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The U.S. Department of Commerce announced today that total sales of retail stores in September were estimated at \$24.6 billion; this advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal and holiday variations and trading day differences but not price changes, was \$25.6 billion. The advance estimate, after adjustment, was little changed from August but about 8 percent above September last year. Adjusted July-through-September sales averaged about 2 percent above the prior three months and 8 percent above the comparable period in 1965.

The Office of Business Economics noted that, after adjustment, sales of both durable-goods and nondurable-goods stores in September were virtually unchanged from August. Sales movements were mixed among the major kinds-of-business; sales rose at food and drug stores and were unchanged to lower elsewhere. Average monthly sales during the July-September period for durable-goods stores were about 5 percent more than the average for the prior three months while the average for nondurable-goods stores for the same period exceeded the average for the prior three months by about 1 percent. The year-to-year gain in the three month average was about 6 percent for the durable-goods stores, as compared to 9 percent for nondurable-goods stores. Average automotive sales were about 4 percent above last year for this period.

Based on the full sample the total U.S. unadjusted sales estimate for August was \$25.4 billion, about 1 percent less than the \$25.7 billion published earlier in the August Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report released on September 9, 1966. The seasonally adjusted sales for August as revised were up 1 percent from July.

The September sales figures are based on advance reporting of a small subsample of the Census Bureau's panel of retail firms. The advance estimates are subject to revision by estimates subsequently derived from the full sample.

The revision of the total seldom exceeds 1.5 percent and for the past year has averaged 1.2 percent. For individual kind-of-business groups revisions have been greater, ranging on the average from 1.4 percent for food stores to 4.5 percent for the apparel group.

It should be noted that even for figures derived from the full sample, sales movements between individual pairs of months tend to be relatively irregular. Data for several months are generally required to indicate the underlying trend.

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Annual subscription to Current Retail Trade Reports (Weekly Retail Sales Report, Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report, Monthly Retail Trade Report, and Annual Retail Trade Report sold as a single subscription) \$6.00. Single copies, available only from the Bureau of the Census, 10¢ each.

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES FOR SEPTEMBER 1966

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)		
	1966		1965
	September ¹	August ²	September
Retail stores, total ³	24,573	25,434	22,732
Durable-goods stores, total ³	7,457	8,201	7,082
Nondurable-goods stores, total ³	17,116	17,233	15,650
Food group.....	6,110	5,920	5,498
Grocery stores.....	5,594	5,410	5,017
Eating and drinking places.....	1,994	2,199	1,856
General merchandise group.....	3,214	3,267	2,962
Department stores.....	2,146	2,114	1,942
Apparel group.....	1,453	1,384	1,324
Furniture and appliance group.....	1,255	1,298	1,201
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. group	1,522	1,507	1,500
Automotive group.....	3,884	4,657	3,784
Gasoline service stations.....	1,892	2,050	1,820
Drug and proprietary stores.....	830	823	759

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, Sept. 1966 from		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, Aug. 1966 from	
	Aug. 1966	Sept. 1965	1966			1965	July 1966	Aug. 1965
			Sept. ¹	Aug. ²	July	Aug.		
Retail stores, total ³	0	+8	25,554	25,657	25,362	23,585	+1	+9
Durable-goods stores, total ³ ...	0	+7	8,306	8,327	8,106	7,755	+3	+7
Nondurable-goods stores, total ³ ...	0	+8	17,248	17,330	17,256	15,830	0	+9
Food group.....				5,958	5,924	5,568	+1	+7
Eating and drinking places.....				1,995	1,996	1,807	0	+10
General merchandise group.....				3,340	3,365	2,988	-1	+12
Apparel group.....				1,508	1,464	1,306	+3	+15
Furniture and appliance group.....				1,269	1,258	1,127	+1	+13
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group....				1,352	1,362	1,351	-1	0
Automotive group.....				4,938	4,764	4,660	+4	+6
Gasoline service stations.....				1,930	1,918	1,820	+1	+6
Drug and proprietary stores.....				837	844	779	-1	1

¹Advance sample estimates.

²Preliminary estimates of full sample.

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