

Advance Monthly Retail Sales

March 1986

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EST, Friday, April 11, 1986

CB-86-57

NOTICE: Beginning with this publication, seasonal factors to adjust sales are developed each month using all available unadjusted estimates. Also, unadjusted estimates have been revised using the results from the 1984 Annual Retail Trade Survey. See corresponding notes below Table 1 for further information.

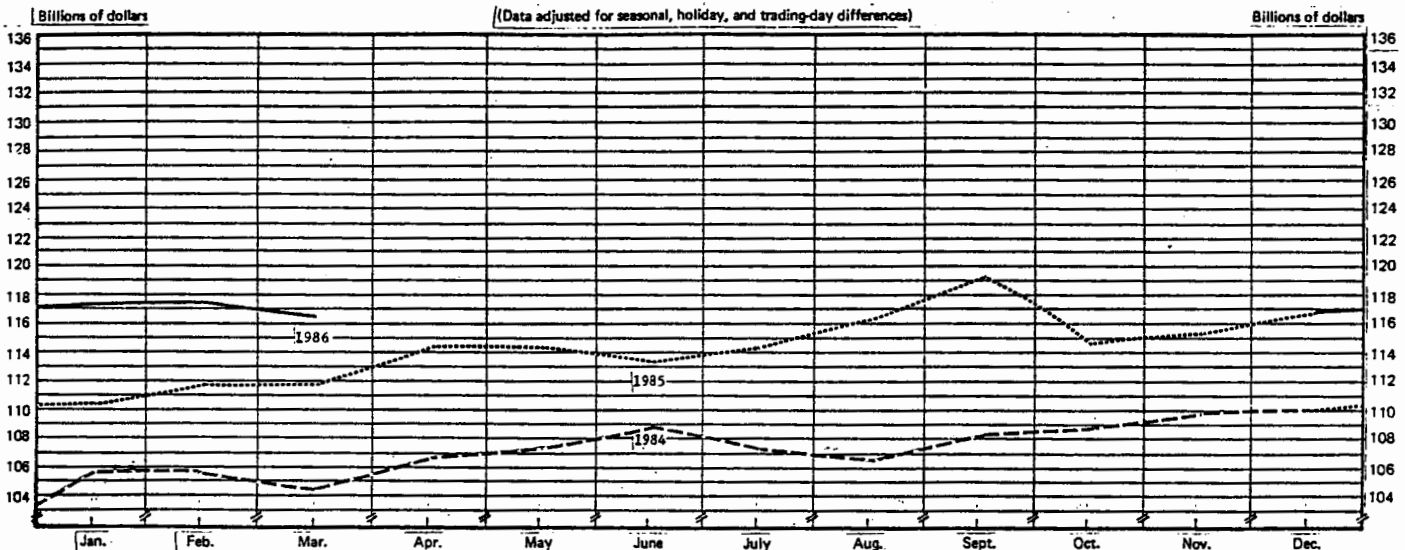
Advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for March adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$116.6 billion, 4.1 percent above March 1985. Total sales in the first quarter were 1.2 percent above the fourth quarter and were 5.1 percent above the same quarter a year ago.

Durable goods increased 4.1 percent above March 1985. Automotive sales decreased 3.4 percent in March but were virtually unchanged from the same month a year ago. The furniture group and building materials increased 8.4 percent and 17.9 percent, respectively, from March 1985.

Nondurable goods were about the same as February but were 4.1 percent above March 1985. General merchandise sales increased 1.2 percent from last month and were 4.5 percent above March last year. Food stores and apparel were 6.3 percent and 4.9 percent, respectively, above March a year ago. Gasoline service stations decreased 5.9 percent for the month and were 5.2 percent below March 1985.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales report for April is scheduled to be released May 13, 1986, at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES January 1984-March 1986



Inquiries concerning this report should be addressed to Ronald Pienycoski, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233. Telephone (301) 763-5294/7561.



U.S. Department of Commerce
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales report, the Monthly Retail Trade report, and the Annual Retail Trade report are available on a single subscription from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, at \$37 per year. Add \$9.25 for each subscription to a foreign address. Postage stamps not acceptable; currency submitted at sender's risk. Remittances from foreign countries must be by international money order or by a draft on a U.S. bank. This report is available electronically in CENDATA, the Bureau's on-line information service, through a commercial vendor. For further information, contact Customer Services, DUSD, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233, or call (301) 763-4100 or (301) 763-7561.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, by Kind of Business

