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ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES March 2005

Notice of Revision: Monthly retail sales estimates were revised based on the results of the 2003 Annual Retail Trade Survey and the preliminary results of the 2002 Census of Retail Trade. The Annual Benchmark Report for Retail Trade and Food Services showing revised unadjusted and adjusted data can be found on our website at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/data/pdf/annpub05.pdf>

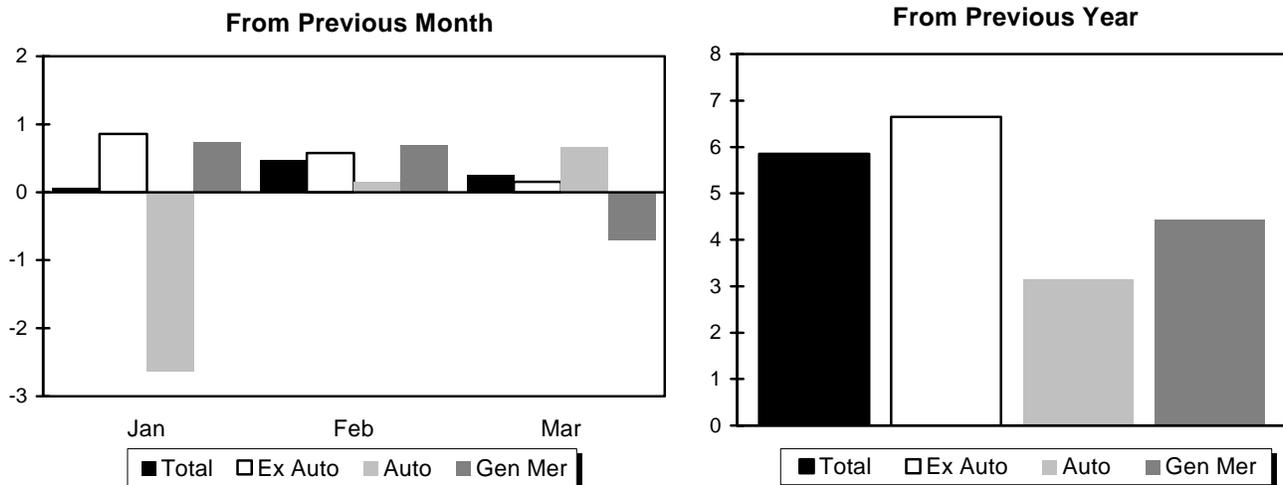
The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for March, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$339.3 billion, an increase of 0.3 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$)* from the previous month and up 5.8 percent ($\pm 0.8\%$) from March 2004. Total sales for the January through March 2005 period were up 7.2 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from the same period a year ago. The January 2005 to February 2005 percent change was revised from +0.4 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$)* to +0.5 percent ($\pm 0.2\%$).

Retail trade sales were up 0.4 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$)* from February and were 5.8 percent ($\pm 1.0\%$) above last year. Gasoline station sales were up 17.8 percent ($\pm 3.0\%$) from March 2004 and sales of nonstore retailers were up 13.4 percent ($\pm 3.5\%$) 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 April is scheduled to be released May 12, 2005 at 8:30 a.m. EDT.

For information, visit the Census Bureau's Web site at <http://www.census.gov/retail>. This report is also available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's STAT-USA (202-482-1986).

