

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EDT, Friday November 14, 1997

**ADVANCE MONTHLY RETAIL SALES
OCTOBER 1997**

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for October adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$213.7 billion, a decrease of 0.2 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from the previous month and 3.4 percent ($\pm 0.9\%$) above October 1996. Total sales for the August through October period were 4.5 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) above the same period a year ago. The August to September 1997 percent change was revised from +0.3 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) to -0.1 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$).

Durable goods decreased 0.9 percent ($\pm 1.4\%$) from September but were 2.8 percent above last year. Building materials and furniture sales were up 4.6 percent and 5.9 percent, respectively, from October 1996.

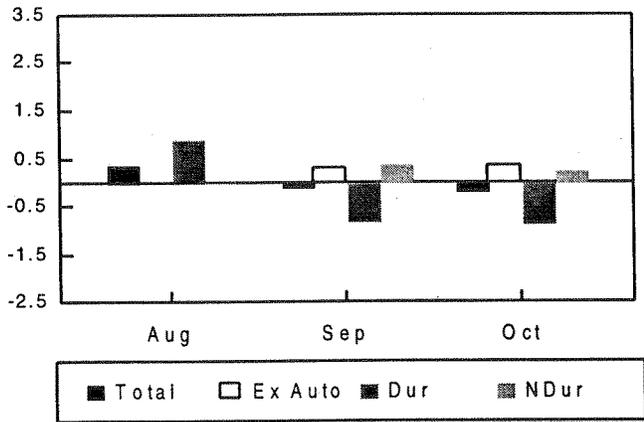
Nondurable goods increased 0.2 percent ($\pm 0.6\%$) from last month and were 3.7 percent above the previous year. General merchandise sales were up 5.5 percent from October 1996.

The advance estimates are based on a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail sales sample. Estimates from the advance and the subsequent full survey can differ because of the earlier reporting in the advance and because of sampling variability present in both surveys.

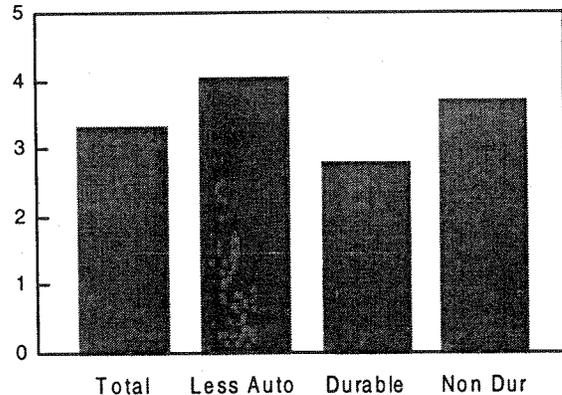
Percent Change in Retail Sales

(Data adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)

From Previous Month



From Previous Year



The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for November is scheduled to be released December 11, 1997 at 8:30 a.m.

Address inquiries concerning this report to Ronald Piencykoski, Services Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233. Telephone: (301) 457-2713 or (301) 457-2666.

This report is available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's online Economic Bulletin Board. For information call (202) 482-1986. The data are also available on the internet - <http://www.census.gov/svsd/www/advtable.html>.

