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MAY 1963

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Total sales of retail stores in May were \$21.3 billion, the U. S. Department of Commerce announced today. After adjustment for seasonal variations and trading day differences, but not for price changes, total retail sales amounted to \$20.4 billion, virtually unchanged from April 1963 and 4 percent above May 1962.

The Office of Business Economics noted that, after adjustment for seasonal variations and trading day differences, durable goods sales were down $1\frac{1}{2}$ percent from April to May attributable entirely to a decline in automotive dealers sales from the high April rate. Nondurable goods stores sales rose 1 percent in May. The general merchandise group was off, while sales of all other major nondurable lines were unchanged or higher. Based on the full sample, seasonally adjusted sales of all retail stores in April 1963 were virtually unchanged from March.

The May sales figures are based on 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 40,000 stores in the United States. The firms which are cooperating in the early reporting of sales are part of a larger sample group which furnishes figures at a later date. The advance estimates are subject to revision by the estimates subsequently derived from the full sample.

The revision of the total seldom exceeds 1.5 percent and for the past year has averaged 0.8 percent. For individual kind-of-business groups, revisions have been greater, ranging on the average from 1.0 percent for the food group to 2.4 percent for the furniture and appliance group.

(more)

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES FOR MAY 1963

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)		
	1963		1962
	May ¹	April ²	May
Retail stores, total ³	21,335	20,550	20,226
Durable-goods stores, total ³	7,212	6,965	6,828
Nondurable-goods stores, total ³	14,123	13,585	13,398
Food group.....	5,129	4,711	4,791
Grocery stores.....	4,642	4,251	4,326
Eating and drinking places.....	1,578	1,465	1,486
General merchandise group.....	2,253	2,312	2,201
Apparel group.....	1,190	1,269	1,183
Furniture and appliance group.....	950	844	876
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. group	1,416	1,362	1,428
Automotive group.....	4,248	4,248	4,026
Gasoline service stations.....	1,663	1,591	1,577
Drug and proprietary stores.....	674	652	669

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, May 1963 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, April 1963 from--	
	April 1963	May 1962	1963			1962	Mar. 1963	April 1962
			May ¹	April ²	March	April		
Retail stores, total ³	+0 ⁰⁵	+4	20,365	20,355	20,365	19,673	0	+3
Durable-goods stores, total ³	-1 ⁵	+6	6,547	6,644	6,625	6,332	0	+5
Nondurable-goods stores, total ³	+0 ¹	+4	13,818	13,711	13,740	13,341	0	+3
Food group.....			4,881	4,807	4,787	4,787	+2	+2
Eating and drinking places.....			1,524	1,513	1,426	1,426	+1	+7
General merchandise group.....			2,340	2,421	2,248	2,248	-3	+4
Apparel group.....			1,172	1,212	1,207	1,207	-3	-3
Furniture and appliance group.....			908	955	888	888	-5	+2
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.....			1,275	1,302	1,273	1,273	-2	0
Automotive group.....			3,888	3,778	3,646	3,646	+3	+7
Gasoline service stations.....			1,625	1,607	1,547	1,547	+1	+5
Drug and proprietary stores.....			675	675	679	675	-1	0

¹ Advance estimates.

² Preliminary estimates of full sample.

³ Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately

Source: Office of Business Economics