

Advance Monthly Retail Sales

April 1987

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EDT, Wednesday, May 13, 1987

CB-87-8.

Advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for April adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$125.4 billion, virtually unchanged from March, but 5.9 percent above April 1986. Total sales in the February through April period increased 1.9 percent from the prior three months and were 6.1 percent above the same month a year ago.

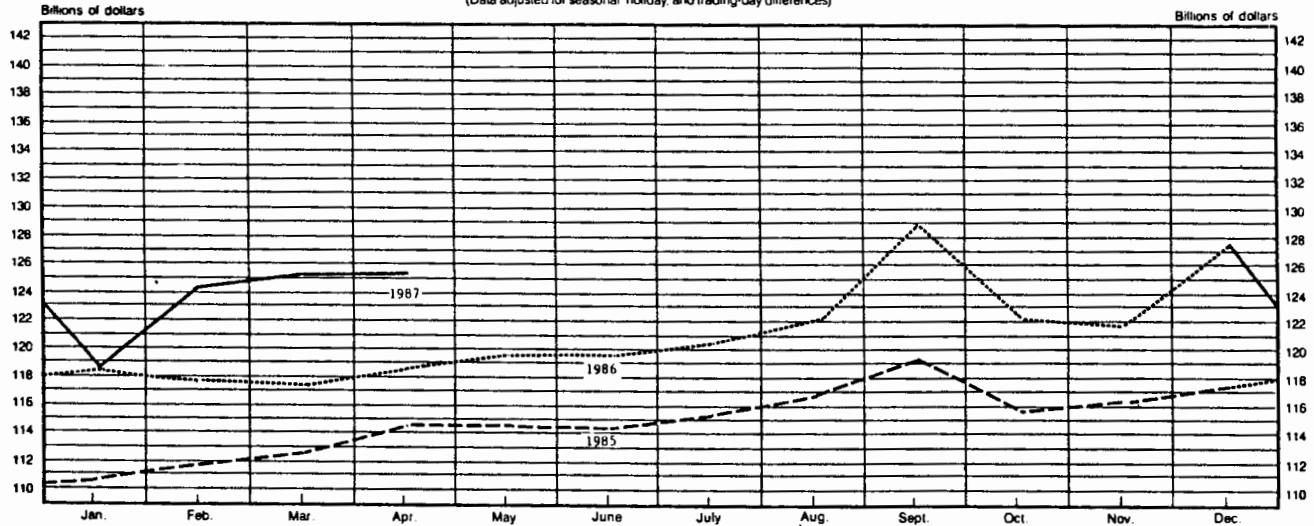
Durable goods sales were 6.0 percent above April 1986. Automotive sales were 5.4 percent above the previous year, while furniture and building material dealers were up 8.2 and 1.4 percent, respectively.

Nondurable goods were 5.9 percent above April of last year. Individual kind-of-business levels showed little change from March; however, compared to sales a year ago, general merchandise sales were up 3.1 percent, food stores up 5.1 percent, apparel up 9.2 percent, and gasoline service stations up 5.1 percent.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales report for May is scheduled to be released June 11, 1987, at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES January 1985-April 1987

(Data adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences)



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U.S. Department of Commerce
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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				
		1987			1986		1987			1986	
		Apr. ² adv.	Mar. prel.	Feb. final	Apr.	Mar.	Apr. ² adv.	Mar. prel.	Feb. final	Apr. ²	Mar. ²
	Retail trade, total.....	125,567	121,221	105,802	116,334	114,915	125,384	125,225	124,280	118,387	117,259
	Total (excl. auto group)..	95,713	91,816	81,754	88,285	88,875	97,696	97,289	97,312	92,130	92,284
	Durable goods, total.....	49,592	47,973	40,164	46,383	43,085	48,041	48,336	47,365	45,322	43,712
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..	8,283	7,061	5,519	7,925	6,572	7,712	7,756	7,652	7,603	7,249
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	5,384	4,289	5,735	4,807	(*)	5,904	5,851	5,695	5,277
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	954	746	908	801	(*)	1,050	999	880	887
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	29,854	29,405	24,048	28,049	26,040	27,688	27,936	26,968	26,257	24,975
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	27,562	27,316	22,263	25,774	24,003	25,450	25,697	24,709	24,065	22,773
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	24,582	20,226	23,430	21,738	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	2,089	1,785	2,275	2,037	(*)	2,239	2,259	2,192	2,202
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	6,212	6,478	5,797	5,818	5,855	6,796	6,890	6,812	6,280	6,204
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	3,581	3,143	3,254	3,257	(*)	3,688	3,650	3,386	3,372
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	2,445	2,241	2,160	2,194	(*)	2,726	2,687	2,460	2,408
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	742	662	685	690	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	75,975	73,248	65,638	69,951	71,830	77,343	76,889	76,915	73,065	73,547
53	General merchandise group stores..	12,703	11,832	9,648	11,729	11,885	13,372	13,434	13,665	12,969	12,905
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)	10,696	10,091	8,125	9,916	10,032	11,307	11,377	11,591	10,945	10,845
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts.)	(NA)	10,898	8,778	10,713	10,839	(NA)	12,273	12,504	11,851	11,731
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	665	574	699	788	(*)	746	754	760	801
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	1,076	949	1,114	1,065	(*)	1,311	1,320	1,264	1,259
54	Food stores.....	25,148	24,555	22,746	23,523	24,391	25,535	25,301	25,252	24,306	24,487
541	Grocery stores.....	23,724	23,191	21,449	22,129	22,937	24,159	23,908	23,806	22,908	23,052
554	Gasoline service stations.....	7,270	7,072	6,392	6,979	7,211	7,472	7,374	7,182	7,107	7,631
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	7,440	6,561	5,233	6,169	6,594	7,259	7,240	7,097	6,647	6,591
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	652	562	738	704	(*)	801	803	816	794
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	2,771	2,266	2,577	2,755	(*)	2,989	2,997	2,733	2,752
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	1,500	1,130	1,387	1,476	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,335	1,032	1,188	1,334	(*)	1,399	1,358	1,222	1,200
58	Eating and drinking places.....	12,866	12,614	11,412	11,931	11,571	12,789	12,845	13,147	11,872	11,723
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	4,211	4,153	3,940	3,876	4,009	4,266	4,277	4,297	4,046	4,033
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,464	1,363	1,526	1,558	(*)	1,621	1,628	1,666	1,688
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	244	198	279	259	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAF ³	(*)	28,629	24,315	26,948	27,674	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)

