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ADVANCE REPORT ON RETAIL SALES, MAY 1961

Total sales of retail stores in May were \$18.6 billion, the U. S. Department of Commerce announced today. After adjustment for seasonal variations and trading day differences, but not for price changes, total retail sales amounted to \$18.1 billion, about 1 percent above April and 2 percent below May 1960.

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 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 sample group which furnishes figures at a later date. The advance estimates are subject to revision, on the basis of estimates subsequently derived from the full sample, but the revision of the total seldom exceeds 1½ percent.

The advance Census figures for May are shown in table 1 of this release. The Office of Business Economics indicated that, after adjustment for seasonal variations and trading day differences, the rise from April to May was attributable primarily to increased sales by automotive dealers; sales movements in the other durable goods and in nondurables were mixed and offsetting. Estimates for April for the full sample indicate that seasonally adjusted retail sales were 1 percent below March.

(more)

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES FOR MAY 1961

Table 1. SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP

(NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal variations or trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)		
	1961		1960
	May ¹	April ²	May ^r
Retail stores, total ³	18,638	17,463	18,548
Durable-goods stores, total ³	6,054	5,445	6,397
Nondurable-goods stores, total ³	12,584	12,018	12,151
Food group.....	4,568	4,494	4,365
Grocery stores.....	4,090	4,038	3,911
Eating and drinking places.....	1,381	1,309	1,380
General merchandise group.....	1,985	1,812	1,858
Department stores.....	1,148	1,053	1,074
Apparel group.....	1,137	1,025	1,084
Furniture and appliance group.....	855	766	872
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. group.	1,325	1,145	1,375
Automotive group.....	3,421	3,124	3,689
Gasoline service stations.....	1,536	1,460	1,489
Drug and proprietary stores.....	639	610	611

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 variations and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Percentage change, May 1961 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, Apr. 1961 from--	
	Apr. 1961	May 1960	1961			1960	Mar. 1961	Apr. 1960
			May ¹	Apr. ²	Mar.	Apr. ^r		
Retail stores, total ³ ...	+1	-2	18,122	17,914	18,127	18,860	-1	-5
Durable-goods stores, total ³	+3	-7	5,594	5,438	5,547	6,257	-2	-13
Nondurable-goods stores, total ³	0	+1	12,528	12,476	12,580	12,603	-1	-1
Food group.....			4,556	4,603	4,424		-1	+3
Eating and drinking places.....			1,376	1,390	1,377		-1	0
General merchandise group.....			2,036	2,039	2,123		0	-4
Apparel group.....			1,082	1,161	1,179		-7	-8
Furniture and appliance group.....			870	833	916		+4	-5
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.			1,133	1,199	1,271		-6	-11
Automotive group.....			2,953	3,044	3,564		-3	-17
Gasoline service stations.....			1,496	1,491	1,496		0	0
Drug and proprietary stores.....			631	634	623		0	+1

Source: Office of Business Economics

^r Monthly sales by kind-of-business revised for 1960. See Monthly Retail Trade Report for January 1961.

¹ Advance sample estimates.

² Preliminary estimates of full sample.

³ Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

⁴ Based on preliminary estimates supplied by Federal Reserve Board.