

U.S. Census Bureau News

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2008, AT 8:30 A.M. EST

Timothy Winters / Aneta Lukasik
Service Sector Statistics Division
(301) 763-2713

CB08-161

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES October 2008

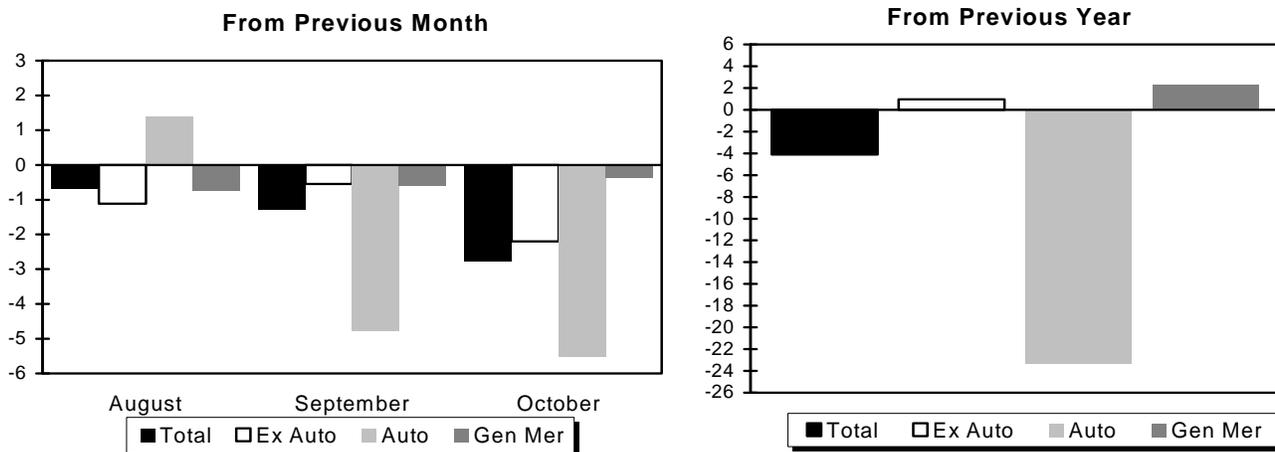
The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for October, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$363.7 billion, a decrease of 2.8 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from the previous month and 4.1 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) below October 2007. Total sales for the August through October 2008 period were down 1.3 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from the same period a year ago. The August to September 2008 percent change was revised from -1.2 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) to -1.3 percent ($\pm 0.3\%$).

Retail trade sales were down 3.1 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from September 2008 and were 5.0 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) below last year. Motor vehicle and parts dealers sales were down 23.4 percent ($\pm 2.1\%$) from October 2007 and sales of furniture and home furnishings stores sales were down 13.5 percent ($\pm 3.3\%$) 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)



The Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services for November is scheduled to be released December 12, 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 | | | | |
|----------------------------|--|----------------|----------------|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------|---------|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | 10 Month Total | | 2008 | | | 2007 | | 2008 | | | 2007 | |
| | | 2008 | % Chg. 2007 | Oct. ³ (a) | Sep. (p) | Aug. (r) | Oct. | Sep. | Oct. ³ (a) | Sep. (p) | Aug. (r) | Oct. (r) | Sep. (r) |
| | Retail & food services, | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | total | 3,740,829 | 1.9 | 360,037 | 357,662 | 390,352 | 372,495 | 357,452 | 363,696 | 374,065 | 378,966 | 379,295 | 378,404 |
| | Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ... | 3,036,540 | 5.1 | 302,252 | 295,158 | 318,525 | 297,128 | 283,135 | 303,195 | 310,028 | 311,732 | 300,328 | 299,372 |
| | Retail | 3,356,190 | 1.6 | 320,670 | 320,098 | 349,495 | 335,100 | 320,887 | 324,796 | 335,299 | 340,422 | 341,863 | 341,093 |
| | GAFO⁴ | (*) | (*) | (*) | 87,329 | 100,785 | 92,525 | 89,132 | (*) | 96,715 | 98,348 | 97,809 | 97,686 |
| 441 | Motor vehicle & parts dealers | 704,289 | -9.8 | 57,785 | 62,504 | 71,827 | 75,367 | 74,317 | 60,501 | 64,037 | 67,234 | 78,967 | 79,032 |
| 4411, 4412 | Auto & other motor veh. dealers . | 638,726 | -10.9 | 50,752 | 55,962 | 65,087 | 68,513 | 68,157 | 53,934 | 57,515 | 60,772 | 72,501 | 72,662 |
| 44111 | New car dealers | (*) | (*) | (*) | 44,404 | 51,406 | 55,842 | 55,373 | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) |
| 4413 | Auto parts, acc. & tire stores..... | (*) | (*) | (*) | 6,542 | 6,740 | 6,854 | 6,160 | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) |
| 442 | Furniture & home furn. stores | 89,997 | -7.0 | 8,491 | 8,603 | 9,450 | 9,787 | 9,541 | 8,534 | 8,752 | 8,983 | 9,866 | 9,887 |
| 4421 | Furniture stores | (*) | (*) | (*) | 4,611 | 5,171 | 5,082 | 5,190 | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) |
| 4422 | Home furnishings stores | (*) | (*) | (*) | 3,992 | 4,279 | 4,705 | 4,351 | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) |
| 443 | Electronics & appliance stores | 86,408 | 1.7 | 7,899 | 8,184 | 9,161 | 8,377 | 8,347 | 8,867 | 9,079 | 9,243 | 9,396 | 9,306 |
| 44311, 13 | Appl., T.V. & camera..... | (*) | (*) | (*) | 6,568 | 7,412 | 6,643 | 6,596 | (*) | 7,330 | 7,464 | 7,523 | 7,411 |
| 44312 | Computer & software stores..... | (*) | (*) | (*) | 1,616 | 1,749 | 1,734 | 1,751 | (*) | 1,749 | 1,779 | 1,873 | 1,895 |
| 444 | Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers | 280,096 | -2.2 | 28,297 | 27,134 | 27,401 | 28,862 | 26,494 | 27,170 | 27,292 | 27,367 | 27,585 | 27,929 |
| 4441 | Building mat. & sup. dealers | (*) | (*) | (*) | 23,645 | 23,963 | 25,586 | 23,705 | (*) | 22,979 | 23,064 | 24,024 | 24,363 |
| 445 | Food & beverage stores | 487,764 | 6.0 | 49,858 | 47,815 | 50,921 | 46,742 | 45,860 | 49,753 | 49,729 | 49,836 | 47,477 | 47,140 |
| 4451 | Grocery stores | 438,126 | 6.1 | 44,528 | 42,857 | 45,527 | 41,844 | 41,074 | 44,439 | 44,457 | 44,547 | 42,438 | 42,084 |
| 4453 | Beer, wine & liquor stores | (*) | (*) | (*) | 3,380 | 3,730 | 3,228 | 3,190 | (*) | 3,577 | 3,593 | 3,321 | 3,340 |
| 446 | Health & personal care stores | 203,764 | 4.0 | 20,985 | 19,986 | 20,247 | 20,131 | 18,796 | 20,798 | 20,711 | 20,597 | 19,991 | 20,017 |
| 44611 | Pharmacies & drug stores | (*) | (*) | (*) | 16,614 | 16,634 | 16,862 | 15,606 | (*) | 17,181 | 17,026 | 16,613 | 16,549 |
| 447 | Gasoline stations | 435,601 | 18.5 | 39,155 | 43,602 | 47,639 | 38,757 | 37,126 | 38,275 | 43,821 | 43,988 | 38,109 | 37,388 |
| 448 | Clothing & clothing accessories stores | 173,548 | 0.6 | 17,371 | 16,242 | 19,370 | 17,913 | 17,016 | 18,064 | 18,328 | 19,014 | 18,816 | 18,974 |
| 44811 | Men's clothing stores | (*) | (*) | (*) | 782 | 794 | 867 | 794 | (*) | (S) | (S) | (S) | (S) |
| 44812 | Women's clothing stores | (*) | (*) | (*) | 3,077 | 3,159 | 3,344 | 3,203 | (*) | 3,273 | 3,332 | 3,398 | 3,393 |
| 44814 | Family clothing stores | (*) | (*) | (*) | 6,189 | 7,673 | 6,955 | 6,492 | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) |
| 4482 | Shoe stores | (*) | (*) | (*) | 1,940 | 2,858 | 2,058 | 2,005 | (*) | 2,185 | 2,294 | 2,199 | 2,218 |
| 451 | Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores | 68,744 | 2.2 | 6,296 | 6,755 | 8,608 | 6,518 | 6,862 | 7,187 | 7,303 | 7,498 | 7,441 | 7,418 |
| 452 | General merchandise stores | 471,255 | 4.5 | 47,724 | 44,169 | 50,333 | 46,110 | 43,796 | 49,639 | 49,823 | 50,126 | 48,536 | 48,350 |
| 4521 | Department stores (ex. L.D.)..... | 153,424 | -3.6 | 15,528 | 14,017 | 16,550 | 16,400 | 15,306 | 16,218 | 16,428 | 16,668 | 17,413 | 17,397 |
| 4521 | Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁵ | (*) | (*) | (*) | 14,407 | 17,009 | 16,848 | 15,730 | (*) | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) |
| 4529 | Other general merch. stores..... | (*) | (*) | (*) | 30,152 | 33,783 | 29,710 | 28,490 | (*) | 33,395 | 33,458 | 31,123 | 30,953 |
| 45291 | Warehouse clubs & supercenters..... | (*) | (*) | (*) | 26,792 | 30,220 | 26,134 | 25,221 | (*) | 29,637 | 29,715 | 27,452 | 27,325 |
| 45299 | All oth. gen. merch. stores..... | (*) | (*) | (*) | 3,360 | 3,563 | 3,576 | 3,269 | (*) | 3,758 | 3,743 | 3,671 | 3,628 |
| 453 | Miscellaneous store retailers | 98,157 | 1.0 | 10,209 | 9,811 | 10,071 | 10,129 | 9,685 | 9,977 | 9,905 | 9,950 | 10,006 | 10,155 |
| 454 | Nonstore retailers | 256,567 | 6.0 | 26,600 | 25,293 | 24,467 | 26,407 | 23,047 | 26,031 | 26,519 | 26,586 | 25,673 | 25,497 |
| 4541 | Elect. shopping & m/o houses | (*) | (*) | (*) | 17,749 | 17,301 | 18,400 | 16,238 | (*) | 18,204 | 18,231 | 17,899 | 17,727 |
| 722 | Food services & drinking places ... | 384,639 | 4.5 | 39,367 | 37,564 | 40,857 | 37,395 | 36,565 | 38,900 | 38,766 | 38,544 | 37,432 | 37,311 |

