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ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES February 2008

Intention to Revise Retail Estimates: Monthly retail sales estimates will be revised based on the results of the 2006 Annual Retail Trade Survey. Revised not adjusted and corresponding adjusted data are scheduled for release on April 30, 2008.

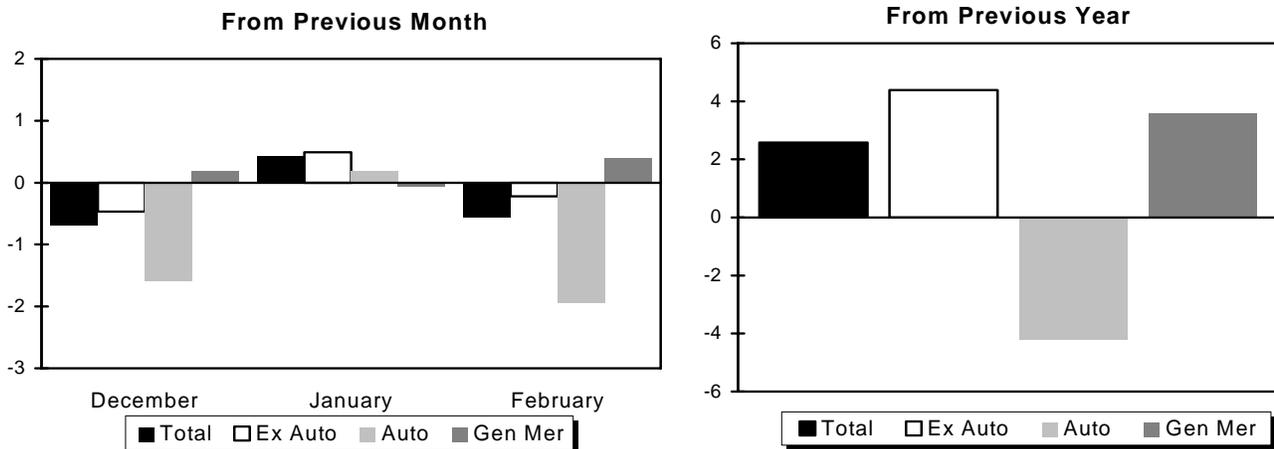
The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for February, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$380.2 billion, a decrease of 0.6 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from the previous month, but 2.6 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) above February 2007. Total sales for the December 2007 through February 2008 period were up 3.3 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from the same period a year ago. The December 2007 to January 2008 percent change was revised from +0.3 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$)* to +0.4 percent ($\pm 0.2\%$).

Retail trade sales were down 0.6 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$)* from January 2008, but were 2.4 percent ($\pm 0.8\%$) above last year. Gasoline station sales were up 20.2 percent ($\pm 1.0\%$) from February 2007 and sales of sporting goods, hobby, book, and music stores were up 6.3 percent ($\pm 2.8\%$) 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 March is scheduled to be released April 14, 2008 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 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				
		2 Month Total		2008			2007		2008			2007	
		2008	% Chg. 2007	Feb. ³ (a)	Jan. (p)	Dec. (r)	Feb.	Jan.	Feb. ³ (a)	Jan. (p)	Dec. (r)	Feb. (r)	Jan. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	698,721	5.8	349,746	348,975	433,319	327,624	332,797	380,197	382,336	380,711	370,630	367,623
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	561,858	7.4	280,049	281,809	363,021	257,427	265,530	305,628	306,293	304,802	292,779	290,907
	Retail	626,849	5.6	313,507	313,342	394,152	294,356	298,986	341,970	343,938	342,237	334,072	330,991
	GAFO⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	85,570	147,633	83,015	83,867	(*)	98,606	97,971	96,583	97,383
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	136,863	-0.4	69,697	67,166	70,298	70,197	67,267	74,569	76,043	75,909	77,851	76,716
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	125,357	-0.8	63,887	61,470	64,485	64,671	61,639	68,328	69,852	69,638	71,697	70,525
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	50,416	54,024	53,428	51,064	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,696	5,813	5,526	5,628	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	18,506	-2.0	9,225	9,281	11,601	9,249	9,639	9,919	9,969	10,027	10,369	10,376
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,202	5,527	5,324	5,256	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,079	6,074	3,925	4,383	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	17,716	2.5	8,824	8,892	15,448	8,449	8,833	9,343	9,377	9,383	9,301	9,323
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,199	12,649	6,783	7,024	(*)	7,626	7,570	7,454	7,441
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,693	2,799	1,666	1,809	(*)	1,751	1,813	1,847	1,882
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	45,621	-2.3	22,624	22,997	24,732	22,771	23,941	28,321	28,510	28,685	29,548	29,466
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	20,538	21,773	20,479	21,929	(*)	24,363	24,686	25,760	26,044
445	Food & beverage stores	93,924	7.3	46,004	47,920	53,685	42,535	45,010	48,883	48,990	48,921	46,890	46,464
4451	Grocery stores	84,978	7.7	41,422	43,556	46,198	38,194	40,743	43,694	43,819	43,542	41,788	41,405
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,925	4,732	2,748	2,710	(*)	3,490	3,462	3,279	3,238
446	Health & personal care stores	40,399	6.3	20,108	20,291	22,051	18,450	19,547	20,270	20,170	20,028	19,401	19,353
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	17,081	18,127	15,631	16,770	(*)	16,812	16,661	16,436	16,473
447	Gasoline stations	72,124	25.0	35,550	36,574	36,995	28,292	29,402	39,721	40,103	39,190	33,051	32,381
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	30,753	4.5	16,328	14,425	31,197	15,307	14,111	18,932	18,901	18,492	18,502	18,769
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	734	1,444	691	722	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,581	4,946	2,665	2,621	(*)	3,322	3,346	3,352	3,386
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,420	11,479	5,457	5,255	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,788	3,006	1,913	1,789	(*)	2,269	2,262	2,222	2,294
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	13,503	8.2	6,294	7,209	12,564	5,647	6,831	7,666	7,637	7,412	7,212	7,206
452	General merchandise stores	86,172	5.5	44,070	42,102	71,367	40,844	40,800	48,985	48,795	48,817	47,293	47,761
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	27,688	-2.9	14,320	13,368	29,610	14,426	14,078	16,892	16,926	17,198	17,591	17,898
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁵	(*)	(*)	(*)	13,717	30,341	14,806	14,461	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	28,734	41,757	26,418	26,722	(*)	31,869	31,619	29,702	29,863
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	25,631	36,447	23,438	23,837	(*)	28,135	28,079	26,188	26,310
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,103	5,310	2,980	2,885	(*)	3,734	3,540	3,514	3,553
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	19,089	6.3	9,548	9,541	12,129	8,849	9,117	10,258	10,308	10,147	10,004	9,959
454	Nonstore retailers	52,179	8.1	25,235	26,944	32,085	23,766	24,488	25,103	25,135	25,226	24,650	23,217
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	16,600	22,145	14,400	15,657	(*)	16,802	16,815	16,180	15,815
722	Food services & drinking places ...	71,872	7.1	36,239	35,633	39,167	33,268	33,811	38,227	38,398	38,474	36,558	36,632

