



The U.S. Department of Commerce announced today that total sales of retail stores in April were estimated at \$25.7 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 a little more than 1 percent below the March 1966 level and about 10 percent above April 1965.

The Office of Business Economics noted that, after adjustment, sales by durable goods stores in April were down about 7 percent from March. A substantial drop in auto sales was mainly responsible for the decline, although sales of most other durable groups also fell. Sales of nondurable goods stores were up 1 percent in April. Based on the full sample, seasonally adjusted sales of all retail stores in March 1966 were up about 1 percent from February.

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 1.0 percent. For individual kind-of-business groups, revisions have been greater, ranging on the average from 0.9 percent for drug and proprietary stores to 4.0 percent for the lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.

(more)

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES FOR APRIL 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
	April ¹	March ²	April
Retail stores, total ³	25,702	24,764	23,525
Durable-goods stores, total ³	8,455	8,575	7,984
Nondurable-goods stores, total ³	17,247	16,189	15,541
Food group.....	6,191	5,825	5,436
Grocery stores.....	5,608	5,311	4,969
Eating and drinking places.....	1,787	1,809	1,713
General merchandise group.....	3,178	2,928	2,842
Department stores.....	2,119	1,926	1,841
Apparel group.....	1,505	1,292	1,383
Furniture and appliance group.....	1,118	1,153	1,015
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. group.....	1,515	1,376	1,384
Automotive group.....	5,131	5,391	5,056
Gasoline service stations.....	1,913	1,817	1,765
Drug and proprietary stores.....	841	798	738

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 1966 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, March 1966 from--	
	Mar. 1966	Apr. 1965	1966			1965	Feb. 1966	Mar. 1965
			Apr. ¹	Mar. ²	Feb.	Mar.		
Retail stores, total ³	-1	+10	25,227	25,597	25,281	22,856	+1	+12
Durable-goods stores, total ³	-7	+8	8,045	8,620	8,399	7,581	+3	+14
Nondurable-goods stores, total ³	+1	+12	17,182	16,977	16,882	15,275	+1	+11
Food group.....				5,935	5,879	5,381	+1	+10
Eating and drinking places.....				1,935	1,915	1,724	+1	+12
General merchandise group.....				3,270	3,225	2,864	+1	+14
Apparel group.....				1,392	1,468	1,245	-5	+12
Furniture and appliance group.....				1,252	1,220	1,113	+3	+12
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.....				1,546	1,444	1,264	+7	+22
Automotive group.....				5,083	4,995	4,608	+2	+10
Gasoline service stations.....				1,897	1,907	1,771	-1	+7
Drug and proprietary stores.....				816	806	753	+1	+8

¹Advance sample estimates.

²Preliminary estimates of full sample.

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