

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. ET, Monday, December 13, 2004

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

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for November, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$344.4 billion, an increase of 0.1 percent ( $\pm 0.8\%$ ) from the previous month and up 7.2 percent ( $\pm 1.0\%$ ) from November 2003. Total sales for the September through November 2004 period were up 7.8 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) from the same period a year ago. The September to October 2004 percent change was revised from +0.2 percent ( $\pm 0.8\%$ ) to +0.8 percent ( $\pm 0.2\%$ ).

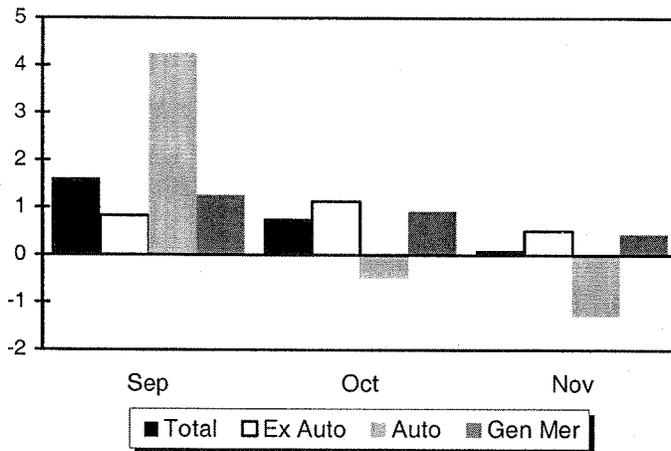
Retail trade sales were up 0.1 percent ( $\pm 0.8\%$ ) from October 2004 and were 7.2 percent ( $\pm 1.0\%$ ) above last year. Gasoline station sales were up 24.0 percent ( $\pm 2.3\%$ ) from November 2003 and sales of building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers were up 12.8 percent ( $\pm 2.3\%$ ) 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.*

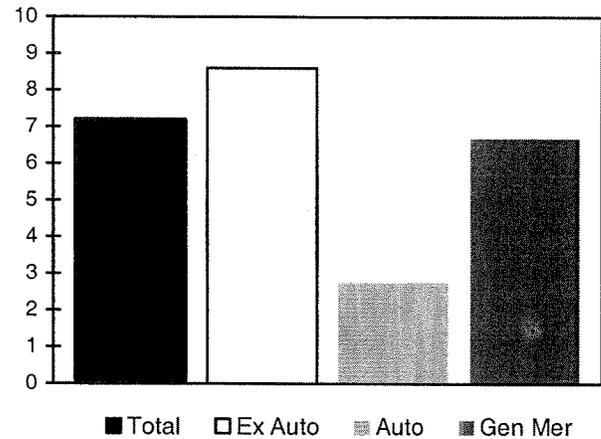
**Percent Change in Retail and Food Services Sales**

