

COMMERCE

Office of the Secretary

Frederick H. Mueller, Secretary

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ADVANCE REPORT ON RETAIL SALES, FEBRUARY 1960

Total sales of retail stores in February were \$15.8 billion, the U. S. Department of Commerce announced today. This advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal factors and trading day differences, was virtually unchanged from January and about 3 percent above February 1959.

The February 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 2,000 retail firms which, in total, operate some 39,000 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 February are shown in table 1 of this release. The Office of Business Economics pointed out that, after adjustment for seasonal factors and trading day differences, a further rise in sales in the automotive group, was offset by small declines elsewhere; in some areas abnormal weather may have tended to hold down sales. Final estimates for January indicate that seasonally adjusted retail sales were about 4 percent above December.

(more)

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES REPORT--PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES FOR FEBRUARY 1960
 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)		
	1960		1959
	February	January	February
Retail stores, total ¹	15,788	16,346	14,961
Durable-goods stores, total ¹	5,200	5,082	4,927
Nondurable-goods stores, total ¹	10,588	11,264	10,034
Food group.....	4,059	4,335	3,869
Grocery stores.....	3,608	3,863	3,445
Eating and drinking places.....	1,163	1,238	1,070
General merchandise group.....	1,460	1,496	1,359
Department stores.....	2832	869	768
Apparel group.....	781	930	750
Furniture and appliance group.....	764	772	746
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. group.....	910	884	892
Automotive group.....	3,135	3,012	2,899
Gasoline service stations.....	1,275	1,354	1,197
Drug and proprietary stores.....	614	628	534

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		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change	
	Feb. 1960 from--		1960		1959		Jan. 1960 from--	
	Jan. 1960	Feb. 1959	Feb.	Jan.	Dec.	Jan.	Dec. 1959	Jan. 1959
Retail stores, total ¹ ...	0	+3	18,056	18,142	17,485	17,455	+4	+4
Durable-goods stores, total ¹ ...	+2	+2	6,004	5,895	5,328	5,836	+11	+1
Nondurable-goods stores, total ¹ ...	-2	+3	12,052	12,247	12,157	11,619	+1	+5
Food group.....				4,411	4,363	4,243	+1	+4
Eating and drinking places.....				1,352	1,351	1,262	0	+7
General merchandise group.....				1,971	1,991	1,826	-1	+8
Apparel group.....				1,162	1,150	1,032	+1	+13
Furniture and appliance group.....				905	903	880	0	+3
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.....				1,243	1,281	1,207	-3	+3
Automotive group.....				3,237	2,667	3,258	+21	-1
Gasoline service stations.....				1,447	1,423	1,367	+2	+6
Drug and proprietary stores.....				635	612	579	+4	+10

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.

Note: Effective with January 1960, the statistics include retail sales in Alaska and Hawaii which in 1958, according to preliminary results of the Retail Census, accounted for approximately 0.1 and 0.3 percent, respectively of the United States total.