



The U.S. Department of Commerce announced today that total sales of retail stores in March were estimated at \$24.8 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 about 1 percent above the February 1966 level and 12 percent above March 1965.

The Office of Business Economics noted that, after adjustment, sales by durable goods stores in March were up about 1 percent from February, while sales at nondurable goods stores were unchanged from their record February rate. March sales by the furniture and appliance group and the lumber, building, hardware group were particularly strong. Based on the full sample, seasonally adjusted sales of all retail stores in February 1966 were up almost 2 percent from January.

The March 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 1.1 percent. For individual kind-of-business groups, revisions have been greater, ranging on the average from 1.0 percent for drug and proprietary stores to 3.9 percent for the lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.

(more)

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES FOR MARCH 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
	March <sup>1</sup>	February <sup>2</sup>	March
Retail stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	24,832	21,439	21,915
Durable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	8,506	7,046	7,640
Nondurable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	16,326	14,393	14,275
Food group.....	5,963	5,388	5,212
Grocery stores.....	5,421	4,906	4,764
Eating and drinking places.....	1,916	1,652	1,610
General merchandise group.....	2,875	2,293	2,439
Department stores.....	1,869	1,482	1,583
Apparel group.....	1,275	1,016	1,049
Furniture and appliance group.....	1,185	1,013	1,014
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. group	1,397	1,013	1,124
Automotive group.....	5,270	4,399	4,977
Gasoline service stations.....	1,860	1,679	1,695
Drug and proprietary stores.....	810	759	733

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, Mar. 1966 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, Feb. 1966 from--	
	Feb. 1966	Mar. 1965	1966			1965	Jan. 1966	Feb. 1965
			Mar. <sup>1</sup>	Feb. <sup>2</sup>	Jan.	Feb.		
Retail stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	+1	+12	25,643	25,472	25,023	23,262	+2	+10
Durable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> ...	+1	+13	8,568	8,456	8,324	7,909	+2	+7
Nondurable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup>	0	+12	17,075	17,016	16,699	15,353	+2	+11
Food group.....				5,922	5,783	5,394	+2	+10
Eating and drinking places.....				1,955	1,879	1,737	+4	+13
General merchandise group.....				3,237	3,230	2,859	0	+13
Apparel group.....				1,461	1,417	1,297	+3	+13
Furniture and appliance group.....				1,218	1,208	1,106	+1	+10
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.....				1,448	1,489	1,327	-3	+9
Automotive group.....				5,032	4,884	4,875	+3	+3
Gasoline service stations.....				1,921	1,907	1,784	+1	+8
Drug and proprietary stores.....				814	806	744	+1	

<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.