

COMMERCE

Office of the Secretary

Frederick H. Mueller, Secretary

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ADVANCE REPORT ON RETAIL SALES, DECEMBER 1960

The Department of Commerce announced today that December 1960 retail store sales totaled \$22.4 billion, bringing sales for the full year 1960 to a record high of \$219.8 billion, about 2 percent above sales for the year 1959. After adjustment for seasonal variations and trading day differences, but not for price changes, total retail sales for December amounted to \$18.2 billion, somewhat more than 1 percent below November and 4 percent above December 1959.

The December 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 2,000 retail firms which, in total, operate some 39,000 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 subject to revision, on the basis of estimates subsequently derived from the full sample, but the revision of the total seldom exceeds $1\frac{1}{2}$ percent.

The preliminary Census figures for December are shown in table 1 of this release. The Office of Business Economics noted that, after adjustment for seasonal variations and trading day differences, durable-goods store sales declined by more than 5 percent from November to December due largely to reduced marketing of new cars by automotive dealers. Department store sales advanced in December reflecting brisk holiday purchases; at other nondurable-goods stores changes in sales were generally small and offsetting. Estimates for November for the full sample indicate that seasonally adjusted retail sales were 1 percent below October.

(more)

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES FOR DECEMBER 1960

Table 1. SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP

(NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal variations or trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)				
	12 months		December ¹	November ²	December
	1960	1959	1960	1960	1959
Retail stores, total ³	219,831	215,413	22,434	18,406	21,454
Durable-goods stores, total ³	71,130	71,662	6,244	5,879	6,025
Nondurable-goods stores, total ³	148,701	143,751	16,190	12,527	15,429
Food group.....	54,102	51,680	5,197	4,443	4,698
Grocery stores.....	48,366	46,043	4,638	3,961	4,158
Eating and drinking places.....	16,059	15,601	1,354	1,307	1,350
General merchandise group.....	23,858	23,391	3,600	2,217	3,552
Department stores.....	13,865	13,609	4,207	1,305	2,056
Apparel group.....	13,465	13,266	1,893	1,158	1,975
Furniture and appliance group.....	10,722	11,042	1,190	946	1,229
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipgr	14,998	15,276	1,170	1,219	1,199
Automotive group.....	39,574	39,439	3,043	3,200	2,723
Gasoline service stations.....	17,563	16,793	1,479	1,451	1,437
Drug and proprietary stores.....	7,538	7,150	823	612	783

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 variations and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Percentage change, Dec. 1960 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, Nov. 1960 from--	
	Nov. 1960	Dec. 1959	1960			1959	Oct. 1960	Nov. 1959
			Dec. ¹	Nov. ²	Oct.	Nov.		
Retail stores, total ³	-1	+4	18,156	18,421	18,540	17,842	-1	+3
Durable-goods stores, total ³ ..	-6	+6	5,630	5,984	6,093	5,682	-2	+5
Nondurable-goods stores, total ³	+1	+3	12,526	12,437	12,447	12,160	0	+2
Food group.....				4,603	4,520	4,390	+2	+5
Eating and drinking places.....				1,348	1,341	1,306	+1	+3
General merchandise group.....				1,958	2,020	1,966	-3	0
Apparel group.....				1,101	1,110	1,119	-1	-2
Furniture and appliance group.....				857	898	935	-5	-8
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group...				1,266	1,289	1,282	-2	-1
Automotive group.....				3,376	3,405	2,961	-1	+14
Gasoline service stations.....				1,460	1,482	1,438	-1	+2
Drug and proprietary stores.....				642	637	607	+1	+6

Source: Office of Business Economics

¹ Advance sample estimates.

² Preliminary estimates of full sample.

³ Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

⁴ Based on preliminary estimates supplied by Federal Reserve Board.

Note: Figures shown above for the 12 months of 1960 include the December advance estimates; therefore, these totals are subject to revision on the basis of the estimates subsequently derived from the full sample.