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Ian Thomas
Service Sector Statistics Division
(301) 763-2713

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ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES May 2012

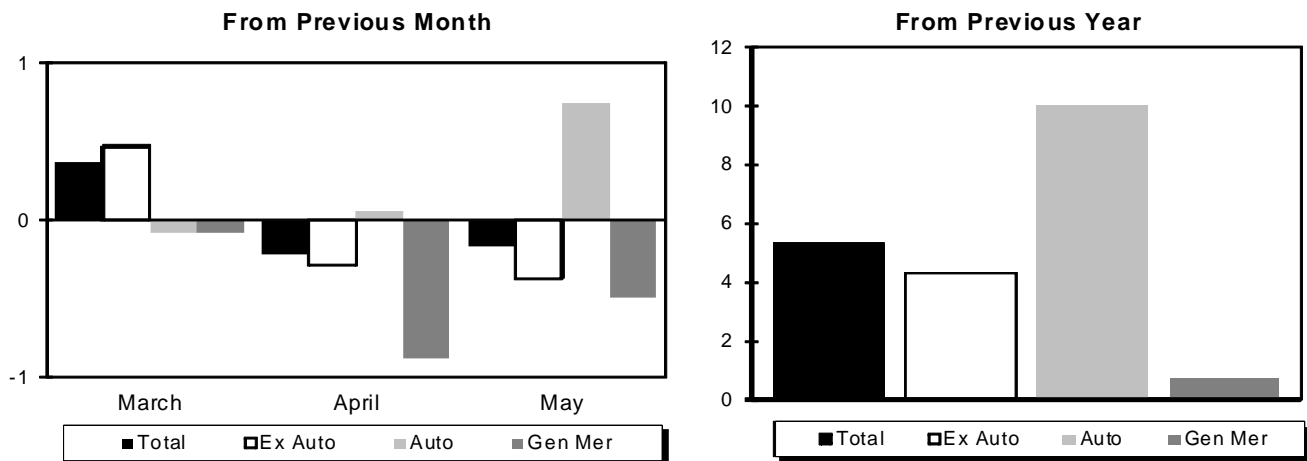
The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for May, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$404.6 billion, a decrease of 0.2 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$)* from the previous month, but 5.3 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) above May 2011. Total sales for the March through May 2012 period were up 5.7 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from the same period a year ago. The March to April 2012 percent change was revised from 0.1 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$)* to -0.2 percent ($\pm 0.2\%$)*.

Retail trade sales were down 0.2 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$)* from April 2012, but 5.0 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) above last year. Nonstore retailers sales were up 12.4 percent ($\pm 3.1\%$) from May 2011 and motor vehicles and parts dealers were up 10.0 percent ($\pm 2.1\%$) from last year.

The advance estimates are based on a subsample of the Census Bureau's full retail and food services sample. A stratified random sampling method is used to select approximately 5,000 retail and food services firms whose sales are then weighted and benchmarked to represent the complete universe of over three million retail and food services firms. Responding firms account for approximately 65% of the MARTS dollar volume estimate. For an explanation of the measures of sampling variability included in this report, please see the Reliability of Estimates section on the last page of this publication.

Percent Change in Retail and Food Services Sales

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



The Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services for June is scheduled to be released July 16, 2012 at 8:30 a.m. EDT.

For customized retail time series estimates by industry, visit the Census Bureau's web site at <www.census.gov/timeseries>. For additional survey information, visit <www.census.gov/retail>.

* The 90 percent confidence interval includes zero. The Census Bureau does not have sufficient statistical evidence to conclude that the actual change is different than zero.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services, by Kind of Business

(Total sales estimates are shown in millions of dollars and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, Monthly Retail Trade Survey, and administrative records.)

