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The U.S. Department of Commerce announced today that total sales of retail stores in April were estimated at \$23.5 billion. Statistics prepared by the Department's Bureau of the Census show that this advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal and holiday variations and trading day differences, but not for price changes, was little changed from March 1965 and 7 percent above the April 1964 level.

The Office of Business Economics noted that after adjustment, sales of durable goods declined 1 percent in April, due primarily to the further moderate decline in auto dealers sales from the February high. Sales of nondurable goods stores at \$15.2 billion, seasonally adjusted were unchanged from March. Based on the full sample, seasonally adjusted sales of all retail stores in March 1965 were down 2 percent from the February 1965 level.

The April sales figures are based on a monthly survey of the Bureau of the Census conducted in cooperation with a representative cross-section of about 2,500 retail firms which, in total, operate some 48,000 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 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 1.1 percent for the food group to 2.8 percent for the automotive group.

(more)

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES FOR APRIL 1965

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)		
	1965		1964
	April <sup>1</sup>	March <sup>2</sup>	April
Retail stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	23,483	22,007	21,186
Durable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	8,136	7,769	7,360
Nondurable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	15,347	14,238	13,826
Food group.....	5,386	5,170	4,898
Grocery stores.....	4,889	4,692	4,414
Eating and drinking places.....	1,654	1,592	1,547
General merchandise group.....	2,870	2,412	2,310
Department stores.....	1,680	1,426	1,366
Apparel group.....	1,430	1,073	1,140
Furniture and appliance group.....	997	1,008	1,004
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. group.....	1,485	1,172	1,344
Automotive group.....	5,067	4,997	4,453
Gasoline service stations.....	1,739	1,683	1,617
Drug and proprietary stores.....	712	732	665

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, April 1965 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, March 1965 from--	
	Mar. 1965	Apr. 1964	1965			1964	Feb. 1965	Mar. 1964
			April <sup>1</sup>	March <sup>2</sup>	February	March		
Retail stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	0	+7	22,812	22,898	23,317	21,223	-2	+8
Durable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> ...	-1	+9	7,613	7,727	7,966	6,939	-3	+11
Nondurable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup>	0	+6	15,199	15,171	15,351	14,284	-1	+6
Food group.....				5,313	5,338	5,112	0	+4
Eating and drinking places.....				1,695	1,720	1,584	-1	+7
General merchandise group.....				2,826	2,848	2,489	-1	+14
Apparel group.....				1,261	1,335	1,228	-6	+3
Furniture and appliance group.....				1,102	1,081	1,088	+2	+1
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.....				1,319	1,352	1,277	-2	+3
Automotive group.....				4,628	4,855	3,894	-5	+19
Gasoline service stations.....				1,759	1,798	1,629	-2	+8
Drug and proprietary stores.....				749	745	702	+1	+7

<sup>1</sup> Advance sample estimates.

<sup>2</sup> Preliminary estimates of full sample.

<sup>3</sup> Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.