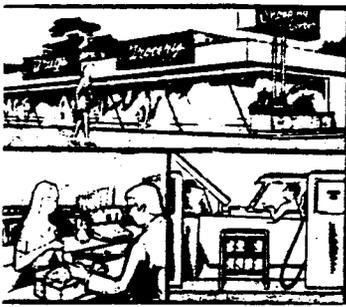


Advance Monthly Retail Sales

May 1985



FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EDT, Thursday, June 13, 1985

CB-85-113

Advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for May, adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$113.7 billion, little changed from the revised level of \$114.6 billion in April but 5.3 percent above the previous year. The revised April sales were 2.4 percent above March and 6.6 above April a year ago. March through May sales were 2.0 percent above the previous 3 months and 6.3 above the same months last year.

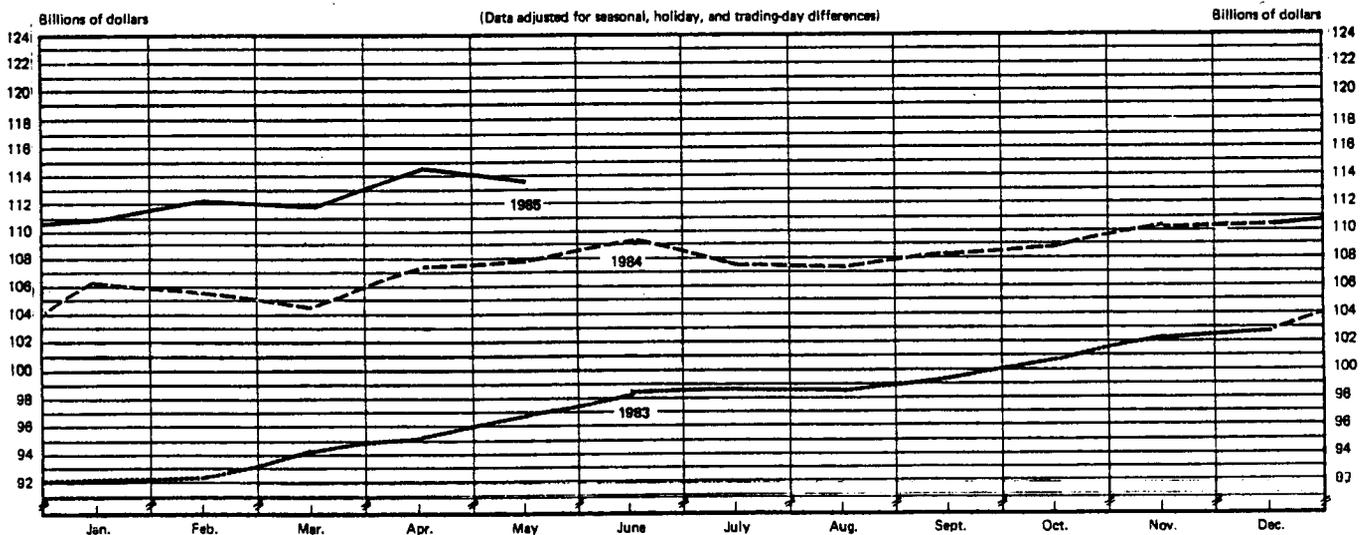
Durable goods sales in May increased 7.7 percent from the May 1984 estimate. Following last month's 6.5 percent gain, automotive sales showed evidence of a decline from April but were 8.6 above a year ago. Building materials sales dropped 6.2 percent from April while furniture sales rose 4.8 percent during the month.

Nondurable goods sales were virtually unchanged from the previous month but were 4.0 percent above the May 1984 level. Compared to a year ago, sales in the general merchandise and apparel groups rose about 5 percent while food stores increased 3.2 percent. Eating and drinking establishments showed evidence of an increase from April and were 6.6 percent above May 1984. Gasoline service stations were virtually unchanged from both the previous month and year ago sales. Compared to May 1984, drug stores rose 8.8 percent.

For a description of the sample design and reliability of the data, see back page.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales report for June is scheduled to be released July 12, 1985, at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES January 1983-May 1985



Inquiries concerning this report should be addressed to Ronald Piencykoski, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233. Telephone (301) 763-5294/7561.