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

**From Previous Month**



**From Previous Year**



The Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services for December is scheduled to be released January 13, 2005 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 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 <sup>1</sup> code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted						Adjusted <sup>2</sup>					
		11 Month Total		2004			2003		2004			2003	
		2004	% Chg. 2003	Nov. <sup>3</sup> (a)	Oct. (p)	Sept. (r)	Nov.	Oct.	Nov. <sup>3</sup> (a)	Oct. (p)	Sept. (r)	Nov. (r)	Oct. (r)
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>												
	<b>total .....</b>	3,649,398	7.8	342,527	338,111	331,974	314,234	317,990	344,375	344,040	341,461	321,202	317,127
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	2,787,847	8.9	271,092	263,137	251,861	247,816	244,789	266,052	264,699	261,730	244,986	243,281
	Retail .....	3,291,967	7.6	310,802	304,181	299,991	284,444	286,913	311,050	310,775	308,658	290,171	286,388
	<b>GAFO<sup>4</sup> .....</b>	(*)	(*)	(*)	83,278	78,429	90,264	78,786	(*)	86,314	85,491	82,145	81,345
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers .....</b>	861,551	4.6	71,435	74,974	80,113	66,418	73,201	78,323	79,341	79,731	76,216	73,846
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	783,530	4.6	64,454	67,784	73,021	59,942	65,945	71,141	72,187	72,730	69,297	66,949
44111	New car dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	56,690	61,931	51,058	55,646	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,190	7,092	6,476	7,256	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores .....</b>	93,998	7.1	9,731	8,798	8,511	9,105	8,534	8,822	8,824	8,747	8,423	8,416
4421	Furniture stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,759	4,591	4,753	4,463	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,039	3,920	4,352	4,071	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores .....</b>	87,870	8.3	9,494	7,841	7,921	8,994	7,634	8,600	8,517	8,541	8,232	8,181
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,520	5,491	6,623	5,293	(*)	6,099	6,128	5,856	5,816
44312	Computer & software stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,321	2,430	2,371	2,341	(*)	2,418	2,413	2,376	2,365
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers .....</b>	339,943	15.0	30,595	31,435	31,718	25,578	29,717	31,649	31,298	31,294	28,051	28,174
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	28,514	29,002	23,343	27,003	(*)	27,710	27,780	24,912	25,003
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores .....</b>	479,849	4.4	44,522	44,472	43,594	42,592	42,657	44,957	44,685	44,490	42,590	42,641
4451	Grocery stores .....	431,682	4.0	39,932	39,932	39,214	38,235	38,321	40,335	40,052	39,892	38,235	38,245
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,871	2,742	2,803	2,785	(*)	2,865	2,833	2,735	2,760
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores .....</b>	183,730	6.1	16,686	16,855	16,381	15,776	16,549	17,096	17,094	17,028	16,554	16,401
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	14,452	14,022	13,527	14,203	(*)	14,583	14,531	14,061	14,035
447	<b>Gasoline stations .....</b>	287,293	16.4	26,945	28,634	26,571	21,405	23,071	28,039	27,773	26,386	22,603	22,100
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores .....</b>	161,571	6.6	17,297	15,467	14,170	16,522	14,577	16,066	16,090	15,709	15,306	15,074
44811	Men's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	994	865	1,001	898	(*)	980	963	887	889
44812	Women's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,075	2,857	3,052	2,889	(*)	3,090	3,014	2,949	2,858
44814	Family clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,818	5,120	6,262	5,340	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,857	1,757	1,881	1,815	(*)	1,973	1,912	1,947	1,931
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores .....</b>	69,262	2.9	7,427	6,117	6,345	7,350	5,908	6,752	6,835	6,815	6,682	6,601
452	<b>General merchandise stores .....</b>	439,025	7.0	47,067	41,866	38,227	45,000	38,876	42,919	42,730	42,340	40,226	39,797
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.) .....	182,916	-0.3	20,597	17,339	15,915	20,729	17,241	17,875	17,891	17,791	17,708	17,778
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) <sup>5</sup> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	17,521	16,090	20,967	17,445	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	24,527	22,312	24,271	21,635	(*)	24,839	24,549	22,518	22,019
45291	Warehouse clubs & superstores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	21,055	19,145	20,514	18,283	(*)	21,311	21,038	19,136	18,637
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,472	3,167	3,757	3,352	(*)	3,528	3,511	3,382	3,382
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers .....</b>	99,050	5.8	9,483	9,201	9,040	8,674	8,990	9,394	9,340	9,267	8,931	8,830
454	<b>Nonstore retailers .....</b>	188,825	12.4	20,120	18,521	17,400	17,030	17,199	18,433	18,248	18,310	16,357	16,265
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	11,405	10,975	10,945	10,860	(*)	11,360	11,326	10,444	10,382
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places ...</b>	357,431	9.6	31,725	33,930	31,983	29,790	31,077	33,325	33,265	32,803	31,031	30,739

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

(NA) Not available. (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/epcd/www/naics.html>

(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-12 ARIMA 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/mrts/www/mrts.html>

(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.

