



The U.S. Department of Commerce announced today that total sales of retail stores in February were estimated at \$20.7 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 unchanged from the January level but 6 percent above February 1965.

The Office of Business Economics noted that, after adjustment, sales by durable goods stores fell 2 percent from January to February, with a decline in auto dealers' sales mainly responsible. Sales by nondurable goods stores rose 1 percent with all major lines reporting about the same or higher than in January.

The February 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 1.0 percent. For individual kind-of-business groups, revisions have been greater, ranging on the average from 0.8 percent for drug and proprietary stores to 3.7 percent for the lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.

(more)

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Annual subscription to Current Retail Trade Reports (Weekly Retail Sales Report, Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report, Monthly Retail Trade Report, and Annual Retail Trade Report sold as a single subscription) \$6.00. Single copies, available only from the Bureau of the Census, 10¢ each.

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES FOR FEBRUARY 1966

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)		
	1966		1965
	February ¹	January ²	February
Retail stores, total ⁴	20,720	21,679	19,608
Durable-goods stores, total ⁴	6,683	6,890	6,608
Nondurable-goods stores, total ⁴	14,037	14,789	13,000
Food group.....	5,328	5,564	4,907
Grocery stores.....	4,851	5,074	4,482
Eating and drinking places.....	1,632	1,684	1,468
General merchandise group.....	2,253	2,376	2,025
Department stores.....	1,463	1,595	1,295
Apparel group.....	915	1,068	900
Furniture and appliance group.....	995	1,035	919
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. group.....	991	988	929
Automotive group.....	4,193	4,336	4,265
Gasoline service stations.....	1,584	1,737	1,559
Drug and proprietary stores.....	755	760	694

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 differences⁵)

Kind-of-business group	Percentage change, Feb. 1966 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, Jan. 1966 from--	
	Jan. 1966	Feb. 1965	1966		1965		Dec. 1965	Jan. 1965
			Feb. ¹	Jan. ²	Dec. ³	Jan.		
Retail stores, total ⁴	0	+6	24,603	24,592	24,793	22,933	-1	+7
Durable-goods stores, total ⁴ ...	-2	+2	8,016	8,181	8,223	7,759	-1	+5
Nondurable-goods stores, total ⁴	+1	+8	16,587	16,411	16,570	15,174	-1	+8
Food group.....				5,792	5,979	5,305	-3	+9
Eating and drinking places.....				1,853	1,855	1,714	0	+8
General merchandise group.....				3,217	3,066	2,844	+5	+13
Apparel group.....				1,304	1,336	1,301	-2	0
Furniture and appliance group.....				1,180	1,192	1,101	-1	+7
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.....				1,407	1,428	1,335	-1	+5
Automotive group.....				4,927	4,956	4,730	-1	+4
Gasoline service stations.....				1,826	1,840	1,757	-1	+4
Drug and proprietary stores.....				788	831	740	-5	+6

¹ Advance sample estimates.

² Advance estimates revised.

³ Preliminary estimates from full sample.

⁴ Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

⁵ Data adjusted for seasonal variations and trading day differences have been derived by a new method.