

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. ET, Thursday, October 14, 1999

**ADVANCE MONTHLY RETAIL SALES
SEPTEMBER 1999**

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for September adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$253.4 billion, an increase of 0.1 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from the previous month and up 10.5 percent ($\pm 0.9\%$) from September 1998. Total sales for the July through September period were up 10.3 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from the same period a year ago. The July to August 1999 percent change was revised from +1.2 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) to +1.5 percent ($\pm 0.3\%$).

Durable goods decreased 0.8 percent ($\pm 1.4\%$) from August but were 12.1 percent above last year. Automotive sales were up 15.7 percent from September a year ago, while building materials sales were up 8.6 percent during the same period.

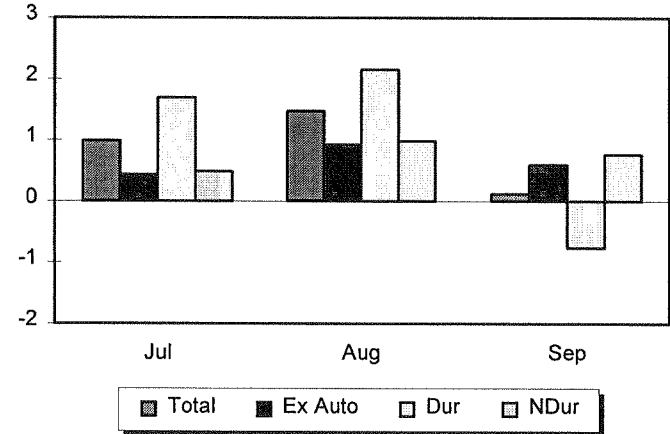
Nondurable goods increased 0.8 percent ($\pm 0.6\%$) from August and were up 9.4 percent from September 1998. Gasoline sales were up 18.2 percent from September a year ago, while drug store sales were up 11.4 percent during the same period.

The advance estimates are based on a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail sales sample. Estimates from the advance and the subsequent full survey can differ because of the earlier reporting in the advance and because of sampling variability present in both surveys.

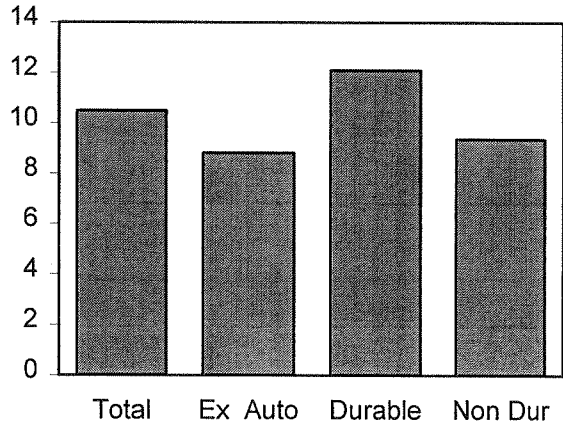
Percent Change in Retail Sales

(Data adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)

From Previous Month



From Previous Year



The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for October is scheduled to be released November 12, 1999 at 8:30 a.m.

Address inquiries concerning this report to Scott Scheleur, Service Sector Statistics Division, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC 20233. Telephone: 301-457-2713 or 301-457-2666.

This report is available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's online Economic Bulletin Board. For information call 202-482-1986. The data are also available on the Internet - <http://www.census.gov/svsd/www/advtable.html>.