(*) 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 | | | | | |
|------------|---|-----------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | Oct. 2008 Advance from -- | | Sep. 2008 Preliminary from -- | | Aug. 2008 through Oct. 2008 from -- | |
| | | Sep. 2008 (p) | Oct. 2007 (r) | Aug. 2008 (r) | Sep. 2007 (r) | May 2008 through Jul. 2008 | Aug. 2007 through Oct. 2007 |
| | Retail & food services, total | -2.8 | -4.1 | -1.3 | -1.1 | -2.8 | -1.3 |
| | Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ... | -2.2 | 1.0 | -0.5 | 3.6 | -1.9 | 3.1 |
| | Retail | -3.1 | -5.0 | -1.5 | -1.7 | -3.3 | -1.9 |
| 441 | Motor vehicle & parts dealers | -5.5 | -23.4 | -4.8 | -19.0 | -7.2 | -18.5 |
| 4411, 4412 | Auto & other motor veh. dealers .. | -6.2 | -25.6 | -5.4 | -20.8 | -7.9 | -20.3 |
| 442 | Furniture & home furn. stores | -2.5 | -13.5 | -2.6 | -11.5 | -6.4 | -11.6 |
| 443 | Electronics & appliance stores | -2.3 | -5.6 | -1.8 | -2.4 | -5.3 | -2.8 |
| 444 | Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers..... | -0.4 | -1.5 | -0.3 | -2.3 | -2.3 | -2.0 |
| 445 | Food & beverage stores..... | 0.0 | 4.8 | -0.2 | 5.5 | 1.0 | 5.7 |
| 4451 | Grocery stores | 0.0 | 4.7 | -0.2 | 5.6 | 0.9 | 5.7 |
| 446 | Health & personal care stores | 0.4 | 4.0 | 0.6 | 3.5 | 0.9 | 3.5 |
| 447 | Gasoline stations | -12.7 | 0.4 | -0.4 | 17.2 | -6.3 | 12.9 |
| 448 | Clothing & clothing accessories stores | -1.4 | -4.0 | -3.6 | -3.4 | -3.3 | -2.1 |
| 451 | Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores..... | -1.6 | -3.4 | -2.6 | -1.6 | -2.5 | -1.2 |
| 452 | General merchandise stores..... | -0.4 | 2.3 | -0.6 | 3.0 | -1.1 | 3.0 |
| 4521 | Department stores (ex. L.D.)..... | -1.3 | -6.9 | -1.4 | -5.6 | -3.9 | -5.8 |
| 453 | Miscellaneous store retailers | 0.7 | -0.3 | -0.5 | -2.5 | -1.5 | -1.3 |
| 454 | Nonstore retailers | -1.8 | 1.4 | -0.3 | 4.0 | -2.9 | 3.5 |
| 722 | Food services & drinking places | 0.3 | 3.9 | 0.6 | 3.9 | 0.8 | 3.9 |