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

(In Millions of Dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted ¹				
		1997			1996		1997			1996	
		Oct. ² (a)	Sept. (p)	Aug. (r)	Oct.	Sept.	Oct. ² (a)	Sept. (p)	Aug. (r)	Oct. (r)	Sept. (r)
	Retail trade, total	215,523	207,023	220,153	207,531	195,749	213,694	214,136	214,372	206,715	204,949
	Total (excl. auto group)...	163,592	155,100	165,064	156,473	147,371	162,698	162,122	161,619	156,309	155,104
	Durable goods, total.....	87,276	86,738	91,015	84,794	80,509	86,556	87,306	88,014	84,168	83,160
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers....	12,734	12,709	12,530	12,316	11,634	11,912	11,928	11,912	11,393	11,340
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores....	(*)	9,874	9,701	9,478	8,898	(*)	9,177	9,143	8,601	8,605
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,318	1,364	1,306	1,188	(*)	1,350	1,345	1,277	1,247
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	51,931	51,923	55,089	51,058	48,378	50,996	52,014	52,753	50,406	49,845
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	48,807	48,905	51,847	47,786	45,399	48,038	49,052	49,709	47,313	46,851
551	Motor vehicle (franchised).....	(*)	42,845	45,175	42,423	40,270	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
551	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	3,018	3,242	3,272	2,979	(*)	2,962	3,044	3,093	2,994
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	11,781	11,505	12,000	11,211	10,721	11,876	11,879	11,976	11,212	11,267
571	Furniture and home furnishings....	(*)	6,006	6,261	5,822	5,443	(*)	6,030	6,096	5,631	5,571
572,31,4	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores.....	(*)	4,671	4,896	4,604	4,474	(*)	4,959	5,011	4,712	4,832
572	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	815	863	797	760	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	128,247	120,285	129,138	122,737	115,240	127,138	126,830	126,358	122,547	121,789
53	General merchandise group stores...	27,742	24,678	27,900	25,978	23,819	28,009	27,716	27,841	26,545	26,403
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts).....	21,732	19,369	22,062	20,183	18,611	22,041	21,812	21,930	20,764	20,656
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) ³	(*)	19,675	22,425	20,539	18,938	(*)	22,126	22,298	21,080	21,010
531	Variety stores.....	(*)	719	790	710	616	(*)	815	812	711	684
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	4,590	5,048	5,085	4,592	(*)	5,089	5,099	5,070	5,063
54	Food stores.....	36,596	34,898	37,114	35,498	34,096	36,412	36,315	36,062	35,673	35,594
541	Grocery stores.....	34,412	32,836	34,928	33,584	32,314	34,241	34,133	33,878	33,753	33,696
554	Gasoline service stations.....	13,443	13,205	13,927	13,264	12,724	13,257	13,205	13,016	13,094	12,853
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	10,010	9,286	10,728	9,569	9,052	9,901	9,815	10,004	9,536	9,630
561	Men's and boy's clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	879	933	843	791	(*)	983	994	853	886
562,3	Women's clothing, specialty stores.....	(*)	2,610	2,711	2,805	2,638	(*)	2,730	2,736	2,777	2,789
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	3,483	4,150	3,683	3,352	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,546	2,003	1,494	1,511	(*)	1,594	1,646	1,583	1,571
58	Eating and drinking places.....	20,992	20,302	22,035	20,083	19,278	20,641	20,695	20,403	19,884	19,651
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	8,375	7,834	7,959	7,715	7,114	8,367	8,308	8,205	7,777	7,633
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,912	2,087	1,837	1,757	(*)	2,011	2,011	1,888	1,881
5991	Total mail order.....	(*)	4,342	3,835	4,491	3,731	(*)	4,499	4,512	4,006	3,990
59,50,57, 594	GAF(4).....	(*)	52,677	58,419	53,897	50,464	(*)	57,428	57,763	55,261	55,083

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

NA Not available. (a) Advance estimates. (p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

(1) Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-11 program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publication. Factors and explanatory material are contained in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-97-09.

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

(3) Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

(4) GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise (general merchandise, apparel, furniture, and miscellaneous shopping goods stores).

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, but not for price changes)

SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change ¹					
		Oct. 1997 Advance from --		Sept. 1997 Preliminary from --		Aug. 1997 through Oct. 1997 from --	
		Sept. 1997 (p)	Oct. 1996 (r)	Aug. 1997 (r)	Sept. 1996 (r)	May 1997 through July 1997	Aug. 1996 through Oct. 1996
	Retail trade, total	-0.2	3.4	-0.1	4.5	1.3	4.5
	Total (excl. automotive group)	0.4	4.1	0.3	4.5	1.1	4.5
	Durable goods, total	-0.9	2.8	-0.8	5.0	1.6	4.9
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers	-0.1	4.6	0.1	5.2	-1.0	5.0
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-2.0	1.2	-1.4	4.4	2.1	4.4
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	-2.1	1.5	-1.3	4.7	2.2	4.8
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	0.0	5.9	-0.8	5.4	1.2	6.2
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.2	3.7	0.4	4.1	1.1	4.2
53	General merchandise group stores.....	1.1	5.5	-0.4	5.0	1.1	5.6
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	1.0	6.2	-0.5	5.6	1.1	6.4
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ²	(NA)	(NA)	-0.8	5.3	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	0.3	2.1	0.7	2.0	1.3	2.2
541	Grocery stores.....	0.3	1.4	0.8	1.3	1.1	1.5
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.4	1.2	1.5	2.7	2.3	2.0
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	0.9	3.8	-1.9	1.9	1.3	3.8
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.3	3.8	1.4	5.3	1.4	4.4
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	0.7	7.6	1.3	8.8	1.3	8.0

