

# U.S. Census Bureau News

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**Facts** for  
Features

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## The 2008 Holiday Season

The holiday season is a time for gathering and celebrating with friends and family, gift-giving, reflection and thanks. To commemorate this time of year, the U.S. Census Bureau presents the following holiday-related facts and figures from its data collection.

### It's in the Mail

#### **20 billion**

Pieces of mail the U.S. Postal Service expected to deliver between Thanksgiving and Christmas last year. The busiest mailing day was expected to be Dec. 17, as more than three times the average daily volume of cards and letters were to have been mailed (more than 275 million versus 82 million). Source: U.S. Postal Service

<<http://www.usps.com/communications/newsroom/welcome.htm>>

### Rush to the Stores

#### **\$30.5 billion**

Retail sales by the nation's department stores (including leased departments) in December 2007. This represented a 42 percent jump from the previous month (when retail sales, many holiday-related, registered \$21.5 billion). No other month-to-month increase in department store sales last year was as large.

Other U.S. retailers with sizable jumps in sales between November and December 2007 were book stores (78 percent); clothing stores (37 percent); jewelry stores (137 percent); radio, TV and other electronics stores (46 percent); and sporting goods stores (53 percent).

Source: Service Sector Statistics <<http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>>

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## **14 percent**

The proportion of total 2007 sales for department stores (including leased departments) in December. For jewelry stores, the percentage was 21 percent.

Source: Service Sector Statistics <<http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>>

## **23 percent**

The proportion of growth in inventories by our nation's department stores (excluding leased departments) from Aug. 31 to Nov. 30, 2007. Thanks to the holiday crowds, inventories plummeted by 22 percent in December.

Source: Service Sector Statistics <<http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>>

Note: Leased departments are separately owned businesses operated as departments or concessions of other service establishments or of retail businesses, such as a separately owned shoeshine parlor in a barber shop, or a beauty shop in a department store. Also, retail sales estimates have not been adjusted to account for seasonal or pricing variations.

## **\$23 billion**

Value of retail sales by electronic shopping and mail-order houses in December 2007 — the highest total for any month last year.

Source: Service Sector Statistics <<http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>>

## **\$39 billion**

The value of total retail e-commerce sales for the fourth quarter of 2007. This amount represented 3.6 percent of total retail sales during the period and exceeded e-commerce sales for all other quarters of the year. E-commerce sales were up 19 percent from the fourth quarter of 2006.

Source: Service Sector Statistics <<http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/ecommm.html>>

## **16,230**

The number of electronic shopping and mail-order houses in business in 2006. These businesses, which employed 263,979 workers, are a popular source of holiday gifts. Their sales:

\$191 billion, of which 39.4 percent were attributable to e-commerce. California led the nation in the number of these establishments and their employees, with 2,381 and 32,728, respectively.

Source: County Business Patterns <[http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/county\\_business\\_patterns/012181.html](http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/county_business_patterns/012181.html)> and Annual Trade Survey <<http://www.census.gov/eos/www/2006/table6.xls>>

If you're not sure where to do your shopping, choices of retail establishments abound: In 2006, there were 152,021 clothing and clothing accessories stores; 9,969 department stores; 9,522 hobby, toy and game shops; 31,813 gift, novelty and souvenir shops; 23,270 sporting goods stores; 28,300 jewelry stores; and 10,989 book stores across the nation. The figures shown are for locations with paid employees.

Source: County Business Patterns <[http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/county\\_business\\_patterns/012181.html](http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/county_business_patterns/012181.html)>

## **Christmas Trees and Decorations**

### **\$493.3 million**

Sales by U.S. Christmas tree farmers in 2007.

Source: USDA Economic Research Service <<http://www.ers.usda.gov/>>

### **\$114.3 million**

Sales by Christmas tree farmers in Oregon in 2007.

Source: USDA Economic Research Service <<http://www.ers.usda.gov/>>

### **\$593.8 million**

The value of U.S. imports of Christmas tree ornaments from China between January and August 2008. China was the leading country of origin for such items. Similarly, China was the leading foreign source of artificial Christmas trees shipped to the United States (\$66.2 million worth) during the same period.

