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DECEMBER 1979

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The Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce, announced today that total sales of retail stores in December, after adjusting for seasonal variations and trading-day differences, but not for price changes were estimated at \$77.0 billion. This adjusted figure was about 1 percent above November and 9 percent higher than December a year ago. The adjusted December estimate excluding the automotive group was about 1 percent above November and 11 percent above December last year. Sales for the full year 1979 amounted to \$884.5 billion, about 11 percent above 1978.

Adjusted sales of durable goods stores were about 2 percent above November while nondurable goods stores increased about 1 percent. Compared with sales for December 1978, durable goods stores increased 2 percent, and nondurable goods stores increased 12 percent.

The revised estimate of retail sales for November, based on preliminary results from the full sample of retail stores, was about \$76.2 billion, \$0.8 billion below the November Advance estimate published earlier. Seasonal adjusted preliminary sales for November were about 1 percent above October 1979 estimates but were 9 percent above the November 1978 sales. Excluding the automotive group, retail sales were about 1 percent above October and 12 percent over November 1978. For nondurable goods stores, adjusted November sales increased about 2 percent from the previous month and 13 percent above the same month a year earlier. For durable goods stores, adjusted sales for November were about 1 percent below October but were 1 percent higher than November 1978.

The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting of sales by a small subsample of the Bureau's retail survey panel. Because of the early reporting, the advance estimates can differ from the subsequent estimates which are based on monthly reports obtained from the full sample of retail stores. In addition, sampling variability between the subsample used for the advance estimates and the full sample can cause a difference. For most months, such differences have been reduced by modifying the advance estimates prior to publication on the basis of the relationship between the advance and full-sample data for previous months.

In the past, differences between advance and full-sample estimates of month-to-month percentage change in seasonally adjusted total retail stores sales have averaged less than 1 percent. However, most modifications being applied to the current advance monthly estimates are based on the relationship between the advance and the redesigned full-sample data for only the months since June 1977. The difference now, therefore, may vary from the past experience.

Preliminary estimates for November 1979 and final estimates for October 1979 based on the full sample will also be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for November (BR-79-11). The complete report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and will present a description of the sample design, the basis and methodology used in developing revisions, and the techniques used in developing the estimates. In addition, the completed report will include approximate measures of sampling variability.

Estimated Monthly Retail Sales for the United States
JANUARY 1977-DECEMBER 1979

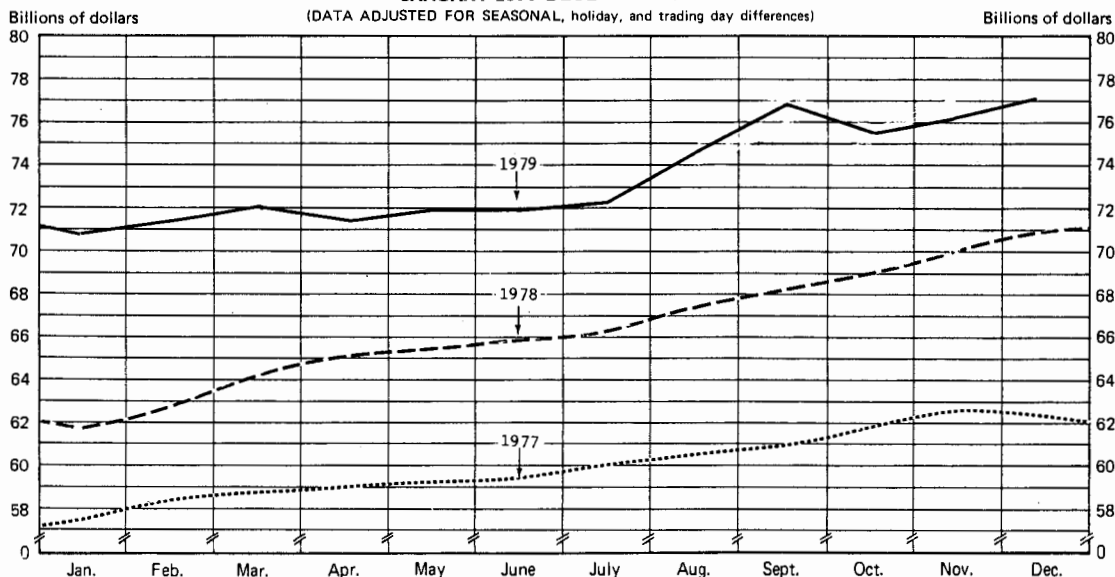


Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kind of Business for the United States

(Sales in millions of dollars)

