



Advance Monthly Retail Sales

For release March 10, 1975 2:30 P.M.

CB-75-58

FEBRUARY 1975

The Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce, announced today that total sales of retail stores in February were estimated at \$39.2 billion. The Bureau, part of the Department's Social and Economic Statistics Administration (SESA), said this advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal and holiday variations and trading day differences but not for price changes was \$46.1 billion, virtually unchanged from January but about 7 percent above February sales last year. Adjusted December-through-February total sales were little changed from the prior 3 months but 7 percent above the comparable period a year ago.

Based on the full sample, the total U. S. adjusted sales estimate for January was about \$0.8 billion above the \$45.1 billion published earlier in the January Advance Monthly Retail Sales report released February 10, 1975. The seasonally adjusted sales for January as revised were about 2 percent above December.

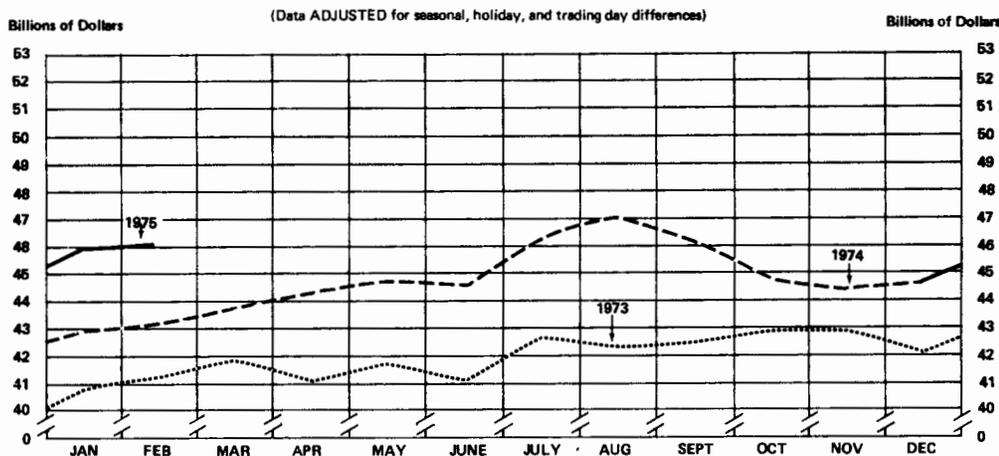
The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting, by a small subsample of the Census Bureau's retail survey panel, of sales figures for the weeks and part-weeks comprising the month. Because retailers' weekly records often differ

from their monthly records (in reflecting such elements as carrying charges, sales taxes, merchandise returns), the sales figures estimated for the advance report can differ from the subsequently issued report based on the monthly records of the full sample of retailers. Additionally sampling variability between sub-sample and later full sample results can be a cause of difference. For most months, such differences have been reduced by modifying the advance estimate, prior to publication, on the basis of the relationship between the advance and full-sample data for previous months.

The differences between the month-to-month change in advance and full-sample estimates for total retail sales seldom exceed 1.0 percent and for the past year has averaged 0.7 percent. For individual kind of business groups, differences have been greater, ranging on the average from 0.5 percent for the Food group to 2.7 percent for the Building materials group.

Even for figures derived from the full sample, sale movements from one month to the next can be relatively irregular. Data for 3 months are generally required to indicate the underlying trend.

MONTHLY SALES OF ALL RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES



Inquiries concerning this report should be addressed to Mr. Irving True, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233. Telephone (301) 763-7660.

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Data on the retail trade, published in the Weekly Retail Sales Report, Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report, the Monthly Retail Trade Report, and the Annual Retail Trade Report are available on a single subscription from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 20402, at \$30.10 per year. Add \$7.55 for each subscription to a foreign address. Single copies of the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Report are available from Subscriber Services Section (Publications), Social and Economic Statistics Administration, Washington, D.C., 20233 at 25 cents each.

Table 1. Sales of Retail Stores in the United States, by Kind-of-Business Group

Part A. NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal variations or trading day differences

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)		
	1975		1974
	February ¹	January ²	February
Total, retail stores ³	39,215	41,256	36,668
Total (excluding automotive group).....	32,315	34,536	30,277
Durable goods stores, total ³	11,924	12,014	11,293
Nondurable goods stores, total ³	27,291	29,242	25,375
Food group.....	9,728	10,531	8,750
Grocery stores.....	9,107	9,854	8,142
Eating and drinking places.....	3,267	3,437	2,854
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	5,380	5,612	5,315
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	4,890	5,120	4,817
Department stores.....	3,178	3,404	3,167
Apparel group.....	1,588	1,800	1,518
Furniture and appliance group.....	1,781	1,936	1,803
Bldg. materials, hardware, farm equipment group.....	2,080	2,131	2,082
Automotive group.....	6,900	6,720	6,391
Gasoline service stations.....	3,019	3,266	2,692
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,333	1,391	1,255

Part B. ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)					Percentage change January 1975 from--	
	1975		1974			December 1974	January 1974
	February ¹	January ²	December	February	January		
Total, retail stores ³	46,105	45,894	44,821	43,134	42,932	+2	+7
Total (excluding automotive group).....	38,291	38,212	37,403	35,898	35,158	+2	+8
Durable goods stores, total ³	14,150	14,026	13,266	13,327	13,525	+6	+4
Nondurable goods stores, total ³	31,955	31,868	31,555	29,807	29,407	+1	+8
Food group.....		10,635	10,330	9,634	9,551	+3	+11
Eating and drinking places.....		3,777	3,721	3,326	3,331	+2	+13
General merchandise group with nonstores.....		7,290	7,371	7,237	7,234	-1	+1
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....		6,719	6,758	6,677	6,666	-1	+1
Apparel group.....		2,153	2,032	2,074	2,053	+6	+5
Furniture and appliance group.....		2,046	2,004	2,032	2,058	+2	0
Bldg. materials, hardware, farm equipment group.....		2,851	2,539	2,797	2,716	+12	+5
Automotive group.....		7,682	7,358	7,236	7,474	+4	+3
Gasoline service stations.....		3,452	3,399	3,059	2,952	+2	+17
Drug and proprietary stores.....		1,449	1,461	1,370	1,323	-1	+10

¹Advance sample estimates. not shown separately.

²Preliminary estimates of full sample.

³Totals include data for kinds of business

Table 2. Percentage Changes for Retail Sales

(ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	February 1975 from--		December 1974 through February 1975 from--	
	January 1975	February 1974	September 1974 through November 1974	December 1973 through February 1974
Total, retail stores.....	0	+7	0	+7
Total (excluding automotive group).....	0	+6	0	+7
Durable goods stores, total.....	+1	+6	+1	+3
Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0	+7	0	+8

Source: Bureau of the Census