

COMMERCE

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Washington 25, D. C.

Office of the Secretary

For immediate release
March 10, 1959

G 59-24

ADVANCE REPORT ON RETAIL TRADE, FEBRUARY 1959

Total sales of retail stores in February were \$14.9 billion, the U. S. Department of Commerce announced today. This advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal factors and trading day differences was virtually unchanged from January and about 9 percent above February 1958.

The February sales figures are based on the Advance Report on Retail Trade, a monthly survey of the Bureau of the Census conducted in cooperation with a representative cross-section of about 1,700 retail firms which, in total, operate some 35,000 stores in the United States. The firms which are cooperating in the early reporting of sales are part of a larger group which furnishes figures at a later date. The advance estimates are preliminary and subject to revision, but the revision of the total seldom exceeds 1½ percent.

The preliminary Census figures for February are shown in table 1 on the reverse side. The Office of Business Economics noted that after adjustment for seasonal factors and trading day differences, sales of both the durable and non-durable goods groups were little changed from January to February. Generally small and offsetting month-to-month changes were shown for the major lines of trade. Final estimates for January indicate that seasonally adjusted retail sales were 1 percent below December.

(more)

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES REPORT--PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES FOR FEBRUARY 1959
 Table 1.--SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP

(NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal factors and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (million of dollars)		
	1959		1958
	February	January	February
Retail stores, total ¹	14,943	16,223	13,783
Durable-goods stores, total ¹	4,910	5,121	4,281
Nondurable-goods stores, total ¹	10,033	11,102	9,502
Food group.....	3,847	4,382	3,777
Grocery stores.....	3,433	3,914	3,342
Eating and drinking places.....	1,086	1,158	1,027
General merchandise group.....	1,356	1,442	1,201
Department stores ²	773	843	665
Apparel group.....	722	868	698
Furniture and appliance group.....	718	784	719
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. group..	897	903	749
Automotive group.....	2,911	3,017	2,471
Gasoline service stations.....	1,187	1,282	1,122
Drug and proprietary stores.....	549	581	507

See footnotes below table 2.

Source: Bureau of the Census

Table 2.--SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP

(ADJUSTED for seasonal factors and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Percentage change, Feb. 1959 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change Jan. 1959 from--	
	Jan. 1959	Feb. 1958	1959		1958		Dec. 1958	Jan. 1958
			Feb.	Jan.	Dec.	Jan.		
Retail stores, total ¹	+0.5	+9.0	17,542	17,453	17,605	16,718	-1	+4
Durable-goods stores, total ¹	+0.2	+15.6	5,845	5,836	5,827	5,538	0	+5
Nondurable-goods stores, total ¹	+0.7	+6.0	11,697	11,618	11,778	11,180	-1	+4
Food group.....				4,244	4,242	4,116	0	+3
Eating and drinking places.....				1,263	1,243	1,236	+2	+2
General merchandise group.....				1,823	1,887	1,772	-3	+3
Apparel group.....				1,032	1,101	1,059	-6	-3
Furniture and appliance group.....				880	868	869	+1	+1
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group...				1,208	1,219	1,134	-1	+6
Automotive group.....				3,257	3,256	3,094	0	+5
Gasoline service stations.....				1,367	1,356	1,290	+1	+6
Drug and proprietary stores.....				579	580	539	0	+7

Source: Office of Business Economics

¹ Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

² Based on preliminary estimates supplied by Federal Reserve Board.