(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

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 | 0.6 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.4 | 0.0 | 0.2 |
| | Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) .. | 0.6 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| | Retail | 0.6 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.4 | 0.0 | 0.2 |
| 441 | Motor vehicle & parts dealers | 1.9 | 1.2 | 0.6 | 1.3 | -0.4 | 0.8 |
| 4411, 4412 | Auto & other motor veh. dealers . | 2.0 | 1.3 | 0.7 | 1.4 | -0.4 | 0.8 |
| 442 | Furniture & home furn. stores..... | 2.5 | 1.5 | 0.7 | 2.0 | -0.5 | 0.7 |
| 443 | Electronics & appliance stores | 1.4 | 0.7 | 0.5 | 1.2 | 0.0 | 0.7 |
| 444 | Building material & garden eq. &... supplies dealers..... | 2.4 | 1.2 | 0.8 | 1.6 | 0.2 | 0.4 |
| 445 | Food & beverage stores..... | 0.8 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.5 | 0.0 | 0.2 |
| 4451 | Grocery stores | 0.9 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.5 | 0.0 | 0.2 |
| 446 | Health & personal care stores | 1.6 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 1.1 | -0.1 | 0.1 |
| 447 | Gasoline stations | 2.0 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 1.0 | 0.4 | 0.6 |
| 448 | Clothing & clothing accessories stores | 2.0 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 1.0 | -0.2 | 0.8 |
| 451 | Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores..... | 2.3 | 1.5 | 1.1 | 1.7 | 0.0 | 0.5 |
| 452 | General merchandise stores..... | 0.2 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.1 |
| 4521 | Department stores (ex. L.D.)..... | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | -0.1 | 0.2 |
| 453 | Miscellaneous store retailers | 3.4 | 2.6 | 1.5 | 2.9 | 0.0 | 0.6 |
| 454 | Nonstore retailers | 1.6 | 0.9 | 0.6 | 1.3 | 0.2 | 0.6 |
| 722 | Food services & drinking places .. | 1.9 | 0.8 | 0.7 | 1.3 | 0.3 | 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 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>