NAICS ¹ code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted							Adjusted ²				
		5 Month Total		2012			2011		2012			2011	
		2012	% Chg. 2011	May ³ (a)	Apr. (p)	Mar. (r)	May	Apr.	May ³ (a)	Apr. (p)	Mar. (r)	May (r)	Apr. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	1,979,360	7.0	424,023	398,671	419,599	396,066	384,506	404,596	405,287	406,200	384,249	383,810
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	1,609,333	6.6	343,852	324,598	337,676	325,448	313,654	330,965	332,206	333,165	317,335	315,943
	Retail	1,762,012	6.8	378,084	354,456	373,528	353,318	342,996	360,719	361,336	362,448	343,381	343,431
	GAFO⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	92,453	99,246	94,310	92,521	(*)	99,271	99,998	96,638	97,131
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	370,027	8.7	80,171	74,073	81,923	70,618	70,852	73,631	73,081	73,035	66,914	67,867
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	335,859	9.0	72,998	67,235	74,661	63,765	64,173	66,787	66,111	66,072	60,156	61,175
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	55,158	61,366	52,056	52,534	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,838	7,262	6,853	6,679	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	37,856	9.4	7,963	7,292	8,094	7,148	6,960	7,931	7,900	7,858	7,294	7,342
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,925	4,566	3,872	3,912	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,367	3,528	3,276	3,048	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	38,166	0.5	7,608	6,907	8,167	7,516	7,214	8,267	8,198	8,312	8,276	8,404
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,091	5,939	5,725	5,509	(*)	6,134	6,186	6,277	6,466
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,816	2,228	1,791	1,705	(*)	2,064	2,126	1,999	1,938
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	121,627	11.1	31,047	27,318	25,254	28,694	25,222	24,324	24,747	25,339	23,092	22,749
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	21,687	20,989	22,932	20,464	(*)	20,733	21,265	19,500	19,324
445	Food & beverage stores	257,963	4.2	54,352	51,249	52,981	51,905	50,985	52,522	52,606	52,449	50,984	51,088
4451	Grocery stores	232,683	4.0	48,721	46,050	47,746	46,677	45,888	47,028	47,134	46,994	45,807	45,934
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,448	3,597	3,545	3,429	(*)	3,740	3,720	3,570	3,542
446	Health & personal care stores	115,482	2.9	23,499	22,704	23,889	22,783	22,250	23,083	23,097	22,970	22,692	22,295
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	18,871	19,732	19,357	18,808	(*)	19,197	19,102	19,165	18,865
447	Gasoline stations	224,942	6.8	48,239	46,834	47,587	47,615	45,268	44,873	45,871	46,517	44,625	44,035
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	90,751	7.2	19,981	18,602	20,054	18,618	18,498	19,754	19,586	19,820	18,739	18,811
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	756	665	736	749	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,621	3,801	3,371	3,448	(*)	3,429	3,497	3,183	3,149
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,149	7,911	7,011	7,117	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,330	2,526	2,180	2,280	(*)	2,385	2,408	2,259	2,222
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	33,581	7.0	6,925	6,586	7,170	6,348	6,401	7,511	7,518	7,461	6,999	7,003
452	General merchandise stores	250,877	3.2	52,244	50,331	52,809	51,708	50,733	52,657	52,918	53,388	52,270	52,535
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	68,602	0.4	14,576	13,975	14,850	14,577	14,598	15,280	15,255	15,518	15,413	15,681
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁵	(*)	(*)	(*)	14,203	15,087	14,821	14,839	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	36,356	37,959	37,131	36,135	(*)	37,663	37,870	36,857	36,854
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	31,634	32,925	32,688	31,749	(*)	32,815	32,925	32,493	32,397
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,722	5,034	4,443	4,386	(*)	4,848	4,945	4,364	4,457
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	47,967	9.3	10,804	9,472	9,758	9,903	8,944	10,034	10,129	10,050	9,348	9,319
454	Nonstore retailers	172,773	11.9	35,251	33,088	35,842	30,462	29,669	36,132	35,685	35,249	32,148	31,983
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	25,504	27,045	23,766	22,545	(*)	27,632	27,346	24,577	24,294
722	Food services & drinking places ...	217,348	8.7	45,939	44,215	46,071	42,748	41,510	43,877	43,951	43,752	40,868	40,379

(*) Advance estimates are not available for this kind of business.

