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ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES December 2007

The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for December, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$382.9 billion, a decrease of 0.4 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$)* from the previous month, but 4.1 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) above December 2006. Total sales for the 12 months of 2007 were up 4.2 percent ($\pm 0.4\%$) from 2006. Total sales for the October through December 2007 period were up 4.9 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from the same period a year ago. The October to November 2007 percent change was revised from +1.2 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) to +1.0 percent ($\pm 0.2\%$).

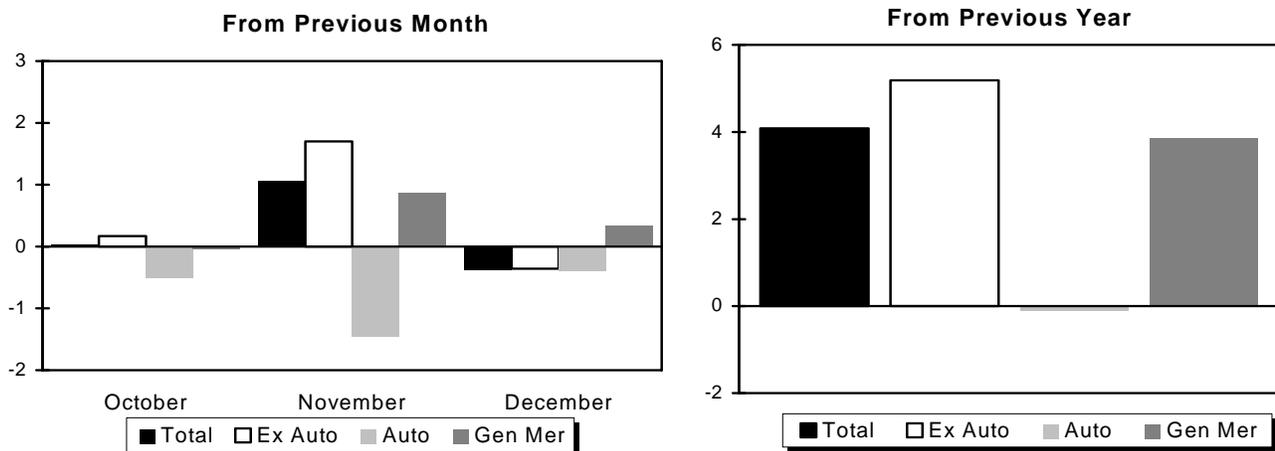
Retail trade sales were down 0.4 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$)* from November 2007, but were 4.3 percent ($\pm 0.8\%$) above last year. Gasoline station sales were up 18.5 percent ($\pm 2.8\%$) from December 2006 and sales of nonstore retailers were up 12.1 percent ($\pm 1.8\%$) from last December.

The scheduled release dates for 2008 are as follows: January 15, February 13, March 13, April 14, May 13, June 12, July 15, August 13, September 12, October 15, November 14, December 12.

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 January is scheduled to be released February 13, 2008 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 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				
		12 Month Total		2007			2006		2007			2006	
		2007	% Chg. 2006	Dec. ³ (a)	Nov. (p)	Oct. (r)	Dec.	Nov.	Dec. ³ (a)	Nov. (p)	Oct. (r)	Dec. (r)	Nov. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	4,511,870	4.2	435,874	384,044	374,656	422,341	360,754	382,928	384,342	380,349	367,929	363,067
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	3,587,247	4.6	364,481	315,376	298,901	350,836	292,924	305,803	306,904	301,775	290,724	286,792
	Retail	4,063,413	4.1	397,446	347,688	336,602	384,218	326,634	344,880	346,352	342,295	330,700	326,885
	GAFO⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	109,817	93,407	147,500	104,565	(*)	99,469	98,396	96,214	95,168
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	924,623	2.6	71,393	68,668	75,755	71,505	67,830	77,125	77,438	78,574	77,205	76,275
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	849,046	2.6	65,585	62,463	68,964	65,725	61,890	70,826	71,061	72,063	70,977	70,170
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	51,905	56,855	55,665	51,698	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,205	6,791	5,780	5,940	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	123,287	1.7	11,920	11,088	10,146	11,996	11,063	10,267	10,201	10,207	10,209	10,215
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,639	5,279	5,685	5,639	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,449	4,867	6,311	5,424	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	112,565	3.3	15,814	11,203	8,422	15,507	10,452	9,588	9,770	9,460	9,394	9,246
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	9,154	6,725	12,573	8,400	(*)	7,919	7,625	7,426	7,375
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,049	1,697	2,934	2,052	(*)	1,851	1,835	1,968	1,871
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	353,791	-1.3	24,461	28,776	30,324	25,517	28,026	28,675	29,523	29,055	29,683	28,957
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	24,928	26,664	22,901	25,077	(*)	25,308	25,037	26,024	25,563
445	Food & beverage stores	572,474	5.7	53,926	49,066	47,697	51,270	46,177	49,100	48,767	48,423	46,312	46,058
4451	Grocery stores	509,581	5.5	46,507	43,546	42,524	44,057	41,008	43,751	43,416	43,084	41,213	40,967
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,540	3,313	4,498	3,295	(*)	3,414	3,408	3,234	3,224
446	Health & personal care stores	236,848	5.7	22,148	19,514	19,978	21,356	18,954	20,080	19,933	19,898	19,327	19,440
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	16,346	16,884	17,924	16,125	(*)	16,646	16,684	16,369	16,471
447	Gasoline stations	428,729	6.0	36,674	37,653	37,344	31,048	30,015	38,767	39,427	36,648	32,717	31,628
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	224,953	4.8	31,568	20,838	17,908	31,655	19,580	18,689	19,068	18,759	18,370	18,084
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	940	840	1,456	920	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,674	3,372	5,065	3,449	(*)	3,450	3,410	3,392	3,263
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	8,510	7,079	11,947	8,016	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,295	2,106	3,079	2,270	(*)	2,281	2,212	2,298	2,293
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	89,734	2.9	12,705	8,290	6,690	12,600	7,631	7,474	7,626	7,542	7,204	7,132
452	General merchandise stores	576,793	4.5	71,369	54,189	46,140	69,899	51,758	48,951	48,790	48,369	47,141	46,553
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	209,181	-1.4	29,573	20,899	16,347	30,568	21,179	17,287	17,352	17,273	17,691	17,592
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁵	(*)	(*)	(*)	21,430	16,762	31,383	21,761	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	33,290	29,793	39,331	30,579	(*)	31,438	31,096	29,450	28,961
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	29,236	26,264	33,937	26,638	(*)	27,844	27,502	25,906	25,442
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,054	3,529	5,394	3,941	(*)	3,594	3,594	3,544	3,519
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	123,450	3.3	12,752	10,442	10,472	12,572	10,182	10,405	10,297	10,371	10,168	10,163
454	Nonstore retailers	296,166	9.5	32,716	27,961	25,726	29,293	24,966	25,759	25,512	24,989	22,970	23,134
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	18,954	17,365	20,993	16,982	(*)	17,137	16,908	15,892	15,623
722	Food services & drinking places ...	448,457	5.2	38,428	36,356	38,054	38,123	34,120	38,048	37,990	38,054	37,229	36,182