U.S. Department of Commerce
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

The 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, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, at \$37 per year. Add \$9.25 for each subscription to a foreign address. Postage stamps not acceptable; currency submitted at sender's risk. Remittances from foreign countries must be by international money order or by a draft on a U.S. bank. This report is available electronically in CENDATA, the Bureau's on-line information service, through a commercial vendor. For further information, contact Customer Services, DUSD, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233, or call (301) 763-4100 or (301) 763-7561.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, by Kind of Business

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted				Adjusted ⁴					
		1985			1984		1985			1984	
		May ² adv.	Apr. prel.	Mar. final	May	Apr.	May ² adv.	Apr. prel.	Mar. final	May	Apr.
	Retail trade, total.....	119,137	112,346	110,167	111,834	104,629	113,678	114,584	111,854	107,941	107,443
	Total (excl. auto group)..	90,591	84,999	83,833	85,983	80,712	88,374	98,501	87,362	84,648	84,407
	Durable goods, total.....	45,598	43,078	41,180	41,924	38,325	41,638	42,566	40,765	38,667	38,302
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..	6,911	6,232	5,234	6,748	5,743	5,754	6,132	5,862	5,696	5,679
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	4,485	3,865	4,694	4,036	(*)	4,521	4,343	4,118	4,110
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	879	744	910	787	(*)	863	818	782	782
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	28,546	27,347	26,334	25,851	23,917	25,304	26,083	24,492	23,293	23,036
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	26,340	25,230	24,367	23,697	21,895	23,207	23,983	22,417	21,253	20,992
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	22,466	22,125	21,462	19,719	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	2,117	1,967	2,154	2,022	(*)	2,100	2,075	2,040	2,044
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	5,548	5,234	5,429	4,954	4,698	5,840	5,575	5,674	5,139	5,150
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	2,869	2,948	2,938	2,748	(*)	2,940	3,011	2,906	2,908
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	1,996	2,085	1,680	1,612	(*)	2,225	2,242	1,856	1,864
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	623	637	592	550	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	73,539	69,268	68,987	69,910	66,304	72,040	72,018	71,089	69,274	69,141
53	General merchandise group stores..	13,456	12,374	11,876	12,686	11,499	13,415	13,488	13,303	12,705	12,547
531	Department stores.....	11,310	10,414	10,005	10,700	9,681	11,243	11,332	11,117	10,689	10,557
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	734	694	740	723	(*)	761	763	745	740
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	1,226	1,177	1,246	1,095	(*)	1,395	1,423	1,271	1,250
54	Food stores.....	24,123	22,556	23,090	22,963	21,566	23,109	23,344	22,980	22,391	22,443
541	Grocery stores.....	22,573	21,077	21,643	21,475	20,076	21,601	21,887	21,514	20,951	20,978
554	Gasoline service stations.....	8,938	8,424	8,103	8,800	8,311	8,720	8,693	8,441	8,619	8,612
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	5,813	5,755	5,548	5,459	5,447	5,842	5,924	5,963	5,551	5,555
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	670	588	701	668	(*)	729	711	712	717
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	2,402	2,361	2,309	2,275	(*)	2,459	2,465	2,298	2,314
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	1,476	1,451	1,378	1,335	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	984	924	863	927	(*)	936	934	856	857
58	Eating and drinking places.....	11,360	10,637	10,749	10,579	10,149	10,840	10,669	10,771	10,172	10,180
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	3,995	3,845	3,790	3,641	3,549	3,952	3,927	3,863	3,634	3,640
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,496	1,487	1,574	1,457	(*)	1,621	1,601	1,603	1,601
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	383	348	393	380	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAP ³	(*)	26,513	25,934	26,308	24,506	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)

*Advance estimates are not available from the subsample panel for these kinds of business.

NA Not available.

¹Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-85-04).

²Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.

³GAP represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise.

Note: Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, by Kind of Business

(Adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences)

SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change					
		May 1985 advance from--		Apr. 1985 preliminary from--		Mar. 1985 through May 1985	
		Apr. 1985 prelim.	May 1984 final	Mar. 1985 final	Apr. 1984 final	Dec. 1984 through Feb. 1985	Mar. 1984 through May 1984
	Retail trade, total.....	-0.8	+5.3	+2.4	+6.6	+2.0	+6.3
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	-0.1	+4.4	+1.3	+4.9	+1.6	+4.9
	Durable goods, total.....	-2.2	+7.7	+4.4	+11.1	+2.4	+10.0
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	-6.2	+1.0	+4.6	+8.0	+2.2	+5.0
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-3.0	+8.6	+6.5	+13.2	+3.3	+11.4
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	-3.2	+9.2	+7.0	+14.2	+3.3	+12.2
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+4.8	+13.6	-1.7	+8.3	+1.2	+11.6
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.0	+4.0	+1.3	+4.2	+1.7	+4.3
53	General merchandise group stores.....	-0.5	+5.6	+1.4	+7.5	+1.8	+7.7
531	Department stores.....	-0.8	+5.2	+1.9	+7.3	+1.6	+7.4
54	Food stores.....	-1.0	+3.2	+1.6	+4.0	+1.0	+3.7
541	Grocery stores.....	-1.3	+3.1	+1.7	+4.3	+0.6	+3.8
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+0.3	+1.2	+3.0	+0.9	+4.4	+0.1
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-1.4	+5.2	-0.7	+6.6	+4.0	+7.5
58	Eating and drinking places.....	+1.6	+6.6	-0.9	+4.8	+1.7	+6.1
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+0.6	+8.8	+1.7	+7.9	+1.3	+8.5

Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales of Group II Companies, by Kind of Business

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted ¹		
		Apr. 1985 prelim.	Mar. 1985 final	Apr. 1984	Apr. 1985 prelim.	Mar. 1985 final	Apr. 1984
	Retail trade, total.....	37,515	37,240	35,195	39,449	38,824	37,102
53	General merchandise group stores.....	11,445	11,003	10,617	12,461	12,331	11,588
531	Department stores.....	9,971	9,572	9,257	10,850	10,636	10,095
533	Variety stores.....	632	592	607	656	649	626
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	842	839	753	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	12,578	13,010	11,833	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	12,408	12,843	11,662	12,912	12,616	12,250
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	2,249	2,157	2,081	2,323	2,264	2,062
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	982	959	919	1,007	984	911
566	Shoe stores.....	481	443	470	445	427	410
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	2,094	2,066	1,921	2,145	2,148	1,972

¹Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-85-04).

Note: The Group II component of the sample consists of companies which had 11 or more retail establishments according to the most recent update of multi-establishment files and which were selected with certainty (i.e., their sales size exceeded specified dollar volume cutoffs which vary by kind of business).

Official Business
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Sample Design and Reliability of Data

The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting of sales by a small subsample of the Bureau's retail survey panel. Because of the early reporting, the advance estimates can differ from the subsequent estimates which are based on monthly reports obtained from the full sample of retail stores. In addition, sampling variability between the subsample used for the advance estimates and the full sample can cause a difference.

Percentage differences between advance and full sample preliminary estimates of month-to-month percentage change in seasonally adjusted total retail store sales have ranged from approximately -1.1 percent to +1.6 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.5 percent for the past 12 months. For individual kind-of-business groups, these differences tend to be higher. Sampling variability of and revisions to advance-to-preliminary estimates are shown in table 4 below.

Preliminary estimates for April 1985 and final estimates for March 1985 based on the full sample will be published late this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for April (BR-85-04). The complete report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and will present a description of revisions, and the techniques used in developing the estimates. The complete report will include additional measures of sampling variability.

Table 4. Sampling Variability of and Revision to Advance-to-Preliminary Estimate

SIC code	Kind of business	Estimated coefficient of variation in percent of the advance-to-preliminary ratio			Preliminary-to-final percent change minus the advance-to-preliminary percent change			
		Range ¹		Median	Range ²		Mean	Average of absolute difference
		From	To		From	To		
	Retail trade, total.....	0.6	0.8	0.7	-1.1	+1.6	+0.1	0.5
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0.6	0.9	0.7	-0.9	+1.0	0.0	0.4
	Durable goods stores, total.....	1.0	1.7	1.4	-2.0	+2.7	0.0	1.0
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	1.3	3.6	2.0	-2.4	+5.0	+0.6	1.6
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.5	2.4	1.8	-2.0	+2.4	+0.1	1.1
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	1.2	2.2	1.4	-2.4	+2.9	+0.2	1.3
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	1.3	3.3	2.5	-4.6	+3.4	-0.4	1.6
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0.4	0.7	0.5	-0.6	+0.7	0.0	0.3
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.4	0.6	0.5	-1.3	+1.6	+0.2	0.6
531	Department stores.....	0.1	0.5	0.2	-1.1	+1.9	+0.3	0.7
54	Food stores.....	0.8	1.1	1.0	-1.0	+0.6	+0.1	0.4
541	Grocery stores.....	0.2	0.5	0.4	-1.2	+0.6	0.0	0.3
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.6	1.3	0.9	-3.8	+3.0	-0.4	1.7
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.1	3.7	2.1	-1.7	+2.2	0.0	1.1
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.5	1.2	0.9	-2.5	+3.2	+0.1	1.4
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	0.5	1.4	0.6	-2.1	+2.2	-0.1	0.9

¹The ranges of sampling variability shown are based on sales estimates unadjusted for seasonal variation, holiday, and trading-day differences for the data months of January-December 1983.

²The ranges shown for the retail trade total are based on sales estimates adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences for the 12-month period, May 1984-April 1985. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period December 1983-November 1984.

Note: See appendix B, Reliability of Data, in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for a discussion on the measures of sampling variability.

