959

Total sales of retail stores in May were \$18.6 billion, the U. S. Department of Commerce announced today. This advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal factors and trading day differences was about 2 percent above April of this year and 10 percent above May 1958.

The May sales figures are based on the Advance Report on Retail Trade, a monthly survey of the Bureau of the Census conducted in cooperation with a representative cross-section of about 1,700 retail firms which, in total, operate some 35,000 stores in the United States. The firms which are cooperating in the early reporting of sales are part of a larger group which furnishes figures at a later date. The advance estimates are preliminary and subject to revision, but the revision of the total seldom exceeds 1½ percent.

The preliminary Census figures for May are shown in table 1 of this release. The Office of Business Economics noted that after adjustment for seasonal factors and trading day differences, advances in sales from April to May were widespread among the nondurable trades while the durables showed little change from the high April rates. Final estimates for April indicate that seasonally adjusted retail sales were virtually unchanged from March.

(more)

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES REPORT--PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES FOR MAY 1959
 Table 1.--SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP

(NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal factors and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (million of dollars)		
	1959		1958
	May	April	May
Retail stores, total ¹	18,577	17,589	17,364
Durable-goods stores, total ¹	6,437	6,208	5,627
Nondurable-goods stores, total ¹	12,140	11,381	11,737
Food group.....	4,454	4,157	4,419
Grocery stores.....	3,960	3,714	3,930
Eating and drinking places.....	1,265	1,215	1,272
General merchandise group.....	1,899	1,774	1,784
Department stores.....	² 1,097	1,044	1,036
Apparel group.....	1,109	996	1,058
Furniture and appliance group.....	863	839	840
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. group..	1,433	1,365	1,294
Automotive group.....	3,690	3,566	3,082
Gasoline service stations.....	1,469	1,348	1,335
Drug and proprietary stores.....	579	559	544

See footnotes below table 2.

Source: Bureau of the Census

Table 2.--SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP

(ADJUSTED for seasonal factors and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Percentage change, May 1959 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, April 1959 from--	
	April 1959	May 1958	1959			1958	March 1959	April 1958
			May	April	March	April		
Retail stores, total ¹	+1.7	+10.2	18,255	17,953	17,914	16,502	0	+9
Durable-goods stores, total ¹	-0.5	+16.6	6,104	6,137	6,045	5,163	+2	+19
Nondurable-goods stores, total ¹	+2.8	+7.3	12,151	11,816	11,869	11,339	0	+4
Food group.....			4,292	4,320	4,217		-1	+2
Eating and drinking places.....			1,283	1,240	1,237		+3	+4
General merchandise group.....			1,935	1,883	1,766		+3	+10
Apparel group.....			1,059	1,106	1,045		-4	+1
Furniture and appliance group.....			918	902	827		+2	+11
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group...			1,321	1,290	1,145		+2	+15
Automotive group.....			3,396	3,340	2,769		+2	+23
Gasoline service stations.....			1,381	1,376	1,283		0	+8
Drug and proprietary stores.....			579	592	539		-2	+7

Source: Office of Business Economics

¹ Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

² Based on preliminary estimates supplied by Federal Reserve Board.