1972 SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted							Adjusted ¹				
		12 month total		1979			1978		1979			1978	
		1979	Percent change from 1978	Dec. ² advance	Nov. prelim.	Oct. final	Dec.	Nov.	Dec. ² advance	Nov. prelim.	Oct. final	Dec.	Nov.
	Retail trade, total.....	884,483	+11	92,067	78,658	76,389	84,597	71,297	77,020	76.175	75.611	70.198	70.158
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	712,337	+12	79,750	65,465	61,800	72,145	57,687	62,764	62.154	61.589	56.360	55.727
	Durable goods stores, total.....	303,997	+9	26,928	25,138	26,355	25,872	24,463	25,658	25.248	25.468	25.163	24,954
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	50,030	+13	3,905	4,242	4,830	3,560	3,918	4,315	4,283	4,402	4,009	3,971
521,3	Building materials and supply stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,890	3,318	2,263	2,699	(*)	2,833	2,888	2,727	2,667
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	745	759	749	632	(*)	726	726	631	621
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	172,146	+5	12,317	13,193	14,589	12,452	13,610	14,256	14,021	14,022	14,558	14,431
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous auto- motive dealers.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	11,693	13,066	11,169	12,322	(*)	12,587	12,563	13,296	13,179
551	Motor vehicle dealers (franchised).....	(*)	(*)	(*)	10,364	11,581	9,979	11,033	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,500	1,523	1,283	1,288	(*)	1,434	1,459	1,262	1,252
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	42,217	+13	4,426	3,897	3,728	4,216	3,566	3,488	3,585	3,678	3,307	3,303
571	Furniture and home furnishings stores....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,390	2,274	2,290	2,197	(*)	2,171	2,225	2,014	2,003
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,143	1,126	1,359	1,034	(*)	1,073	1,123	956	975
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	560	550	595	504	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	580,486	+11	65,139	53,520	50,034	58,725	46,834	51,362	50,927	50,143	45,755	45,204
53	General merchandise group stores.....	108,283	+9	17,087	11,357	9,219	15,784	9,883	9,418	9,576	9,307	8,716	8,549
531	Department stores.....	86,453	+8	13,523	9,064	7,386	12,635	7,908	7,426	7,630	7,416	6,897	6,806
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	808	703	1,273	712	(*)	744	726	649	663
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,485	1,130	1,876	1,263	(*)	1,202	1,165	1,170	1,080
54	Food stores.....	194,686	+12	18,318	16,836	16,349	16,690	14,834	17,192	16,827	16,669	15,284	15,125
541	Grocery stores.....	179,379	+11	16,812	15,580	15,106	15,243	13,695	15,920	15,533	15,430	13,984	13,960
554	Gasoline service stations.....	73,720	+21	6,883	6,813	6,843	5,318	5,197	6,842	6,889	6,769	5,292	5,276
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	41,557	+10	6,201	3,886	3,555	5,698	3,675	3,650	3,458	3,476	3,376	3,388
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	722	625	1,293	763	(*)	602	650	675	685
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,508	1,390	2,144	1,396	(*)	1,356	1,298	1,313	1,287
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	754	662	1,153	685	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	672	679	823	617	(*)	610	655	586	590
58	Eating and drinking places.....	76,095	+9	6,613	6,351	6,502	6,141	5,775	6,680	6,588	6,489	6,184	6,003
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	28,138	+11	3,327	2,406	2,335	3,040	2,164	2,450	2,463	2,388	2,232	2,240
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,346	1,270	1,675	1,196	(*)	1,309	1,292	1,194	1,181
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise) ³	(*)	(*)	(*)	656	556	722	902	(*)	421	417	604	598

NOTE: Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

^{*}Advance estimates are not available from the subsample panel for these kinds of business.

NA Not available.

¹Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-79-11.²Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.³Includes sales made by mail-order catalog desks located within department stores of mail-order firms.⁴During the periods of automotive changeover, seasonal adjustment factors are less reliable than during other periods and are more susceptible to subsequent revision.

Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Monthly Retail Sales by Kind of Business for the United States

(Adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences)

1972 SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change					
		Dec. 1979 advance from--		Nov. 1979 preliminary from--		Oct. 1979 through Dec. 1979 from --	
		Nov. 1979 preliminary	Dec. 1978 final	Oct. 1979 final	Nov. 1978 final	July 1979 through Sept. 1979	Oct. 1978 through Dec. 1978
	Retail trade, total.....	+1	+9	+1	+9	+2	-9
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	+1	+11	+1	+12	+3	+12
	Durable goods stores, total.....	+2	+2	-1	-1	-1	+2
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+1	+8	-3	+8	0	+9
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+2	-2	0	-3	-2	-2
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-3	+5	-3	+9	-3	+9
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	+1	+12	+2	+13	+4	+12
53	General merchandise group stores.....	-2	+8	+3	+12	+4	+10
531	Department stores.....	-3	+8	+3	+12	+3	+10
54	Food stores.....	+2	+12	+1	+11	+3	+12
541	Grocery stores.....	+2	+14	+1	+11	+4	+12
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-1	+29	+2	+31	+8	+30
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+6	+8	-1	+2	0	+5
58	Eating and drinking places.....	+1	+8	+2	+10	+5	+9
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	-1	+10	+3	+10	+2	+10

Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales of Group II Companies by Kind of Business for the United States: NOVEMBER 1979

(Sales in millions of dollars)

1972 SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted ¹		
		Nov. 1979 preliminary	Oct. 1979 final	Nov. 1978	Nov. 1979 preliminary	Oct. 1979 final	Nov. 1978
	Retail trade, total.....	28,370	25,437	25,261	25,794	25,363	23,566
53	General merchandise group stores.....	10,081	8,139	8,798	8,528	8,225	7,631
531	Department stores.....	8,574	6,983	7,455	7,223	7,025	6,443
533	Variety stores.....	653	556	596	590	577	548
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.	854	600	747	(S)	(S)	(S)
54	Food stores.....	8,938	8,580	7,929	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	8,833	8,480	7,846	8,567	8,574	7,846
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1,378	1,220	1,284	1,224	1,187	1,164
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	578	514	539	514	486	486
566	Shoe stores.....	320	304	298	290	302	279
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	1,192	1,117	1,038	1,239	1,171	1,105

Note: The Group II component of the sample consists of companies which had 11 or more retail establishments according to the most recent update of multi-establishment files and which were selected with certainty (i.e., their sales size exceeded specified dollar volume cutoffs which vary by kind of business).

¹Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-

(S) Data do not meet publication standards because of high sampling error.

(NA) Not Available.