(NA) Not available (S) Suppressed (a) Advance estimate (p) Preliminary estimate (r) Revised estimate

(1) For a full description of the NAICS codes used in this table, see <http://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics>

(2) Estimates are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variation and for holiday and trading day differences, but not for price changes. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-13ARIMA-SEATS program. The factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted estimates shown in this table. Year-to-date seasonally adjusted sales estimates are not tabulated. Adjustment factors and explanatory material can be found on the Internet at <http://www.census.gov/retail>

(3) Advance estimates are based on early reports obtained from a small sample of firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey (MRTS) sample. All other estimates are from the MRTS sample

(4) GAFO represents firms which specialize in department store types of merchandise and is comprised of furniture & home furnishings (442), electronics & appliances (443), clothing & accessories (448), sporting goods, hobby, book, and music (451), general merchandise (452), office supply, stationery, and gift stores (4532).

(5) Estimates include data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line are not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

Note: Table 3 provides estimated measures of sampling variability. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <http://www.census.gov/retail>

Table 2. Estimated Change in Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services, by Kind of Business

(Estimates are shown as percents and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, Monthly Retail Trade Survey, and administrative records.)

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Percent Change ¹					
		May 2012 Advance from --		Apr. 2012 Preliminary from --		Mar. 2012 through May 2012 from --	
		Apr. 2012 (p)	May 2011 (r)	Mar. 2012 (r)	Apr. 2011 (r)	Dec. 2011 through Feb. 2012	Mar. 2011 through May 2011
	Retail & food services, total	-0.2	5.3	-0.2	5.6	1.1	5.7
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	-0.4	4.3	-0.3	5.1	1.2	5.2
	Retail	-0.2	5.0	-0.3	5.2	0.9	5.5
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	0.8	10.0	0.1	7.7	0.7	8.3
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	1.0	11.0	0.1	8.1	0.9	8.9
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	0.4	8.7	0.5	7.6	1.0	7.2
443	Electronics & appliance stores	0.8	-0.1	-1.4	-2.5	-0.3	-1.4
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	-1.7	5.3	-2.3	8.8	-0.1	8.9
445	Food & beverage stores.....	-0.2	3.0	0.3	3.0	1.2	3.3
4451	Grocery stores	-0.2	2.7	0.3	2.6	1.1	2.9
446	Health & personal care stores	-0.1	1.7	0.6	3.6	0.3	2.2
447	Gasoline stations	-2.2	0.6	-1.4	4.2	1.4	3.8
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	0.9	5.4	-1.2	4.1	0.8	5.4
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	-0.1	7.3	0.8	7.4	4.1	6.9
452	General merchandise stores.....	-0.5	0.7	-0.9	0.7	-0.7	1.4
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.2	-0.9	-1.7	-2.7	-0.3	-1.0
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	-0.9	7.3	0.8	8.7	2.5	8.6
454	Nonstore retailers	1.3	12.4	1.2	11.6	3.4	12.0
722	Food services & drinking places	-0.2	7.4	0.5	8.8	2.2	7.9

(p) Preliminary estimate (r) Revised estimate

(1) Estimates shown in this table are derived from adjusted estimates provided in Table 1 of this report.

Note: Table 3 provides estimated measures of sampling variability. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <http://www.census.gov/retail>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Survey Description

The U.S. Census Bureau conducts the Advance Monthly Retail Trade and Food Services Survey (MARTS) to provide an early estimate of monthly sales by kind of business for retail and food service firms located in the United States. Each month, questionnaires are mailed to a probability sample of approximately 5,000 employer firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey (MRTS). Firms responding to MARTS account for approximately 65% of the total national sales estimate. Advance sales estimates are computed using a link relative estimator. The change in sales from the previous month is estimated using only units that have reported data for both the current and

previous month. There is no imputation or adjustment for nonrespondents in MARTS. The total sales estimate is derived by multiplying this ratio by the preliminary sales estimate for the previous month (derived from the larger MRTS sample). Detailed industry estimates are summed to derive total estimates at broad industry levels. The monthly estimates are adjusted using annual survey estimates and for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences. Additional information on MARTS and MRTS can be found on the Census Bureau website at: <http://www.census.gov/retail>.