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted ¹				
		1986			1985		1986			1985	
		Mar. ² adv.	Feb. prel.	Jan. final	Mar.	Feb.	Mar. ² adv.	Feb. prel.	Jan. final	Mar. ² adv.	Feb. ² adv.
	Retail trade, total.....	114,254	99,807	105,642	109,934	95,336	116,556	117,454	117,349	111,941	111,935
	Total (excl. auto group)..	87,904	76,628	81,831	83,336	72,828	91,532	91,543	91,022	86,839	86,783
	Durable goods stores, total.	42,806	37,353	38,985	41,444	35,354	43,095	43,880	44,187	41,400	41,341
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..	6,329	5,063	5,393	5,312	4,225	7,024	6,987	6,925	5,960	5,801
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	3,746	4,035	3,886	3,075	(*)	5,132	5,121	4,347	4,207
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	717	779	811	660	(*)	955	927	904	878
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	26,350	23,179	23,811	26,598	22,508	25,024	25,911	26,327	25,102	25,152
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	24,375	21,552	22,052	24,688	20,967	22,930	23,841	24,286	23,094	23,194
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	19,610	20,370	22,163	19,013	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores....	(*)	1,627	1,759	1,910	1,541	(*)	2,070	2,041	2,008	1,958
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	5,612	5,088	5,565	5,243	4,705	5,945	5,960	5,969	5,484	5,505
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	2,820	3,035	2,934	2,600	(*)	3,291	3,253	3,009	3,030
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	1,882	2,105	1,934	1,764	(*)	2,230	2,263	2,080	2,088
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	572	676	621	565	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods total.....	71,448	62,454	66,657	68,490	59,982	73,461	73,574	73,162	70,541	70,594
53	General merchandise group stores..	12,685	9,539	9,383	11,811	9,264	13,754	13,595	13,340	13,165	13,203
531	Department stores.....	10,806	8,058	7,954	9,984	7,769	11,682	11,544	11,330	11,056	11,130
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	555	568	696	567	(*)	738	768	766	757
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	926	861	1,131	928	(*)	1,313	1,242	1,343	1,316
54	Food stores.....	24,244	21,857	23,948	23,149	20,852	24,572	24,338	24,337	23,116	23,188
541	Grocery stores.....	22,902	20,688	22,749	21,785	19,640	23,251	23,038	23,002	21,763	21,846
554	Gasoline service stations.....	7,410	7,194	8,067	7,947	7,063	7,825	8,317	8,421	8,252	8,156
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	6,012	4,369	4,694	5,380	4,146	6,024	5,937	5,915	5,740	5,632
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	499	563	579	482	(*)	713	695	700	688
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	1,877	2,003	2,284	1,776	(*)	2,480	2,498	2,377	2,349
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	1,082	1,161	1,359	1,022	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	691	740	924	673	(*)	908	886	924	884
58	Eating and drinking places.....	11,185	9,951	10,338	10,813	9,327	11,344	11,373	11,274	10,824	10,659
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	3,935	3,633	3,828	3,683	3,483	3,971	3,936	3,938	3,762	3,774
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,277	1,363	1,363	1,230	(*)	1,518	1,503	1,477	1,461
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	238	260	364	291	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAP.....	(*)	21,984	22,743	22,583	21,000	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)

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

NA Not available. [†]Revised

¹Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-11 program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publication. Factors and explanatory material are contained in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-86-02.

Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.

³GAP represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise.

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

NOTICE OF REVISED RETAIL SALES ESTIMATES - The unadjusted monthly estimates of retail sales from January 1983 to December 1985 have been revised utilizing the results from the 1984 Annual Retail Trade Survey. The revised estimates and a description of the methodology are contained in the Revised Monthly Retail Sales and Inventories January 1976-December 1985 Report (BR-13-85S), which was released April 8.

Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, by Kind of Business

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

SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change					
		Mar. 1986 advance from--		Feb. 1986 preliminary from--		Jan. 1986 through Mar. 1986	
		Feb. 1986 prelim.	Mar. 1985 final	Jan. 1986 final	Feb. 1985 final	Oct. 1985 through Dec. 1985	Jan. 1985 through Mar. 1985
	Retail trade, total.....	-0.8	+4.1	+0.1	+4.9	+1.2	+5.1
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0.0	+5.4	+0.6	+5.5	+1.3	+5.6
	Durable goods stores, total.....	-1.8	+4.1	-0.7	+6.1	+1.8	+6.3
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+0.5	+17.9	+0.9	+20.4	+7.3	+18.8
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-3.4	-0.3	-1.6	+3.0	+1.0	+3.1
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	-3.8	-0.7	-1.8	+2.8	+1.0	+3.0
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-0.3	+8.4	-0.2	+8.3	+0.4	+9.6
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	-0.2	+4.1	+0.6	+4.2	+0.9	+4.4
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+1.2	+4.5	+1.9	+3.0	+1.2	+3.7
531	Department stores.....	+1.2	+5.7	+1.9	+3.7	+1.2	+4.6
54	Food stores.....	+1.0	+6.3	0.0	+5.0	+1.6	+5.5
541	Grocery stores.....	+0.9	+6.8	+0.2	+5.5	+1.9	+5.9
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-5.9	-5.2	-1.2	+2.0	-3.1	-0.2
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+1.5	+4.9	+0.4	+5.4	+0.3	+6.1
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.3	+4.8	+0.9	+6.7	+2.3	+6.0
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+0.9	+5.6	-0.1	+4.3	+0.6	+5.3

Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales of Group II Companies, by Kind of Business

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted ¹		
		Feb. 1986 prelim.	Jan. 1986 final	Feb. 1985	Feb. 1986 prelim.	Jan. 1986 final	Feb. ^r 1985
	Retail trade, total.....	32,716	34,526	31,547	40,227	40,077	38,733
53	General merchandise group stores.....	8,911	8,708	8,605	12,688	12,454	12,268
531	Department stores.....	7,743	7,628	7,444	11,046	10,851	10,634
533	Variety stores.....	439	461	471	596	640	641
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	729	619	690	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	12,074	13,401	11,637	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	11,898	13,235	11,473	13,118	13,156	12,635
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1,729	1,743	1,547	2,494	2,435	2,233
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	792	785	694	1,115	1,099	977
566	Shoe stores.....	346	356	320	468	452	434
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	1,943	2,083	1,938	2,166	2,207	2,158

^r Revised

¹ Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-11 program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publication. Factors and explanatory material are contained in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-86-02.

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).

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use, \$300

Sample Design and Reliability of Data

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.

Percentage differences between advance and full sample preliminary estimates of month-to-month percentage change in seasonally adjusted total retail store sales have ranged from approximately -0.9 percent to +1.6 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.6 percent for the past 12 months. For individual kind-of-business groups, these differences tend to be higher. Sampling variability of and revisions to advance-to-preliminary estimates are shown in table 4 below.

Preliminary estimates for February 1986 and final estimates for January 1986 based on the full sample will be published late this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for February (BR-86-02). The complete report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and will present a description of revisions, and the techniques used in developing the estimates. The complete report will include additional measures of sampling variability.

Table 4. Sampling Variability of and Revision to Advance-to-Preliminary Estimate

SIC code	Kind of business	Estimated coefficient of variation in percent of the advance-to-preliminary ratio			Preliminary-to-final percent change minus the advance-to-preliminary percent change			
		Range ¹		Median	Range ²		Mean	Average of absolute difference
		From	To		From	To		
	Retail trade, total.....	0.7	0.9	0.8	-0.9	+1.6	0.0	0.6
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0.8	0.9	0.8	-0.7	+1.1	-0.1	0.4
	Durable goods stores, total.....	1.3	1.7	1.6	-1.1	+3.8	+0.4	0.9
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	0.9	2.0	1.3	-3.7	+5.8	-0.1	1.8
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.5	2.2	1.7	-1.8	+4.9	+1.0	1.4
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	0.9	1.6	1.2	-1.8	+5.3	+1.1	1.5
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	1.8	2.5	2.1	-3.8	+3.4	-0.1	1.5
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0.5	0.7	0.6	-0.8	+1.2	0.0	0.4
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.5	1.0	0.6	-1.7	+1.6	+0.1	0.6
531	Department stores.....	0.2	0.5	0.2	-1.1	+1.9	+0.2	0.8
54	Food stores.....	1.0	1.2	1.0	-1.0	+1.0	-0.2	0.6
541	Grocery stores.....	0.3	0.5	0.4	-1.3	+0.9	-0.2	0.5
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.6	1.3	0.9	-2.4	+4.2	+0.2	1.2
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.1	3.1	1.7	-1.6	+2.8	-0.1	1.2
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.8	1.3	0.9	-2.5	+2.8	0.0	1.1
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	0.3	1.8	0.6	-1.1	+2.2	+0.4	1.1

¹The ranges of sampling variability shown are based on sales estimates unadjusted for seasonal variation, holiday, and trading-day differences for the data months of November 1984-July 1985.

²The ranges shown for the retail trade total are based on sales estimates adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences for the 12-month period, March 1985-February 1986. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period August 1934-July 1985.

Note: See appendix B, Reliability of Data, in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for a discussion on the measures of sampling variability.