* The 90 percent confidence interval includes zero. The Census Bureau does not have sufficient statistical evidence to conclude that the actual change is different from 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					
		3 Month Total		2005			2004		2005			2004	
		2005	% Chg. 2004	Mar. ³ (a)	Feb. (p)	Jan. (r)	Mar.	Feb.	Mar. ³ (a)	Feb. (p)	Jan. (r)	Mar. (r)	Feb. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	946,248	6.1	346,053	301,181	299,014	322,390	285,329	339,299	338,412	336,785	320,557	313,973
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	731,173	6.9	263,234	232,453	235,486	242,659	219,259	263,529	263,139	261,623	247,099	242,409
	Retail	851,855	6.2	312,561	270,734	268,560	290,883	256,282	306,302	305,173	303,933	289,393	283,170
	GAFO⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	74,983	73,268	78,102	72,782	(*)	87,265	86,456	83,676	82,597
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	215,075	3.6	82,819	68,728	63,528	79,731	66,070	75,770	75,273	75,162	73,458	71,564
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	198,117	3.3	76,575	63,331	58,211	73,866	61,031	69,868	69,290	69,134	67,829	66,051
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	52,080	48,779	61,897	51,553	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,397	5,317	5,865	5,039	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	24,517	2.4	8,716	7,938	7,863	8,551	7,669	8,804	8,859	8,805	8,655	8,418
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,603	4,482	4,724	4,410	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,335	3,381	3,827	3,259	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	22,759	5.5	7,797	7,421	7,541	7,283	7,035	8,292	8,320	8,114	7,762	7,710
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,015	6,104	5,704	5,630	(*)	6,758	6,592	6,241	6,194
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,406	1,437	1,579	1,405	(*)	1,562	1,522	1,521	1,516
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	68,100	9.7	26,797	20,663	20,640	25,339	18,332	26,776	26,369	26,480	25,385	23,146
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	18,819	18,941	22,203	16,691	(*)	23,233	23,413	22,427	20,355
445	Food & beverage stores	123,382	4.5	43,274	38,692	41,416	40,111	37,610	42,715	42,723	42,553	40,854	40,449
4451	Grocery stores	111,775	4.2	39,068	34,913	37,794	36,339	34,076	38,302	38,282	38,253	36,743	36,367
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,332	2,230	2,376	2,201	(*)	2,789	2,664	2,602	2,599
446	Health & personal care stores	53,097	5.5	18,717	16,954	17,426	17,605	16,030	17,826	17,809	17,727	16,977	16,560
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	14,488	14,957	14,966	13,728	(*)	15,203	15,108	14,516	14,153
447	Gasoline stations	80,813	15.4	29,735	25,285	25,793	25,243	22,266	29,646	29,030	28,723	25,167	25,018
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	41,657	4.6	15,787	13,780	12,090	14,728	13,333	16,178	16,497	16,316	15,917	15,611
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	645	649	692	606	(*)	828	809	781	755
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,466	2,347	2,943	2,431	(*)	2,996	3,005	2,940	2,894
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,788	4,335	5,468	4,475	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,797	1,509	1,992	1,750	(*)	2,068	1,993	2,037	1,991
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	17,681	-0.1	6,124	5,343	6,214	5,939	5,411	6,789	6,738	6,696	6,592	6,672
452	General merchandise stores	115,792	5.8	41,649	37,520	36,623	38,621	36,211	43,327	43,637	43,336	41,492	40,869
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	45,678	-0.1	16,594	14,915	14,169	16,470	15,189	17,823	18,183	18,093	18,203	17,973
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁵	(*)	(*)	(*)	15,071	14,317	16,689	15,395	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	22,605	22,454	22,151	21,022	(*)	25,454	25,243	23,289	22,896
45291	Warehouse clubs & superstores	(*)	(*)	(*)	19,691	19,813	18,981	18,155	(*)	22,026	21,917	19,917	19,627
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,914	2,641	3,170	2,867	(*)	3,428	3,326	3,372	3,269
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	25,723	4.8	9,008	8,459	8,256	8,418	7,973	9,363	9,339	9,314	8,781	8,648
454	Nonstore retailers	63,259	11.2	22,138	19,951	21,170	19,314	18,342	20,816	20,579	20,707	18,353	18,505
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	11,594	12,443	12,107	10,796	(*)	12,954	12,961	11,975	11,773
722	Food services & drinking places ...	94,393	5.6	33,492	30,447	30,454	31,507	29,047	32,997	33,239	32,852	31,164	30,803

(*) 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 ¹					
		Mar. 2005 Advance from --		Feb. 2005 Preliminary from --		Jan. 2005 through Mar. 2005 from --	
		Feb. 2005 (p)	Mar. 2004 (r)	Jan. 2005 (r)	Feb. 2004 (r)	Oct. 2004 through Dec. 2004	Jan. 2004 through Mar. 2004
	Retail & food services,						
	total	0.3	5.8	0.5	7.8	1.3	7.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.1	6.6	0.6	8.6	1.7	7.8
	Retail	0.4	5.8	0.4	7.8	1.3	7.2
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	0.7	3.1	0.1	5.2	0.0	5.2
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	0.8	3.0	0.2	4.9	-0.3	4.9
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	-0.6	1.7	0.6	5.2	0.9	3.8
443	Electronics & appliance stores	-0.3	6.8	2.5	7.9	3.6	6.8
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	1.5	5.5	-0.4	13.9	2.5	11.4
445	Food & beverage stores	0.0	4.6	0.4	5.6	1.1	4.9
4451	Grocery stores	0.1	4.2	0.1	5.3	0.9	4.7
446	Health & personal care stores	0.1	5.0	0.5	7.5	2.5	6.2
447	Gasoline stations	2.1	17.8	1.1	16.0	2.0	17.1
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	-1.9	1.6	1.1	5.7	1.6	4.0
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	0.8	3.0	0.6	1.0	1.7	1.2
452	General merchandise stores	-0.7	4.4	0.7	6.8	1.4	5.6
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	-2.0	-2.1	0.5	1.2	-0.3	0.0
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	0.3	6.6	0.3	8.0	1.8	6.7
454	Nonstore retailers	1.2	13.4	-0.6	11.2	1.7	12.8
722	Food services & drinking places	-0.7	5.9	1.2	7.9	1.5	7.0

(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/mrts/www/mrts.html>.

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/mrts/www/mrts.html>.

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

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 statistical 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

(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	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.2
	Retail	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.1
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1.7	1.4	0.7	1.7	0.4	0.3
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	1.9	1.5	0.7	1.8	0.4	0.3
442	Furniture & home furn. stores.....	3.8	1.4	1.2	2.1	-0.2	0.6
443	Electronics & appliance stores	2.1	0.7	0.5	1.0	0.3	0.4
444	Building material & garden eq. &....						
	supplies dealers.....	1.9	1.0	0.6	1.3	0.4	0.4
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
4451	Grocery stores	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.1
446	Health & personal care stores	3.1	0.4	0.4	0.9	0.2	0.4
447	Gasoline stations	1.6	0.8	0.5	1.8	0.2	0.4
448	Clothing & clothing accessories						
	stores	1.5	0.7	0.5	0.9	0.0	0.3
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book &						
	music stores.....	2.6	1.7	1.3	1.6	-0.2	0.6
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	0.0	0.1
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	3.4	2.9	1.9	3.6	0.3	0.7
454	Nonstore retailers	4.3	1.8	1.0	2.1	0.1	0.5
722	Food services & drinking places ..	2.5	0.6	0.6	1.3	0.2	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 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>

