

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. ET, Monday, June 14, 2004

**ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES
May 2004**

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for May, adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$335.8 billion, an increase of 1.2 percent ($\pm 0.8\%$) from the previous month and up 8.9 percent ($\pm 1.0\%$) from May 2003. Total sales for the March through May 2004 period were up 8.4 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from the same period a year ago. The March to April 2004 percent change was revised from -0.5 percent ($\pm 1.0\%$) to -0.6 percent ($\pm 0.2\%$).

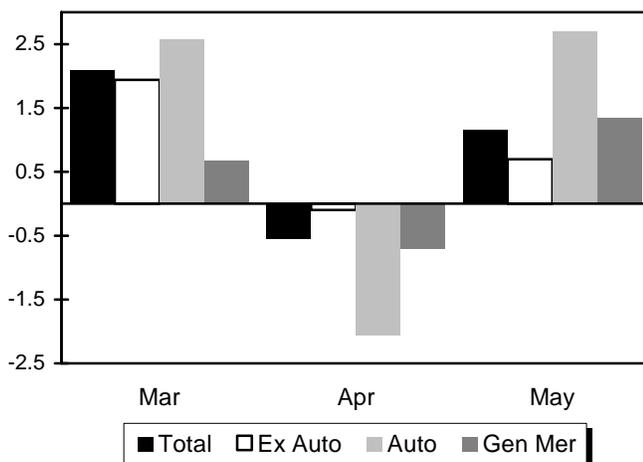
Retail trade sales were up 1.3 percent ($\pm 1.0\%$) from April 2004 and were 9.0 percent ($\pm 1.2\%$) above last year. Gasoline station sales were up 22.5 percent ($\pm 2.1\%$) from May 2003 and sales of building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers were up 16.6 percent ($\pm 2.1\%$) from last year.

The advance estimates are based on a subsample of the 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.

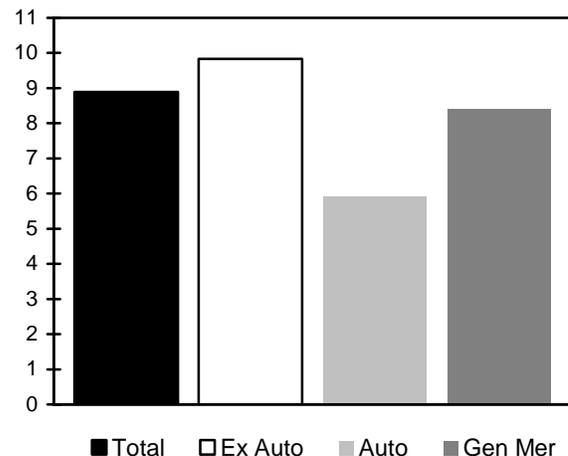
Percent Change in Retail and Food Services Sales

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

From Previous Month



From Previous Year



The Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services for June is scheduled to be released July 14, 2004 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: 301-763-2713.

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/retail>.

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

(In Millions of Dollars and Annual Percent Change)