(*) 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/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					
		Dec. 2007 Advance from --		Nov. 2007 Preliminary from --		Oct. 2007 through Dec. 2007 from --	
		Nov. 2007 (p)	Dec. 2006 (r)	Oct. 2007 (r)	Nov. 2006 (r)	Jul. 2007 through Sep. 2007	Oct. 2006 through Dec. 2006
	Retail & food services, total	-0.4	4.1	1.0	5.9	1.2	4.9
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	-0.4	5.2	1.7	7.0	1.4	5.7
	Retail	-0.4	4.3	1.2	6.0	1.2	5.0
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	-0.4	-0.1	-1.4	1.5	0.5	1.7
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	-0.3	-0.2	-1.4	1.3	0.4	1.5
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	0.6	0.6	-0.1	-0.1	-0.8	0.1
443	Electronics & appliance stores	-1.9	2.1	3.3	5.7	2.5	3.8
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	-2.9	-3.4	1.6	2.0	-1.8	-0.9
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.7	6.0	0.7	5.9	1.7	5.5
4451	Grocery stores	0.8	6.2	0.8	6.0	1.8	5.5
446	Health & personal care stores	0.7	3.9	0.2	2.5	0.1	3.2
447	Gasoline stations	-1.7	18.5	7.6	24.7	8.0	20.0
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	-2.0	1.7	1.6	5.4	-0.8	3.1
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	-2.0	3.7	1.1	6.9	-0.7	5.0
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.3	3.8	0.9	4.8	0.6	4.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	-0.4	-2.3	0.5	-1.4	-1.2	-2.0
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	1.0	2.3	-0.7	1.3	-1.2	2.1
454	Nonstore retailers	1.0	12.1	2.1	10.3	2.3	10.1
722	Food services & drinking places	0.2	2.2	-0.2	5.0	0.7	4.2

(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 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	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2
	Retail	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.1
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1.9	1.4	0.6	1.6	0.1	0.5
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	2.1	1.6	0.7	1.8	0.1	0.5
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	2.0	1.5	0.8	1.8	0.1	0.8
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.2	0.6	0.5	1.4	0.0	0.5
444	Building material & garden eq. &... supplies dealers	2.3	1.2	0.8	1.6	0.2	0.6
445	Food & beverage stores	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.0	0.1
4451	Grocery stores	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.0	0.2
446	Health & personal care stores	1.7	0.5	0.4	1.1	-0.3	0.4
447	Gasoline stations	2.0	0.7	0.5	1.7	0.3	0.3
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	1.8	0.5	0.5	0.9	0.1	0.3
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	2.1	1.3	1.1	1.6	0.1	0.4
452	General merchandise stores	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	3.2	2.5	1.6	2.9	1.1	1.2
454	Nonstore retailers	1.6	0.9	0.5	1.1	0.4	0.6
722	Food services & drinking places ..	1.6	0.8	0.7	1.3	0.1	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 revisions 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>