Official Business

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Reliability of Estimates

Because the estimates presented in this report are based on a sample survey, they contain sampling error and nonsampling error.

Sampling error is the difference between the estimate and the result that would be obtained from a complete enumeration of the sampling frame conducted under the same survey conditions. This error occurs because only a subset of the entire sampling frame is measured in a sample survey. Standard errors and coefficients of variation (CV), as given in Table 3 of this report, are estimated measures of sampling variation.

The margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is a 90 percent confidence interval. If, for example, the percent change estimate is +1.2 percent and its estimated standard error is 0.9 percent, then the margin of sampling error is $\pm 1.65 \times 0.9$ percent or ± 1.5 percent, and the 90 percent confidence interval is -0.3 percent to +2.7 percent. If the interval contains 0, then one does not have sufficient evidence to conclude at the 90 percent

confidence level that the change is different from zero and therefore the change is not statistically significant. Estimated changes shown in the text are statistically significant unless otherwise noted. For a monthly total, the median estimated coefficient of variation is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated value $\pm 1.65 \times CV \times$ (the estimated monthly total). The Census Bureau recommends that individuals using estimates in this report incorporate this information into their analyses, as sampling error could affect the conclusions drawn from the estimates.

Nonsampling error encompasses all other factors that contribute to the total error of a sample survey estimate. This type of error can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, mistakes in the recording and coding of data, and other errors of collection, response, coverage, or processing. Although nonsampling error is not measured directly, the Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the process to minimize this type of error.

Table 3. Estimated Measures of Sampling Variability and Revision to Advance Estimates May 2012

(Estimates are shown as percents and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey and Monthly Retail Trade Survey)

NAICS Code	Kind of Business	Median CV ⁽¹⁾ for Current Mo. (%)	Median standard error ⁽¹⁾ for Percent change			Revision for month-to-month change ⁽²⁾	
			Previous Mo. to Current Mo.	Previous Qtr. to Current Qtr.	Current Mo. to same Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	Retail & food services,						
	total	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.2
	Retail	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.1
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	2.5	1.0	0.5	1.3	0.1	0.4
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	2.6	1.1	0.6	1.5	0.0	0.5
442	Furniture & home furn. stores.....	3.1	1.4	0.8	1.7	0.4	0.3
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.5	0.6	0.4	0.9	-0.6	0.5
444	Building material & garden eq. &....						
	supplies dealers.....	3.5	1.7	1.2	1.7	0.0	0.5
445	Food & beverage stores.....	1.2	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.1
4451	Grocery stores	1.3	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.0	0.2
446	Health & personal care stores	1.7	0.4	0.3	1.1	0.1	0.3
447	Gasoline stations	2.5	0.5	0.4	1.0	-0.1	0.5
448	Clothing & clothing accessories						
	stores	2.8	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.0	0.4
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	4.2	1.6	1.5	2.1	0.1	0.8
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.2	-0.2	0.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.2	0.2
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	3.9	2.4	1.5	3.3	0.3	0.7
454	Nonstore retailers	2.1	1.0	0.8	1.9	0.1	0.4
722	Food services & drinking places ..	2.0	0.8	0.6	1.1	0.3	0.3

(1) Estimated measures of sampling variability are based on estimates not adjusted for seasonal variation or holiday or trading-day differences. Medians are based on estimates for the most recent 12 months.

(2) These columns provide measures of the difference between the advance-to-preliminary and preliminary-to-final estimates of month-to-month change for the same pair of months as measured by the Advance sample and MRTS sample. The average and median revisions are based on estimates for the most recent 12 months.