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted							Adjusted ¹				
		5 Month Total		2004			2003		2004			2003	
		2004	% Chg. 2003	May ² (a)	Apr. (p)	Mar. (r)	May	Apr.	May ² (a)	Apr. (p)	Mar. (r)	May (r)	Apr. (r)
	Retail & food services, total	1,603,421	8.4	344,399	332,199	335,583	324,452	305,435	335,801	331,941	333,818	308,383	308,132
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	1,219,269	9.3	261,175	252,941	250,543	243,188	228,849	257,004	255,208	255,473	233,993	233,585
	Retail	1,445,848	8.1	311,087	300,045	303,203	293,013	276,733	303,923	299,979	301,790	278,807	279,140
	GAFO ³	(*)	(*)	(*)	78,658	79,224	78,005	72,364	(*)	84,162	84,745	79,128	78,288
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	384,152	5.7	83,224	79,258	85,040	81,264	76,586	78,797	76,733	78,345	74,390	74,547
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	349,801	5.7	76,143	72,003	77,616	74,241	69,734	71,765	69,703	71,207	67,676	67,901
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	59,094	64,432	61,654	57,671	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,255	7,424	7,023	6,852	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	40,880	9.5	8,472	8,193	8,644	8,188	7,467	8,636	8,688	8,661	8,115	7,961
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,399	4,718	4,399	4,007	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,794	3,926	3,789	3,460	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	38,361	12.0	7,714	7,298	7,912	7,127	6,448	8,508	8,499	8,415	7,740	7,531
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,073	5,484	5,094	4,470	(*)	6,083	6,046	5,525	5,379
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,225	2,428	2,033	1,978	(*)	2,416	2,369	2,215	2,152
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	144,960	16.5	34,512	34,789	30,843	30,960	29,129	30,472	30,900	31,022	26,127	25,822
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	29,032	27,230	25,352	24,039	(*)	27,518	27,617	22,902	22,807
445	Food & beverage stores	213,594	4.5	45,220	42,919	42,613	43,692	40,915	43,932	43,535	43,456	41,524	41,948
4451	Grocery stores	192,847	3.9	40,591	38,548	38,526	39,365	36,993	39,371	39,056	38,994	37,384	37,825
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,666	2,509	2,718	2,460	(*)	2,789	2,754	2,631	2,654
446	Health & personal care stores	83,773	7.7	17,046	16,861	17,452	16,088	15,674	17,012	16,861	16,878	15,711	15,737
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	14,331	14,749	13,747	13,349	(*)	14,331	14,347	13,477	13,376
447	Gasoline stations	121,233	10.8	27,212	25,361	24,742	22,749	22,294	26,015	25,011	24,942	21,241	22,272
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	70,115	9.2	15,205	15,033	14,760	14,701	13,650	15,711	15,570	15,935	14,719	14,443
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	906	846	855	794	(*)	944	945	866	844
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,125	3,054	2,924	2,836	(*)	2,923	3,021	2,746	2,719
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,178	5,223	5,046	4,714	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,096	1,947	1,938	1,911	(*)	1,950	1,979	1,851	1,813
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	29,718	3.8	5,838	5,784	6,041	5,830	5,679	6,734	6,726	6,757	6,507	6,581
452	General merchandise stores	191,306	8.8	42,043	39,410	38,773	39,009	36,201	41,924	41,366	41,661	38,678	38,484
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	79,491	1.0	17,422	16,611	16,373	17,567	16,380	17,847	17,704	17,994	17,811	17,704
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	16,810	16,570	17,804	16,601	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	22,799	22,400	21,442	19,821	(*)	23,662	23,667	20,867	20,780
45291	Warehouse clubs & superstores	(*)	(*)	(*)	19,393	19,018	18,122	16,673	(*)	20,201	20,061	17,628	17,551
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,406	3,382	3,320	3,148	(*)	3,461	3,606	3,239	3,229
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	43,623	5.4	9,421	8,792	8,706	9,202	8,148	9,244	9,147	9,025	8,759	8,593
454	Nonstore retailers	84,133	10.2	15,180	16,347	17,677	14,203	14,542	16,938	16,943	16,693	15,296	15,221
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	10,566	11,068	9,309	9,423	(*)	10,995	10,937	9,882	9,877
722	Food services & drinking places ...	157,573	11.0	33,312	32,154	32,380	31,439	28,702	31,878	31,962	32,028	29,576	28,992

(*) Advance estimates are not available from the subsample panel for these business classifications.

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

Note: Totals include data for business classifications not shown separately.

(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-12-ARIMA 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 released on the Internet at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>.