**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 <sup>1</sup>					
		Nov. 2004 Advance from --		Oct. 2004 Preliminary from --		Sep. 2004 through Nov. 2004 from --	
		Oct. 2004 (p)	Nov. 2003 (r)	Sep. 2004 (r)	Oct. 2003 (r)	Jun. 2004 through Aug. 2004	Sep. 2003 through Nov. 2003
	<b>Retail &amp; food services, total .....</b>	0.1	7.2	0.8	8.5	2.3	7.8
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ....	0.5	8.6	1.1	8.8	2.1	8.5
	Retail .....	0.1	7.2	0.7	8.5	2.3	7.7
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers .....</b>	-1.3	2.8	-0.5	7.4	3.0	5.6
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	-1.4	2.7	-0.7	7.8	3.1	5.8
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores .....</b>	0.0	4.7	0.9	4.8	0.4	4.6
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores .....</b>	1.0	4.5	-0.3	4.1	0.8	4.7
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers.....</b>	1.1	12.8	0.0	11.1	1.9	12.5
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores.....</b>	0.6	5.6	0.4	4.8	1.9	4.9
4451	Grocery stores .....	0.7	5.5	0.4	4.7	2.0	4.8
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores .....</b>	0.0	3.3	0.4	4.2	0.5	3.9
447	<b>Gasoline stations .....</b>	1.0	24.0	5.3	25.3	4.7	21.8
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores .....</b>	-0.1	5.0	2.4	6.7	2.2	5.1
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores.....</b>	-1.2	1.0	0.3	3.5	-0.8	2.3
452	<b>General merchandise stores.....</b>	0.4	6.7	0.9	7.4	2.3	6.6
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	-0.1	0.9	0.6	0.6	1.3	0.2
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers .....</b>	0.6	5.2	0.8	5.8	2.3	5.7
454	<b>Nonstore retailers .....</b>	1.0	12.7	-0.3	12.2	2.7	13.0
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places ....</b>	0.2	7.4	1.4	8.2	2.1	8.5

(p) Preliminary estimates. (r) Revised estimates.

(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/econ/www/retmenu.html>.

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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 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  $\pm 1.5$  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 estimated change is different from zero. 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**

(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 <sup>(1)</sup> for Current Mo. (%)	Median standard error <sup>(1)</sup> for Percent change			Revision for month-to-month change <sup>(2)</sup>	
			Previous Mo. to Current Mo.	Previous Qtr. to Current Qtr.	Current Mo. to same Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>						
	total .....	0.7	0.4	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.3
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.2
	Retail .....	0.7	0.5	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.2
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers .....	1.7	1.4	0.7	1.8	0.3	0.4
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	1.9	1.5	0.7	1.9	0.3	0.4
442	Furniture & home furn. stores.....	3.8	1.3	1.1	2.0	0.2	0.7
443	Electronics & appliance stores ....	1.9	0.6	0.4	1.3	-0.1	0.2
444	Building material & garden eq. &....						
	supplies dealers.....	1.9	1.0	0.6	1.4	0.4	0.4
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.3
4451	Grocery stores .....	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.2
446	Health & personal care stores .....	3.1	0.5	0.4	1.1	0.1	0.3
447	Gasoline stations .....	1.6	0.7	0.5	1.4	0.6	0.6
448	Clothing & clothing accessories						
	stores .....	1.4	0.7	0.5	1.0	-0.1	0.3
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book &						
	music stores.....	2.8	1.7	1.3	2.0	0.0	0.3
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1
453	Miscellaneous store retailers .....	3.7	3.3	1.9	3.9	0.3	0.9
454	Nonstore retailers .....	4.3	1.9	0.9	2.2	0.3	0.7
722	Food services & drinking places ..	2.4	0.7	0.6	1.3	0.4	0.4

(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 same pair of months as measured by the Advance sample and MRTS sample. The average and median differences are based on estimates for the most recent 12 months.

Note: Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>

