

# Advance Monthly Retail Sales

## February 1990



U.S. Department of Commerce  
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

CB-90-48

**INTENTION TO REVISE ESTIMATES.** The unadjusted and adjusted monthly retail sales estimates will be revised based on the results of the 1987 Census of Retail Trade and the 1988 Annual Retail Trade Survey. Revised estimates for January 1982 through February 1990 are scheduled for release the week of March 19, 1990. Estimates shown in this report do not reflect this revision.

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EST., Tuesday, March 13, 1990

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for February adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$ 146.5 billion, a decrease of 0.9 percent ( $\pm 1.1\%$ ) from the previous month, but 5.1 percent above February 1989. Total sales in the December through February period were 4.6 percent above the same period a year ago.

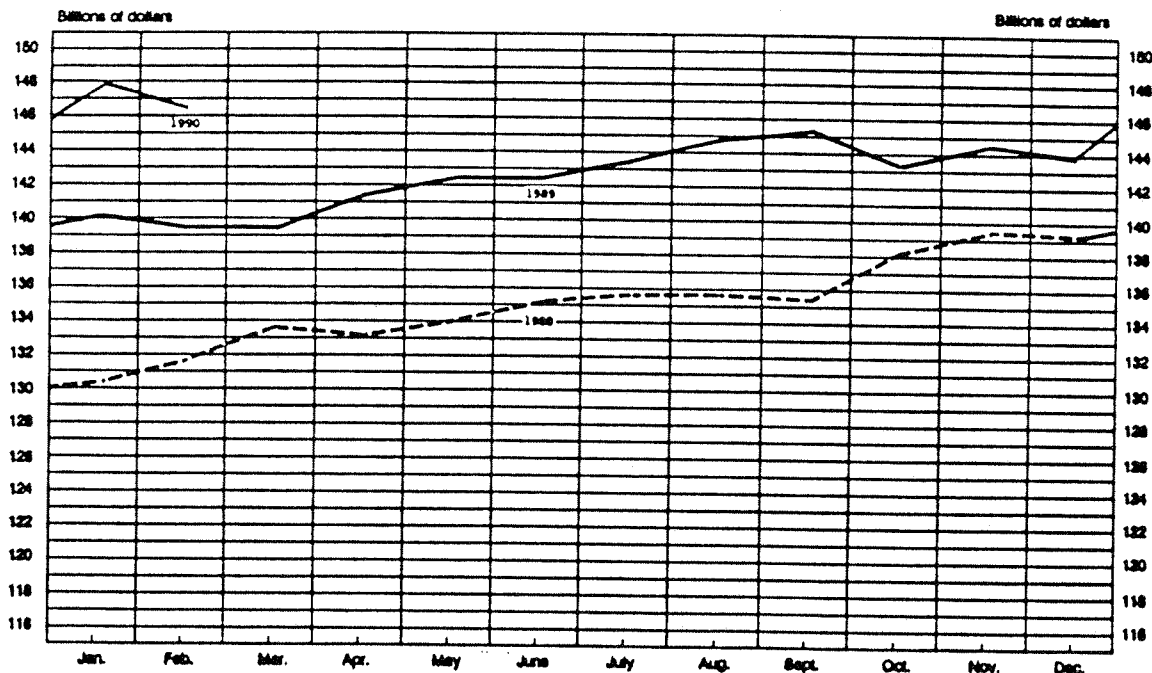
Durable goods decreased 3.0 percent ( $\pm 3.2\%$ ) from the previous month; the largest component, automotive sales, decreased 6.0 percent.

Nondurable goods increased 0.4 percent ( $\pm 1.2\%$ ) from the previous month and were 6.1 percent above last year. General merchandise stores increased 2.0 percent from January and were 8.3 percent above February 1989. Food stores were up 5.4 percent from last year.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for March is scheduled to be released April 12, 1990, at 8:30 a.m.

### ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES January 1988-February 1990

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



Address inquiries concerning this report to Ronald Plencykoild, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233. Telephone (301) 43-5294 or 763-7561.

This report is available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's online Economic Bulletin Board (N-8-1) (202-377-3870) and through the Census Bureau's online information service-CENDATA. CENDATA is available from Dialog Information Services, INC. (1-800-334-2464) and CompuServe (1-800-848-8199). The CENDATA staff at the Bureau of the Census (301-763-2074) can provide content information and general guidance.

