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The U.S. Department of Commerce announced today that total sales of retail stores in November were estimated at \$26.0 billion; this advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal and holiday variations and trading day differences but not price changes, was \$25.4 billion. The advance estimate, after adjustment was 1 percent below October but about 3 percent above November last year. Adjusted September-through-November sales averaged about 1 percent above the prior three months and 6 percent above the comparable period in 1965.

The Office of Business Economics noted that, after adjustment, sales by durable goods retailers fell 3 percent from October to November with lowered sales by automotive dealers chiefly responsible. Sales of nondurable goods stores were unchanged as increases at general merchandise and drug stores balanced declines for all other kinds of business. Average monthly sales during the September-November period for durable goods stores were about 1 percent more than the average for the prior three months and the average for nondurable goods stores for the same period exceeded the average for the prior three months also by about 1 percent. The year-to-year gain in the three month average was about 3 percent for the durable goods stores, as compared to 7 percent for nondurable goods stores. Average automotive sales were about 3 percent above last year for this period.

Based on the full sample the total U.S. unadjusted sales estimate for October was \$26.0 billion, little changed from the \$26.1 billion published earlier in the October Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report released on November 10, 1966. The seasonally adjusted sales for October as revised showed a slight decrease from September.

The November 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 1.3 percent. For individual kind-of-business groups revisions have been greater, ranging on the average from 1.3 percent for food stores to 4.4 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.

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES FOR NOVEMBER 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
	November <sup>1</sup>	October <sup>2</sup>	November
Retail stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	26,002	26,014	25,158
Durable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	8,293	8,614	8,390
Nondurable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	17,709	17,400	16,768
Food group.....	5,731	5,924	5,577
Grocery stores.....	5,269	5,432	5,072
Eating and drinking places.....	1,894	2,032	1,747
General merchandise group.....	4,025	3,388	3,600
Department stores.....	2,642	2,239	2,344
Apparel group.....	1,573	1,508	1,455
Furniture and appliance group.....	1,388	1,331	1,318
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. group	1,333	1,479	1,416
Automotive group.....	4,806	5,096	4,954
Gasoline service stations.....	1,885	1,962	1,849
Drug and proprietary stores.....	837	843	786

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, Nov. 1966 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, Oct. 1966 from--	
	Oct. 1966	Nov. 1965	1966			1965	Sept. 1966	Oct. 1965
			Nov. <sup>1</sup>	Oct. <sup>2</sup>	Sept.	Oct.		
Retail stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	-1	+3	25,413	25,640	25,703	<sup>r</sup> 24,330	0	+5
Durable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> ..	-3	-1	8,019	8,265	8,394	<sup>r</sup> 8,001	-2	+3
Nondurable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup>	0	+5	17,394	17,375	17,309	16,329	0	+6
Food group.....				5,951	5,947	5,788	0	+3
Eating and drinking places.....				2,000	1,975	1,825	+1	+10
General merchandise group.....				3,366	3,341	3,055	+1	+10
Apparel group.....				1,496	1,472	1,321	+2	+13
Furniture and appliance group.....				1,265	1,293	1,221	-2	+4
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group....				1,343	1,328	1,391	+1	-3
Automotive group <sup>4</sup> .....				4,921	5,034	<sup>r</sup> 4,750	-2	+4
Gasoline service stations.....				1,929	1,931	1,843	0	+5
Drug and proprietary stores.....				861	860	816	0	+

<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>Extreme care should be taken in interpreting data in this category for September and October due to the difficulty in adjusting the passenger car dealer category for the model changeover.

<sup>r</sup>Revised