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

NA Not available. ² 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-87-03.

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.

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

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

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					
		Apr. 1987 advance from--		Mar. 1987 preliminary from--		Feb. 1987 through Apr. 1987	
		Mar. 1987 prelim.	Apr. 1987 final	Feb. 1987 final	Mar. 1986 final	Nov. 1986 through Jan. 1987	Feb. 1986 through Apr. 1986
	Retail trade, total.....	+0.1	+5.9	+0.8	+6.8	+1.9	+6.1
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	+0.4	+6.0	0.0	+5.4	+2.9	+5.9
	Durable goods, total.....	-0.6	+6.0	+2.1	+10.6	0.0	+7.8
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	-0.6	+1.4	+1.4	+7.0	+3.7	+5.6
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-0.9	+5.4	+3.6	+11.9	-1.3	+7.0
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	-1.0	+5.8	+4.0	+12.8	-1.6	+7.5
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-1.4	+8.2	+1.1	+11.1	+0.3	+10.2
	Nondurable goods, total.....	+0.6	+5.9	0.0	+4.5	+3.1	+5.1
53	General merchandise group stores.....	-0.5	+3.1	-1.7	+4.1	+3.8	+5.0
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	-0.6	+3.3	-1.8	+4.9	+3.2	+5.6
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	(NA)	(NA)	-1.8	+4.6	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	+0.9	+5.1	+0.2	+3.3	+0.9	+4.0
541	Grocery stores.....	+1.0	+5.5	+0.4	+3.7	+1.3	+4.3
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+1.3	+5.1	+2.7	-3.4	+6.9	-3.3
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+0.3	+9.2	+2.0	+9.8	+5.8	+9.9
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.4	+7.7	-2.3	+9.6	+1.7	+10.3
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	-0.3	+5.4	-0.5	+6.1	+1.0	+6.6

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		
		Mar. 1987 prelim.	Feb. 1987 final	Mar. 1986	Mar. 1987 prelim.	Feb. 1987 final	Mar. [†] 1986
	Retail trade, total.....	42,745	36,983	41,485	45,458	45,515	42,796
53	General merchandise group stores.....	10,992	8,927	11,103	12,400	12,664	12,055
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	9,807	7,895	9,739	11,007	11,246	10,540
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	10,576	8,515	10,497	11,870	12,130	11,360
533	Variety stores.....	516	429	651	575	570	670
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	669	603	713	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	13,883	12,834	13,607	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	13,681	12,627	13,363	13,989	13,906	13,310
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	3,533	2,646	3,493	3,924	3,787	3,427
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	1,526	1,175	1,460	1,653	1,627	1,433
566	Shoe stores.....	800	580	832	851	792	723
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	2,430	2,267	2,309	2,545	2,533	2,325

[†] 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-87-03.

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).

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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 -1.6 percent to +0.8 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 March 1987 and final estimates for February 1987 based on the full sample will be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for March (BR-87-03). 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	-1.6	+0.8	0.0	0.6
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0.8	0.9	0.8	-0.7	+0.6	0.0	0.4
	Durable goods stores, total.....	1.3	1.7	1.6	-2.1	+0.8	-0.3	0.7
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	0.9	2.0	1.3	-2.6	+4.2	+0.5	1.7
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.5	2.2	1.7	-2.6	+1.7	-0.5	1.1
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	0.9	1.6	1.2	-2.6	+1.7	-0.5	1.2
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	1.8	2.5	2.1	-3.4	+2.7	+0.1	1.5
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0.5	0.7	0.6	-0.7	+0.8	0.0	0.3
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.5	1.0	0.6	-0.6	+1.1	+0.1	0.4
531	Department stores.....	0.2	0.5	0.2	-0.7	+0.6	+0.1	0.3
54	Food stores.....	1.0	1.2	1.0	-0.6	+0.5	-0.1	0.3
541	Grocery stores.....	0.3	0.5	0.4	-0.7	+0.5	-0.1	0.3
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.6	1.3	0.9	-5.2	+3.1	-0.5	1.8
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.1	3.1	1.7	-1.3	+2.2	+0.6	0.9
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.8	1.3	0.9	-2.1	+1.5	0.0	1.0
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	0.3	1.8	0.6	-0.8	+1.2	+0.2	0.6

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 January-December 1983.

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, April 1986-March 1987. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period August 1985-July 1986.

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