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

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted <sup>1</sup>				
		1990		1989			1990		1989		
		Feb. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Jan. prel.	Dec. final	Feb.	Jan.	Feb. <sup>2</sup> adv.	Jan. prel.	Dec. final	Feb. <sup>2</sup>	Jan. <sup>2</sup>
	Retail trade, total.....	124,725	131,497	174,285	118,891	122,467	146,539	147,937	143,909	139,456	140,141
	Total (excl. auto group)..	96,974	101,496	147,894	91,690	95,234	115,215	114,601	113,585	108,847	108,900
	Durable goods, total.....	46,602	49,761	57,715	45,146	46,036	54,790	56,510	52,956	53,020	53,746
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..	5,588	5,913	6,708	5,491	5,880	7,623	7,516	7,355	7,483	7,649
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	4,391	4,468	3,992	4,361	(*)	5,482	5,214	5,409	5,570
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	994	1,318	865	952	(*)	1,195	1,162	1,160	1,155
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	27,751	30,001	26,391	27,201	27,233	31,324	33,336	30,324	30,609	31,241
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	25,443	27,566	23,749	25,216	25,134	28,460	30,527	27,583	28,143	28,757
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	24,851	21,234	22,696	22,877	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	2,435	2,642	1,985	2,099	(*)	2,809	2,741	2,466	2,484
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	7,288	7,870	11,182	7,054	7,505	8,494	8,448	8,158	8,278	8,249
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	3,810	4,411	3,471	3,719	(*)	4,114	3,846	4,017	4,096
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	3,479	5,704	3,075	3,256	(*)	3,709	3,692	3,674	3,570
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	767	1,151	654	745	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	78,123	81,736	116,570	73,745	76,431	91,749	91,427	90,953	86,436	86,395
53	General merchandise group stores..	11,939	11,525	30,901	11,025	10,954	17,016	16,675	16,586	15,705	15,925
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)	9,898	9,647	25,817	9,161	9,147	14,262	14,022	13,955	13,181	13,353
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts.)	(*)	9,982	26,591	9,487	9,482	(*)	14,446	14,389	13,670	13,782
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	487	1,340	500	507	(*)	643	700	656	677
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	1,391	3,744	1,364	1,300	(*)	2,010	1,931	1,868	1,895
54	Food stores.....	27,537	29,040	32,875	26,125	27,204	30,603	30,445	30,319	29,036	28,869
541	Grocery stores.....	25,697	27,250	30,561	24,501	25,609	28,552	28,445	28,402	27,223	27,071
554	Gasoline service stations.....	8,192	8,856	9,231	7,649	7,985	9,405	9,482	9,400	8,762	8,568
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	5,461	5,659	12,312	5,103	5,480	7,522	7,403	7,380	6,997	7,211
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	654	1,515	547	642	(*)	800	785	776	796
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	2,183	4,601	2,044	2,213	(*)	2,767	2,797	2,707	2,834
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	1,304	3,614	1,199	1,209	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,097	1,800	907	1,023	(*)	1,368	1,307	1,211	1,276
58	Eating and drinking places.....	12,379	12,801	13,768	11,885	12,497	14,196	14,005	13,727	13,630	13,703
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	5,057	5,386	6,917	4,778	4,898	5,479	5,524	5,366	5,182	5,097
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,442	2,254	1,335	1,425	(*)	1,620	1,590	1,610	1,617
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	225	401	216	235	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAF.....	(*)	29,789	66,114	27,304	28,106	(*)	38,401	37,670	36,224	36,646

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

NA Not available. <sup>T</sup>Revised

<sup>1</sup>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.

<sup>2</sup>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.

<sup>3</sup>Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

<sup>4</sup>GAF 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					
		Feb. 1990 advance from--		Jan. 1990 preliminary from--		Dec. 1989 through Feb. 1990	
		Jan. 1990 prelim.	Feb. 1989 final	Dec. 1989 final	Jan. 1989 final	Sep. 1989 through Nov. 1989	Dec. 1988 through Feb. 1989
	Retail trade, total.....	-0.9	+5.1	+2.8	+5.6	+1.2	+4.6
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	+0.5	+5.9	+0.9	+5.2	+1.6	+5.7
	Durable goods, total.....	-3.0	+3.3	+6.7	+5.1	+0.2	+1.9
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+1.4	+1.9	+2.2	-1.7	-0.4	-1.8
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-6.0	+2.3	+9.9	+6.7	-0.3	+1.1
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	-6.8	+1.1	+10.7	+6.2	-0.7	+0.1
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+0.5	+2.6	+3.6	+2.4	0.0	+2.4
	Nondurable goods, total.....	+0.4	+6.1	+0.5	+5.8	+1.8	+6.4
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+2.0	+8.3	+0.5	+4.7	+2.3	+6.3
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	+1.7	+8.2	+0.5	+5.0	+2.7	+6.4
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	(NA)	(NA)	+0.4	+4.8	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	+0.5	+5.4	+0.4	+5.5	+1.4	+6.5
541	Grocery stores.....	+0.4	+4.9	+0.2	+5.1	+1.0	+6.2
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-0.8	+7.3	+0.9	+10.7	+3.0	+9.2
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+1.6	+7.5	+0.3	+2.7	+0.1	+4.9
58	Eating and drinking places.....	+1.4	+4.2	+2.0	+2.2	+0.9	+2.2
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	-0.8	+5.7	+2.9	+8.4	+1.5	+7.8