NA Not available. (p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

(1) Percent change rounded to nearest tenth.

(2) Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

Reliability of Data

The Advance estimates are based on a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail sales sample. Estimates from the Advance and the subsequent full survey can differ because of the earlier reporting in the Advance and because of sampling variability present in each survey. The margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is a 90% confidence interval. If, for example, the trend estimate is +1.2% and the standard error is 0.9%, then the margin of sampling error is $\pm 1.65 \times 0.9\%$ or $\pm 1.5\%$, and the 90% confidence interval is -0.3% to +2.7%. If the interval contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. For monthly level, the coefficient of variation (CV) is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated value $\pm 1.65 \times CV \times$ (the estimated value).

Estimates of sampling variability are given in Table 3. They are based on two components. The first component is a measure of the average difference

between the Advance and the Preliminary estimates. The second reflects the variability of the Preliminary estimate. Additionally, both the Advance and the full survey are subject to nonsampling errors. Such errors can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, and response errors, among others. Precautionary steps are taken to minimize these errors, but their magnitude is not directly measured.

Preliminary estimates for the current month and final estimates for the previous month based on the full sample are published next month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report. This report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and additional measures of sampling variability. It will also present a description of revisions and the techniques used in developing the estimates, and an explanation of confidence intervals and sampling variability (Appendix B, Reliability of Data).

Table 3. Measures of Variability of and Revision to Advance Estimates for Level and Trend

SIC code	Kind of Business	Level of sales: Estimated CV ¹ for Current Mo. (x 100)	Trend (percent change): Estimated standard error ¹ for			Revision for month- to-month change ²	
			Current Mo. to Previous Mo.	Current Qtr. to Previous Qtr.	Current Mo. to Current Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	Retail trade, total.....	1.0	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.2
	Total (excl. auto)	1.0	0.6	0.3	0.7	-0.1	0.4
	Durable goods, total	1.4	0.9	0.6	1.1	0.1	0.4
52	Building materials, group stores	3.5	1.9	1.1	2.7	0.1	0.7
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.6	1.2	0.8	1.5	0.4	0.4
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	1.8	1.3	0.9	1.6	0.4	0.4
57	Furniture, home furn, and equipment stores	2.0	1.4	0.7	1.8	0.1	1.0
	Nondurable goods, total	1.1	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.3
53	General merch. group, total.....	0.6	0.6	0.2	0.6	0.0	0.2
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.) ...	0.4	0.5	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.2
54	Food stores.....	1.2	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.1
541	Grocery stores	1.2	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.1
554	Gasoline service stations	2.2	1.2	1.4	1.4	-0.2	0.8
56	Apparel and accessory stores	1.9	1.5	0.6	1.6	0.1	0.8
58	Eating and drinking places	5.1	1.0	0.9	2.2	-0.1	0.4
591	Drug and proprietary stores	1.7	0.8	0.4	1.2	0.2	0.5



- (1) The coefficients of variation (CVs) for level of sales and the standard errors for trends are medians based on estimates for the preceding 12 months.
- (2) These columns measure the difference between the Advance/Preliminary ratio and the Preliminary/Final ratio estimates -- i.e., the difference between estimates of trend for the same pair of data months. The revisions for Retail trade total are based on the latest 12 months of data while all other kinds of business are based on the preceding 12 months.