



For release  
January 10, 1967

DECEMBER 1966

CB-67-301

The U.S. Department of Commerce announced today that total sales of retail stores in December were estimated at \$31.8 billion; this advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal and holiday variations and trading day differences but not price changes, was \$25.4 billion. The advance estimate, after adjustment was about 1 percent below November but 2 percent above December sales last year. Adjusted October-through-December sales were virtually unchanged from the average for the prior three months but were 4 percent above the comparable period of 1965. Sales for the full year 1966 amounted to \$303.7 billion, a record annual total and about 7 percent above the 1965 level.

The Office of Business Economics noted that after adjustment, nondurable goods stores fell 2 percent from their record November rate, with the decline attributable to reduced sales in general merchandise and apparel stores. Sales at durable goods stores in December declined about 1 percent. Average monthly sales for durable goods stores during the October-December period were about 1 percent less than the average for the prior 3 months, while the average for nondurable goods stores for the comparable period was unchanged. The year-to-year gain in the three month average was about 1 percent for the durable goods stores, as compared to 5 percent for nondurable goods stores.

Based on the full sample the total U.S. unadjusted sales estimate for November was \$26.3 billion, about 1 percent more than the \$26.0 billion published earlier in the November Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report released on December 9, 1966. The seasonally adjusted sales for November as revised showed about a one-half percent increase over October.

The December sales figures are based on advance reporting of a small subsample of the Census Bureau's panel of retail firms. 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 1.2 percent. For individual kind-of-business groups revisions have been greater, ranging on the average from 1.1 percent for food stores to 4.4 percent for the apparel group.

It should be noted that even for figures derived from the full sample, sales movements between individual pairs of months tend to be relatively irregular. Data for several months are generally required to indicate the underlying trend.

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 DECEMBER 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)					
	12 months			Dec. <sup>1</sup> 1966	Nov. <sup>2</sup> 1966	Dec. 1965
	1966	1965	Percent increase			
Retail stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	303,686	283,950	+7	31,753	26,253	30,601
Durable goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> ....	97,804	93,718	+4	8,865	8,453	8,976
Nondurable goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> ..	205,882	190,232	+8	22,888	17,800	21,625
Food group.....	71,184	66,920	+6	6,748	5,775	6,559
Grocery stores.....	65,174	61,068	+7	6,212	5,300	5,977
Eating and drinking places.....	23,421	21,423	+9	2,019	1,894	1,881
General merchandise group.....	39,762	35,840	+11	6,052	3,968	5,644
Department stores.....	26,037	23,421	+11	3,962	2,581	3,745
Apparel group.....	17,229	15,752	+9	2,513	1,533	2,418
Furniture and appliance group.....	15,006	13,737	+9	1,734	1,397	1,619
Lumber, bldg., hdwe., farm equip. gp...	16,679	16,274	+2	1,362	1,358	1,382
Automotive group.....	57,428	56,266	+2	4,615	4,936	4,835
Gasoline service stations.....	22,996	21,765	+6	1,940	1,938	1,889
Drug and proprietary stores.....	10,210	9,335	+9	1,256	841	1,089

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, Dec. 1966 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, Nov. 1966 from--	
	Nov. 1966	Dec. 1965	1966			1965	Oct. 1966	Nov. 1965
			Dec. <sup>1</sup>	Nov. <sup>2</sup>	Oct.	Nov.		
Retail stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	-1	+2	25,362	25,706	25,550	24,647	+1	+4
Durable goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> ..	-1	-1	8,143	8,185	8,276	8,092	-1	+1
Nondurable goods stores, total <sup>3</sup>	-2	+4	17,219	17,521	17,274	16,555	+1	+6
Food group.....				5,941	5,949	5,757	0	+3
Eating and drinking places.....				1,989	1,974	1,810	+1	+10
General merchandise group.....				3,485	3,354	3,199	+4	+9
Apparel group.....				1,445	1,466	1,384	-1	+4
Furniture and appliance group.....				1,289	1,266	1,218	+2	+6
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group....				1,372	1,356	1,432	+1	-4
Automotive group <sup>4</sup> .....				4,797	4,921	4,776	-3	0
Gasoline service stations.....				1,956	1,926	1,860	+2	+5
Drug and proprietary stores.....				877	859	818	+2	+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.

<sup>4</sup>Extreme care should be taken in interpreting data in this category for October due to the difficulty in adjusting the passenger car dealer category for the model changeover.