

U.S. Census Bureau News

U.S. Department of Commerce • Washington, D.C. 20233

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2006, AT 8:30 A.M. EDT

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CB06-150

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES September 2006

Special Notice – Beginning with the December 13, 2006 release for November 2006, data will be based on a new sample. In addition, a special release providing historic data on a new sample basis will be provided in November after the November 14, 2006 release covering October 2006 data. A new sample for the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey is selected about once every two and a half years. For further information on the sample revision, see our website at <http://www.census.gov/retail>.

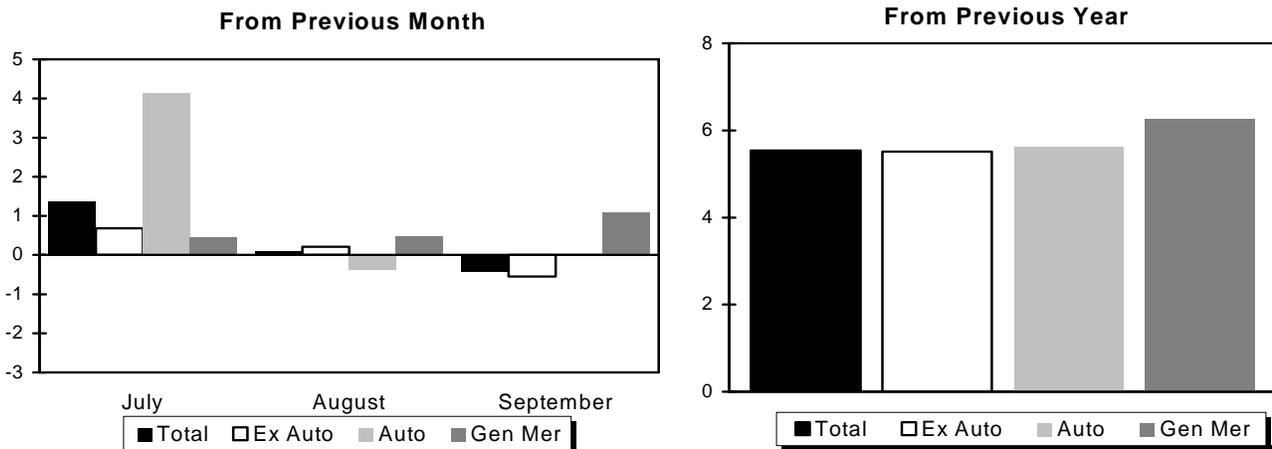
The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for September, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$366.2 billion, a decrease of 0.4 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$)* from the previous month, but up 5.5 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from September 2005. Total sales for the July through September 2006 period were up 5.6 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from the same period a year ago. The July to August 2006 percent change was revised from +0.2 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$)* to +0.1 percent ($\pm 0.3\%$)*.

Retail trade sales were down 0.6 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$)* from August, but were 5.2 percent ($\pm 0.8\%$) above last year. Nonstore retailers were up 12.9 percent ($\pm 4.6\%$) from September 2005 and sales of clothing and clothing accessories stores were up 10.7 percent ($\pm 1.5\%$) 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 October is scheduled to be released November 14, 2006 at 8:30 a.m. EST.

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				
		9 Month Total		2006			2005		2006			2005	
		2006	% Chg. 2005	Sep. ³ (a)	Aug. (p)	Jul. (r)	Sep.	Aug.	Sep. ³ (a)	Aug. (p)	Jul. (r)	Sep. (r)	Aug. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	3,222,864	6.7	353,750	382,410	368,611	336,696	358,936	366,166	367,736	367,415	346,955	345,648
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	2,525,214	8.6	280,804	298,563	286,903	266,658	276,998	290,438	292,032	291,424	275,259	271,609
	Retail	2,903,400	6.6	317,824	345,181	331,696	303,761	324,612	329,950	331,870	331,988	313,518	312,485
	GAFO⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	94,236	88,105	82,063	88,966	(*)	94,078	93,905	89,081	89,041
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	697,650	0.4	72,946	83,847	81,708	70,038	81,938	75,728	75,704	75,991	71,696	74,039
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	640,338	0.1	66,675	76,933	75,215	63,974	75,307	69,309	69,372	69,644	65,614	67,905
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	62,954	61,067	52,130	61,325	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,914	6,493	6,064	6,631	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	86,748	8.6	9,895	10,515	9,843	9,446	9,808	10,056	10,033	10,044	9,619	9,377
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,457	5,145	5,051	5,181	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,058	4,698	4,395	4,627	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	73,450	6.0	8,152	8,776	8,185	7,807	8,362	8,851	8,835	8,825	8,470	8,381
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,123	6,767	6,179	6,668	(*)	7,261	7,284	6,858	6,735
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,653	1,418	1,628	1,694	(*)	1,574	1,541	1,612	1,646
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	274,373	11.9	29,883	31,672	30,262	28,193	29,133	30,163	29,980	29,808	27,846	27,452
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	28,620	26,764	25,646	26,330	(*)	26,427	26,239	24,542	24,200
445	Food & beverage stores	401,658	5.0	45,065	46,599	46,674	43,050	43,824	45,584	45,737	45,555	43,771	43,429
4451	Grocery stores	358,014	4.2	40,021	41,473	41,453	38,498	39,238	40,384	40,580	40,442	39,045	38,811
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,231	3,322	2,914	2,916	(*)	3,231	3,225	2,961	2,931
446	Health & personal care stores	164,665	7.2	18,161	18,859	18,060	16,971	17,448	18,918	18,878	18,676	17,623	17,378
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	15,822	15,174	14,184	14,561	(*)	15,854	15,708	14,653	14,561
447	Gasoline stations	327,797	14.4	35,283	41,170	40,785	37,330	37,284	34,024	37,530	38,010	36,313	34,018
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	145,878	7.1	16,809	17,995	16,360	15,015	16,757	18,481	17,937	17,980	16,689	16,826
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	790	685	687	800	(*)	772	777	775	788
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,999	2,957	2,940	2,845	(*)	3,256	3,319	3,085	3,086
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,143	6,610	5,775	6,592	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,589	2,058	1,879	2,393	(*)	2,190	2,144	2,034	2,025
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	59,972	7.0	6,888	7,786	6,525	6,314	7,464	7,312	7,236	7,250	6,760	6,918
452	General merchandise stores	386,968	5.9	42,681	45,133	43,881	40,059	42,843	46,870	46,366	46,151	44,110	44,120
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	144,445	-0.5	15,858	16,963	15,985	15,460	17,155	17,854	17,682	17,674	17,458	17,840
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁵	(*)	(*)	(*)	17,370	16,374	15,867	17,601	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	28,170	27,896	24,599	25,688	(*)	28,684	28,477	26,652	26,280
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	24,831	24,631	21,473	22,513	(*)	25,184	24,981	23,239	22,902
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,339	3,265	3,126	3,175	(*)	3,500	3,496	3,413	3,378
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	86,817	8.1	9,692	10,201	9,435	9,272	9,511	9,998	9,919	9,929	9,391	9,264
454	Nonstore retailers	197,424	12.8	22,369	22,628	19,978	20,266	20,240	23,965	23,715	23,769	21,230	21,283
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	15,301	13,350	13,066	13,641	(*)	15,550	15,310	13,554	13,835
722	Food services & drinking places ...	319,464	8.2	35,926	37,229	36,915	32,935	34,324	36,216	35,866	35,427	33,437	33,163