(*) 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					
		Feb. 2008 Advance from --		Jan. 2008 Preliminary from --		Dec. 2007 through Feb. 2008 from --	
		Jan. 2008 (p)	Feb. 2007 (r)	Dec. 2007 (r)	Jan. 2007 (r)	Sep. 2007 through Nov. 2007	Dec. 2006 through Feb. 2007
	Retail & food services, total	-0.6	2.6	0.4	4.0	-0.1	3.3
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	-0.2	4.4	0.5	5.3	0.8	4.8
	Retail	-0.6	2.4	0.5	3.9	-0.2	3.2
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	-1.9	-4.2	0.2	-0.9	-3.5	-2.3
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	-2.2	-4.7	0.3	-1.0	-3.5	-2.6
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	-0.5	-4.3	-0.6	-3.9	-2.3	-3.4
443	Electronics & appliance stores	-0.4	0.5	-0.1	0.6	-1.6	0.4
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	-0.7	-4.2	-0.6	-3.2	-2.7	-3.3
445	Food & beverage stores.....	-0.2	4.3	0.1	5.4	1.0	5.1
4451	Grocery stores	-0.3	4.6	0.6	5.8	1.4	5.3
446	Health & personal care stores	0.5	4.5	0.7	4.2	1.2	4.0
447	Gasoline stations	-1.0	20.2	2.3	23.8	6.5	21.0
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	0.2	2.3	2.2	0.7	-0.6	1.1
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	0.4	6.3	3.0	6.0	-0.1	5.1
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.4	3.6	0.0	2.2	0.8	3.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	-0.2	-4.0	-1.6	-5.4	-1.9	-4.0
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	-0.5	2.5	1.6	3.5	-1.2	1.8
454	Nonstore retailers	-0.1	1.8	-0.4	8.3	0.0	6.3
722	Food services & drinking places	-0.4	4.6	-0.2	4.8	1.0	4.4

(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	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.1
	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	0.4
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	2.1	1.6	0.7	1.8	-0.1	0.4
442	Furniture & home furn. stores.....	2.0	1.4	0.8	1.8	-0.1	0.8
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.2	0.6	0.5	1.4	0.1	0.5
444	Building material & garden eq. &... supplies dealers.....	2.3	1.2	0.8	1.3	0.3	0.5
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.1
4451	Grocery stores	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
446	Health & personal care stores	1.7	0.5	0.4	1.4	-0.2	0.4
447	Gasoline stations	1.9	0.6	0.4	1.6	0.5	0.3
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	1.8	0.6	0.5	1.0	0.0	0.3
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	2.1	1.3	1.0	1.7	0.4	0.5
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	3.2	2.3	1.5	2.9	0.8	1.1
454	Nonstore retailers	1.6	0.9	0.5	1.1	0.4	0.6
722	Food services & drinking places ..	1.7	0.8	0.7	1.3	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 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>