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

(In Millions of Dollars and Annual Percent Change)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted							Adjusted ¹				
		9 month total		1999			1998		1999			1998	
		1999	Change from 1998	Sept. ² (a)	Aug. (p)	July (r)	Sept.	Aug.	Sept. ² (a)	Aug. (p)	July (r)	Sept. (r)	Aug. (r)
	Retail trade, total	2,173,623	8.9	246,596	256,882	254,556	222,104	231,685	253,431	253,136	249,468	229,361	228,098
	Total (excl. auto dealers).....	1,605,853	7.8	182,827	188,865	187,795	167,160	175,613	189,258	188,138	186,422	173,912	173,852
	Durable goods, total	929,821	10.5	104,822	110,934	109,530	93,393	95,851	106,287	107,104	104,850	94,819	93,522
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.	137,856	11.2	15,654	16,039	16,840	14,548	14,329	15,037	15,129	15,066	13,842	13,726
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores..	(*)	(*)	(*)	12,484	12,861	11,148	10,918	(*)	11,646	11,391	10,527	10,359
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,291	1,387	1,260	1,273	(*)	1,267	1,275	1,279	1,236
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	567,770	12.0	63,769	68,017	66,761	54,944	56,072	64,173	64,998	63,046	55,449	54,246
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	538,648	12.4	60,386	64,515	63,274	51,787	52,787	60,873	61,737	59,862	52,363	51,150
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)...	(*)	(*)	(*)	55,693	54,094	44,866	45,304	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,502	3,487	3,157	3,285	(*)	3,261	3,184	3,086	3,096
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	115,034	7.6	13,286	13,725	13,307	12,251	12,813	13,868	13,705	13,604	12,810	12,772
571	Furniture and home furnishings	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,503	6,273	5,800	5,992	(*)	6,401	6,260	5,949	5,880
5722,31,4	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,250	6,110	5,465	5,844	(*)	6,269	6,299	5,820	5,867
5722	Household appliance stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	966	1,147	872	946	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total	1,243,802	7.6	141,774	145,948	145,026	128,711	135,834	147,144	146,032	144,618	134,542	134,576
53	General merchandise group stores.	258,667	8.9	29,409	30,845	29,630	26,500	28,903	32,274	31,957	31,790	29,508	29,338
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts)..	201,224	8.1	22,867	24,045	22,903	20,665	22,830	25,240	24,943	24,868	23,167	23,131
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) ³ ..	(*)	(*)	(*)	24,507	23,343	21,079	23,311	(*)	25,314	25,265	23,667	23,609
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,090	1,082	860	893	(*)	1,158	1,132	951	937
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,710	5,645	4,975	5,180	(*)	5,856	5,790	5,390	5,270
54	Food stores.....	339,939	5.0	38,447	38,522	40,284	35,967	37,336	38,826	38,483	38,289	36,675	36,845
541	Grocery stores.....	322,356	5.1	36,499	36,572	38,277	34,077	35,396	36,793	36,499	36,282	34,702	34,873
554	Gasoline service stations.....	131,219	7.5	15,846	16,455	16,206	13,404	14,288	15,814	15,436	15,033	13,377	13,429
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	93,308	7.1	10,797	12,064	10,764	9,778	11,423	11,318	11,421	11,283	10,341	10,598
561	Men's and boy's clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	941	856	820	907	(*)	985	966	908	930
562,3	Women's clothing, specialty stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,921	2,805	2,618	2,783	(*)	3,055	3,029	2,773	2,834
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,794	4,323	3,717	4,452	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,134	1,805	1,624	2,164	(*)	1,799	1,775	1,685	1,785
58	Eating and drinking places.....	212,406	7.1	23,549	25,025	25,372	21,978	23,460	23,932	23,788	23,734	22,381	22,153
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	86,417	11.5	9,561	9,619	9,666	8,556	8,718	10,054	9,958	9,894	9,025	9,016
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,195	2,436	2,011	2,092	(*)	2,233	2,253	2,117	2,086
5961	Total mail order.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,696	6,268	6,086	5,438	(*)	7,465	7,188	6,223	6,201
53,56,57, 594	GAF ⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	64,808	61,390	55,848	61,032	(*)	65,624	65,278	60,901	60,930

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

NA Not available. (a) Advance estimates. (p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

(1) Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes. 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-99-08.

(2) 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.

(3) Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

(4) GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise (general merchandise, apparel, furniture, and miscellaneous shopping goods stores).

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, but not for price changes)

SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change ¹					
		Sept. 1999 Advance from --		Aug. 1999 Preliminary from --		July 1999 through Sept. 1999 from --	
		Aug. 1999 (p)	Sept. 1998 (r)	July 1999 (r)	Aug. 1998 (r)	Apr. 1999 through June 1999	July 1998 through Sept. 1998
	Retail trade, total	0.1	10.5	1.5	11.0	2.3	10.3
	Total (excl. automotive dealers)	0.6	8.8	0.9	8.2	1.4	8.1
	Durable goods, total	-0.8	12.1	2.1	14.5	3.0	12.9
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers	-0.6	8.6	0.4	10.2	-0.7	9.4
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-1.3	15.7	3.1	19.8	5.1	17.1
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	-1.4	16.3	3.1	20.7	5.3	17.8
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	1.2	8.3	0.7	7.3	1.8	7.5
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.8	9.4	1.0	8.5	1.8	8.5
53	General merchandise group stores.....	1.0	9.4	0.5	8.9	1.8	9.1
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	1.2	8.9	0.3	7.8	1.7	8.3
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ²	(NA)	(NA)	0.2	7.2	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	0.9	5.9	0.5	4.4	1.2	4.9
541	Grocery stores.....	0.8	6.0	0.6	4.7	1.3	5.1
554	Gasoline service stations.....	2.4	18.2	2.7	14.9	6.5	14.3
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-0.9	9.4	1.2	7.8	-0.6	7.5
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.6	6.9	0.2	7.4	0.9	7.3
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	1.0	11.4	0.6	10.4	1.2	10.9

NA Not available. (p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

(1) Percent change rounded to nearest tenth.

(2) Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

Reliability of Data

The Advance estimates are based on a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail sales sample. Estimates from the Advance and the subsequent full survey can differ because of the earlier reporting in the Advance and because of sampling variability present in each survey. The margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is a 90% confidence interval. If, for example, the trend estimate is +1.2% and the standard error is 0.9%, then the margin of sampling error is $\pm 1.65 \times 0.9\%$ or $\pm 1.5\%$, and the 90% confidence interval is -0.3% to +2.7%. If the interval contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. For monthly level, the coefficient of variation (CV) is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated value $\pm 1.65 \times CV \times$ (the estimated value).

Estimates of sampling variability are given in Table 3. They are based on two components. The first component is a measure of the average

difference between the Advance and the Preliminary estimates. The second reflects the variability of the Preliminary estimate. Additionally, both the Advance and the full survey are subject to nonsampling errors. Such errors can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, and response errors, among others. Precautionary steps are taken to minimize these errors, but their magnitude is not directly measured.

Preliminary estimates for the current month and final estimates for the previous month based on the full sample are published next month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report. This report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and additional measures of sampling variability. It will also present a description of revisions and the techniques used in developing the estimates, and an explanation of confidence intervals and sampling variability (Appendix B, Reliability of Data).

Table 3. Measures of Variability of and Revision to Advance Estimates for Level and Trend

SIC code	Kind of Business	Level of sales: Estimated CV ¹ for Current Mo. (x 100)	Trend (percent change): Estimated standard error ¹ for			Revision for month- to-month change ²	
			Current Mo. to Previous Mo.	Current Qtr. to Previous Qtr.	Current Mo. to Current Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	Retail trade, total.....	7.0	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.2	0.3
	Total (excl. auto dealers)	1.0	0.6	0.3	0.7	0.2	0.3
	Durable goods, total	1.4	0.9	0.6	1.1	0.2	0.4
52	Building materials, group stores	3.5	1.9	1.1	2.7	0.3	1.1
55 ex. 554 551,2,5,6,7,9	Automotive dealers.....	1.6	1.2	0.8	1.5	0.2	0.5
	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	1.8	1.3	0.9	1.6	0.3	0.7
57	Furniture, home furn, and equipment stores	2.0	1.4	0.7	1.8	0.2	0.5
	Nondurable goods, total.....	1.1	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.3
53	General merch. group, total.....	0.6	0.6	0.2	0.6	0.1	0.3
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)...	0.4	0.5	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.3
54	Food stores.....	1.2	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.2	0.3
541	Grocery stores	1.2	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.3
554	Gasoline service stations	2.2	1.2	1.4	1.4	0.6	1.0
56	Apparel and accessory stores	1.9	1.5	0.6	1.6	0.0	0.8
58	Eating and drinking places	5.1	1.0	0.9	2.2	0.5	0.6
591	Drug and proprietary stores	1.7	0.8	0.4	1.2	0.1	0.4



- (1) The coefficients of variation (CVs) for level of sales and the standard errors for trends are medians based on estimates for the preceding 12 months.
- (2) These columns measure the difference between the Advance/Preliminary ratio and the Preliminary/Final ratio estimates -- i.e., the difference between estimates of trend for the same pair of data months. The revisions are based on the latest 12 months of data.