Source: Foreign Trade Statistics <<http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/www/>>

## **Where the Toys are ... Made**

### **96**

Number of establishments around the country that primarily manufactured dolls and stuffed toys in 2006; they employed 2,410 people. California led the nation with 16 locations.

Source: County Business Patterns <[http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/county\\_business\\_patterns/012181.html](http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/county_business_patterns/012181.html)>

### **691**

The number of locations that primarily produced games, toys and children's vehicles in 2006; they employed 13,665 workers. California led the nation with 118 establishments.

Source: County Business Patterns <[http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/county\\_business\\_patterns/012181.html](http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/county_business_patterns/012181.html)>

### **\$3.4 billion**

Total value of shipments for dolls, toys and games by manufacturers in 2006.

Source: Annual Survey of Manufacturers <<http://www.census.gov/mcd/asm-as2.html>>

### **\$4.9 billion**

The value of U.S. toy imports including stuffed toys (excluding dolls), puzzles and electric trains from China between January and August 2008. China was the leading country of origin for stuffed toys coming into this country, as well as for a number of other popular holiday gifts.

These include roller skates (\$42 million), sports footwear (\$136 million), golf equipment (\$638 million) and basketballs (\$31 million). China leads Indonesia as the leading supplier of ice skates (\$42 million versus \$10 million), with Thailand ranking third (\$9 million).

Source: Foreign Trade Statistics <<http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/www/>>

## **Holiday Names**

Places whose names are associated with the holiday season include North Pole, Alaska (population 2,183 in 2007); Santa Claus, Ind. (2,320); Santa Claus, Ga. (247); Noel, Mo. (1,587); and — if you know about reindeer — the village of Rudolph, Wis. (419) and Dasher, Ga. (830). There is Snowflake, Ariz. (5,343) and a dozen places named Holly, including Holly Springs, Miss., and Mount Holly, N.C.

Source: Population estimates <<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/012242.html>>

## **Hanukkah and Kwanzaa**

### **52%**

Proportion of the nation's spuds produced in Idaho and Washington in 2007. Potato latkes are always a crowd pleaser during Hanukkah.

Source: National Agriculture Statistics Service <<http://www.nass.usda.gov/>>

### **\$1.3 billion**

The value of product shipments of candles in 2002 by the nation's manufacturers. Many of these candles are lit during Hanukkah and Kwanzaa celebrations.

Source: 2002 Economic Census

<<http://www.census.gov/econ/census02/guide/SUBSUMM.HTM>>

## **New Year's Eve and Day**

### **75,515**

The estimated July 1, 2007, population of Champaign, Ill., a place whose name alone may get you into a celebratory mood.

Source: Population Estimates <<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/012242.html>>

## **\$475 million**

U.S. manufacturers shipments of effervescent wines (including sparkling wines, such as champagne) in 2002.

Source: 2002 Economic Census at

<<http://www.census.gov/econ/census02/guide/SUBSUMM.HTM>>

## **More than 305 million**

The nation's projected population as we ring in the New Year.

Source: Population projections

A list of observances typically covered by the Census Bureau's *Facts for Features* series:

African-American History Month (February)

Super Bowl

Valentine's Day (Feb. 14)

Women's History Month (March)

Irish-American Heritage Month (March)/

St. Patrick's Day (March 17)

Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month (May)

Older Americans Month (May)

Cinco de Mayo (May 5)

Mother's Day

Hurricane Season Begins (June 1)

Father's Day

The Fourth of July (July 4)

Anniversary of Americans with Disabilities Act (July 26)

Back to School (August)

Labor Day

Grandparents Day

Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15-Oct. 15)

Unmarried and Single Americans Week

Halloween (Oct. 31)

American Indian/Alaska Native Heritage Month  
(November)

Veterans Day (Nov. 11)

Thanksgiving Day

The Holiday Season (December)

**Editor's note:** The preceding data were collected from a variety of sources and may be subject to sampling variability and other sources of error. Facts for Features are customarily released about two months before an observance in order to accommodate magazine production timelines. Questions or comments should be directed to the Census Bureau's Public Information Office: telephone: 301-763-3030; fax: 301-763-3762; or e-mail: <[pio@census.gov](mailto:pio@census.gov)>.