**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 <sup>1</sup>		
		Jan. 1990 prelim.	Dec. 1989 final	Jan. 1989	Jan. 1990 prelim.	Dec. 1989 final	Jan. <sup>2</sup> 1989
	Retail trade, total.....	46,847	78,697	43,742	55,419	54,603	52,335
53	General merchandise group stores.....	10,659	28,917	10,123	15,475	15,389	14,774
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	9,340	24,942	8,833	13,576	13,504	12,895
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	9,662	25,680	9,146	13,983	13,926	13,294
533	Variety stores.....	365	1,107	386	510	554	542
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	954	2,868	904	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	16,530	18,812	15,636	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	16,289	18,380	15,423	16,793	16,755	16,184
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	2,888	7,020	2,734	4,103	3,993	3,885
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	1,113	2,690	1,120	1,539	1,537	1,547
566	Shoe stores.....	668	1,159	597	879	802	787
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	3,210	4,473	2,924	3,309	3,168	3,055

NA Not available. <sup>2</sup> Revised

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

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 - 0.4 percent to + 1.2 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.4 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 January 1990 and final estimates for December 1989 based on the full sample are published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for January (BR-90-01). 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 margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, indicates a range about the estimate which corresponds to a 90 percent confidence interval. If, for example, the estimate is up .8 percent and the margin of sampling error is 1.2 percentage points above or below the estimate, then the indicated range is - .4 percent to + 2.0 percent. If the range contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. The Monthly Retail Trade Report includes explanations of confidence intervals and sampling variability along with 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						Preliminary-to-final percent change minus the Advance-to-preliminary percent change			
		Advance-to-preliminary ratio		Ratio to same month a year ago	Dollar volume sales est.	Ratio of current quarter to prev. quarter					
		Range <sup>1</sup>		Median	Median	Median	Median	Range <sup>2</sup>		Mean	Aver. of absolute diff.
		From	To					From	To		
	Retail trade, total.....	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.9	0.8	1.0	-0.4	+1.2	0.0	0.4
	Total (excl. auto).	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.9	-0.3	+0.5	+0.1	0.2
	Durable goods, total..	1.4	2.0	1.6	2.3	1.8	2.2	-0.9	+1.7	-0.1	0.7
52	Building materials, group stores.....	1.1	3.0	1.7	3.8	3.2	3.1	-1.9	+3.1	0.0	0.7
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.6	2.4	2.0	3.2	2.6	3.0	-2.1	+2.9	-0.1	0.9
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	1.3	2.0	1.6	4.0	2.8	3.3	-2.5	+3.3	-0.1	1.0
57	Furniture, home furn. and equipment stores.....	1.3	3.8	2.1	4.2	3.9	3.1	-1.9	+5.0	+0.5	1.5
	Nondur. stores, total...	0.5	0.7	0.6	1.0	0.7	0.9	-0.2	+0.7	+0.1	0.2
53	General merch. group, total.	0.2	0.9	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	-0.9	+1.3	0.0	0.4
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.).....	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	-0.5	+1.2	+0.1	0.4
54	Food stores.....	0.8	1.3	1.0	1.7	1.3	1.6	-0.4	+1.5	+0.2	0.4
541	Grocery stores.....	0.2	0.5	0.3	1.8	1.3	1.6	-0.5	+1.3	+0.2	0.4
554	Gasoline service stations...	0.6	1.0	0.9	2.9	2.1	2.7	-1.8	+1.9	0.0	0.7
56	Apparel and acc. stores.....	1.1	3.6	1.7	2.5	2.0	1.9	-3.9	+3.8	+0.2	1.4
58	Eating and drinking .....	0.4	1.9	0.8	2.7	2.3	2.6	-1.3	+1.6	+0.2	0.8
591	Drug and proprietary .....	0.6	1.8	0.7	2.5	1.9	2.1	-1.7	+2.1	+0.3	0.7

<sup>1</sup> The 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 1988 - October 1989.

<sup>2</sup> The 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, February 1989 - January 1990. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period October 1988 - September 1989.

Note: Coefficients of variation for the ratio of current quarter to current quarter a-year-ago estimates are approximately the same as those for the ratio of current quarter to previous quarter. See appendix B, Reliability of Data, in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for a discussion on the measures of sampling variability.