(*) 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.

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>

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					
		Sep. 2006 Advance from --		Aug. 2006 Preliminary from --		Jul. 2006 through Sep. 2006 from --	
		Aug. 2006 (p)	Sep. 2005 (r)	Jul. 2006 (r)	Aug. 2005 (r)	Apr. 2006 through Jun. 2006	Jul. 2005 through Sep. 2005
	Retail & food services, total	-0.4	5.5	0.1	6.4	1.0	5.6
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	-0.5	5.5	0.2	7.5	0.9	7.2
	Retail	-0.6	5.2	0.0	6.2	0.9	5.3
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	0.0	5.6	-0.4	2.2	1.5	-0.3
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	-0.1	5.6	-0.4	2.2	1.5	-0.7
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	0.2	4.5	-0.1	7.0	0.7	6.7
443	Electronics & appliance stores	0.2	4.5	0.1	5.4	0.7	5.2
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	0.6	8.3	0.6	9.2	0.0	8.9
445	Food & beverage stores.....	-0.3	4.1	0.4	5.3	1.1	4.9
4451	Grocery stores	-0.5	3.4	0.3	4.6	0.9	4.2
446	Health & personal care stores	0.2	7.3	1.1	8.6	1.9	7.8
447	Gasoline stations	-9.3	-6.3	-1.3	10.3	-1.8	6.7
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	3.0	10.7	-0.2	6.6	2.7	8.6
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	1.1	8.2	-0.2	4.6	-0.5	6.2
452	General merchandise stores.....	1.1	6.3	0.5	5.1	1.3	5.5
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	1.0	2.3	0.0	-0.9	0.0	0.1
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	0.8	6.5	-0.1	7.1	-0.1	6.7
454	Nonstore retailers	1.1	12.9	-0.2	11.4	2.9	13.1
722	Food services & drinking places	1.0	8.3	1.2	8.2	1.6	7.9

(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

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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

(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	0.8	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.3
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.7	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.1
	Retail	0.8	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.3
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	2.1	1.3	0.6	1.4	0.5	1.2
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	2.2	1.4	0.6	1.5	0.5	1.3
442	Furniture & home furn. stores.....	4.0	1.5	1.2	2.0	0.3	0.6
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.9	0.6	0.4	1.0	0.3	0.6
444	Building material & garden eq. &.....						
	supplies dealers.....	2.6	0.8	0.6	1.2	0.1	0.5
445	Food & beverage stores.....	1.0	0.2	0.2	0.5	-0.1	0.1
4451	Grocery stores	1.0	0.2	0.2	0.5	-0.1	0.1
446	Health & personal care stores	3.4	0.5	0.4	1.0	0.0	0.2
447	Gasoline stations	2.0	0.7	0.5	1.2	-0.2	0.3
448	Clothing & clothing accessories						
	stores	1.6	0.7	0.6	0.9	0.0	0.2
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book &						
	music stores.....	3.0	1.9	1.1	2.1	0.0	0.3
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.1	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	3.5	2.8	1.5	3.1	0.7	0.7
454	Nonstore retailers	5.0	2.0	1.0	2.8	0.1	0.4
722	Food services & drinking places ..	3.1	0.6	0.5	1.2	0.2	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 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>

