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## DECEMBER 1963

The Department of Commerce announced today that December 1963 retail store sales totaled \$25.6 billion, bringing sales for the full year 1963 to \$247.0 billion. After adjustment for seasonal variations and trading day differences, but not for price changes, total retail sales for December amounted to \$21.5 billion, about 4 percent above the previous month and 6 percent above December 1962.

The Office of Business Economics noted that after adjustment for seasonal variation and trading day differences virtually every line of trade shared in the sales advance from November to December. This large rise may be attributable to a shift of sales from November to December following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and the late occurrence of Thanksgiving. Fourth quarter sales were about 2% above the third quarter with durables up 5% and nondurables unchanged. Based on the full sample, seasonally adjusted sales of all retail stores in November were virtually unchanged from October.

The December sales figures are based on 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 40,000 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 by the estimates subsequently derived from the full sample.

The revision of the total seldom exceeds 1.5 percent, and for the past year has averaged 0.6 percent. For individual kind-of-business groups, revisions have been greater, ranging on the average from 1.0 percent for the food group to 2.2 percent for the furniture and appliance group.

(more)

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES FOR DECEMBER 1963

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)				
	12 months		Dec. <sup>1</sup> 1963	Nov. <sup>2</sup> 1963	Dec. 1962
	1963	1962			
Retail stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	247,035	235,351	25,643	21,555	24,127
Durable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	80,548	74,942	7,605	7,038	6,766
Nondurable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> ....	166,487	160,409	18,038	14,517	17,361
Food group.....	59,148	57,609	5,187	5,165	5,237
Grocery stores.....	53,590	52,124	4,708	4,699	4,732
Eating and drinking places.....	18,043	17,305	1,506	1,485	1,479
General merchandise group.....	28,886	27,206	4,480	2,754	4,119
Apparel group.....	14,475	14,338	2,203	1,292	2,127
Furniture and appliance group.....	11,634	10,814	1,334	1,098	1,216
Lumber, bldg., hardware, farm equip. grp.	15,711	15,068	1,354	1,354	1,190
Automotive group.....	46,054	42,794	3,766	3,968	3,434
Gasoline service stations.....	19,375	18,645	1,714	1,634	1,629
Drug and proprietary stores.....	8,158	8,032	888	667	880

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)<sup>4</sup>

Kind-of-business group	Percentage change, Dec. 1963 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, Nov. 1963 from--	
	Nov. 1963	Dec. 1962	1963			1962	Oct. 1963	Nov. 1962
			Dec. <sup>1</sup>	Nov. <sup>2</sup>	Oct.	Nov.		
Retail stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	+4	+6	21,548	20,622	20,716	20,112	0	+3
Durable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> ....	+6	+11	7,188	6,786	6,941	6,437	-2	+5
Nondurable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> ..	+4	+4	14,360	13,836	13,775	13,675	0	+1
Food group.....				4,984	4,943	4,860	+1	+3
Eating and drinking places.....				1,505	1,530	1,471	-2	+2
General merchandise group.....				2,376	2,324	2,354	+2	+1
Apparel group.....				1,173	1,150	1,220	+2	-4
Furniture and appliance group.....				1,004	1,028	928	-2	+8
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.....				1,397	1,350	1,272	+3	+10
Automotive group.....				3,810	3,980	3,704	-4	+3
Gasoline service stations.....				1,648	1,618	1,577	+2	+4
Drug and proprietary stores.....				678	683	682	-1	"

<sup>1</sup> Advance sample estimates.

<sup>2</sup> Preliminary estimates of full sample.

<sup>3</sup> Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

<sup>4</sup> Data adjusted for seasonal variations and trading day differences have been derived by a new method.