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

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

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

(Adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Percent Change ¹					
		May 2004 Advance from --		Apr. 2004 Preliminary from --		Mar. 2004 through May 2004 from --	
		Apr. 2004 (p)	May 2003 (r)	Mar. 2004 (r)	Apr. 2003 (r)	Dec. 2003 through Feb. 2004	Mar. 2003 through May 2003
	Retail & food services, total	1.2	8.9	-0.6	7.7	2.9	8.4
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.7	9.8	-0.1	9.3	3.0	9.3
	Retail	1.3	9.0	-0.6	7.5	3.1	8.3
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	2.7	5.9	-2.1	2.9	2.6	5.6
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	3.0	6.0	-2.1	2.7	2.8	5.6
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	-0.6	6.4	0.3	9.1	1.9	8.4
443	Electronics & appliance stores	0.1	9.9	1.0	12.9	2.3	11.8
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	-1.4	16.6	-0.4	19.7	9.4	18.6
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.9	5.8	0.2	3.8	1.6	4.5
4451	Grocery stores	0.8	5.3	0.2	3.3	1.5	4.0
446	Health & personal care stores	0.9	8.3	-0.1	7.1	2.3	7.9
447	Gasoline stations	4.0	22.5	0.3	12.3	7.5	13.9
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	0.9	6.7	-2.3	7.8	0.8	8.1
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	0.1	3.5	-0.5	2.2	-0.4	3.4
452	General merchandise stores.....	1.3	8.4	-0.7	7.5	1.9	7.8
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.8	0.2	-1.6	0.0	-0.7	0.5
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	1.1	5.5	1.4	6.4	2.5	5.8
454	Nonstore retailers	0.0	10.7	1.5	11.3	0.7	9.7
722	Food services & drinking places	-0.3	7.8	-0.2	10.2	1.3	9.6

(p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

(1) Percent change rounded to nearest tenth.

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

Source of Data and Reliability of Estimates

Source of Data: The Census Bureau conducts the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey each month to provide an early indication of sales of retail and food service companies. The Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey is a voluntary survey of a sub-sample of about 5,000 firms selected from the Monthly Retail Trade Survey. Firms responding to this survey account for approximately 65% of the dollar volume estimate.

Reliability of Estimates: The reliability of the estimates is a function of sampling and nonsampling errors. The margin of sampling error, as included 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 levels, 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. Nonsampling error, on the other hand, can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, and response errors. Although not directly measured, precautionary steps are taken to minimize nonsampling error. Additional survey information is available at <http://www.census.gov/retail>.

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

NAICS Code	Kind of Business	Level of sales: Median CV ⁽²⁾ for Current Mo. (%)	Trend (percent change): Median standard error ⁽²⁾ for			Revision for month- to-month change ⁽¹⁾	
			Current Mo. to Previous Mo.	Current Qtr. to Previous Qtr.	Current Mo. to Current Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	Retail & food services,						
	total	0.8	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.7	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.2
	Retail	0.8	0.5	0.2	0.7	0.1	0.2
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1.9	1.3	0.7	1.7	0.0	0.5
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	2.0	1.4	0.8	1.8	-0.1	0.5
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	3.7	1.3	1.1	1.8	0.3	0.6
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.7	0.6	0.5	1.8	0.1	0.6
444	Building material & garden eq. &...						
	supplies dealers	2.0	1.0	0.7	1.3	0.2	0.4
445	Food & beverage stores	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.1	0.3
4451	Grocery stores	0.8	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.3
446	Health & personal care stores	3.1	0.5	0.4	1.1	0.2	0.3
447	Gasoline stations	1.8	0.7	0.5	1.3	0.4	0.5
448	Clothing & clothing accessories						
	stores	1.4	0.7	0.5	1.1	-0.1	0.5
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book &						
	music stores	2.6	1.7	1.2	2.0	0.1	1.0
452	General merchandise stores	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	4.0	3.2	2.0	3.9	0.4	0.7
454	Nonstore retailers	4.0	1.9	1.0	2.5	0.5	0.8
722	Food services & drinking places ..	2.3	0.8	0.7	1.4	0.2	0.4



(1) These columns measure the difference between the estimates of trend for the same pair of data months, i.e. the difference between the Advance/Preliminary ratio and the Preliminary/Final ratio estimates. Revisions are based on estimates from the 12 most recent months.
 (2) Medians are based on estimates from the 12 most recent months.