Advance Monthly Retail Sales

September 1989

U.S. Department of Commerce
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

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The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for September adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences but not for price changes were $145.2 billion, 7.0 percent above September 1988. Total sales in the third quarter were 6.4 percent above the same quarter a year ago.

Durable goods were 8.9 percent above September 1988, with furniture stores and the automotive group up 9.1 and 10.1 percent, respectively.

Nondurable goods were up 5.8 percent from the previous year. General merchandise stores increased 1.7 percent from August and were 6.8 percent above September 1988. Food stores were up 6.7 percent from the previous year while gasoline service stations were up 6.8 percent in the same period.

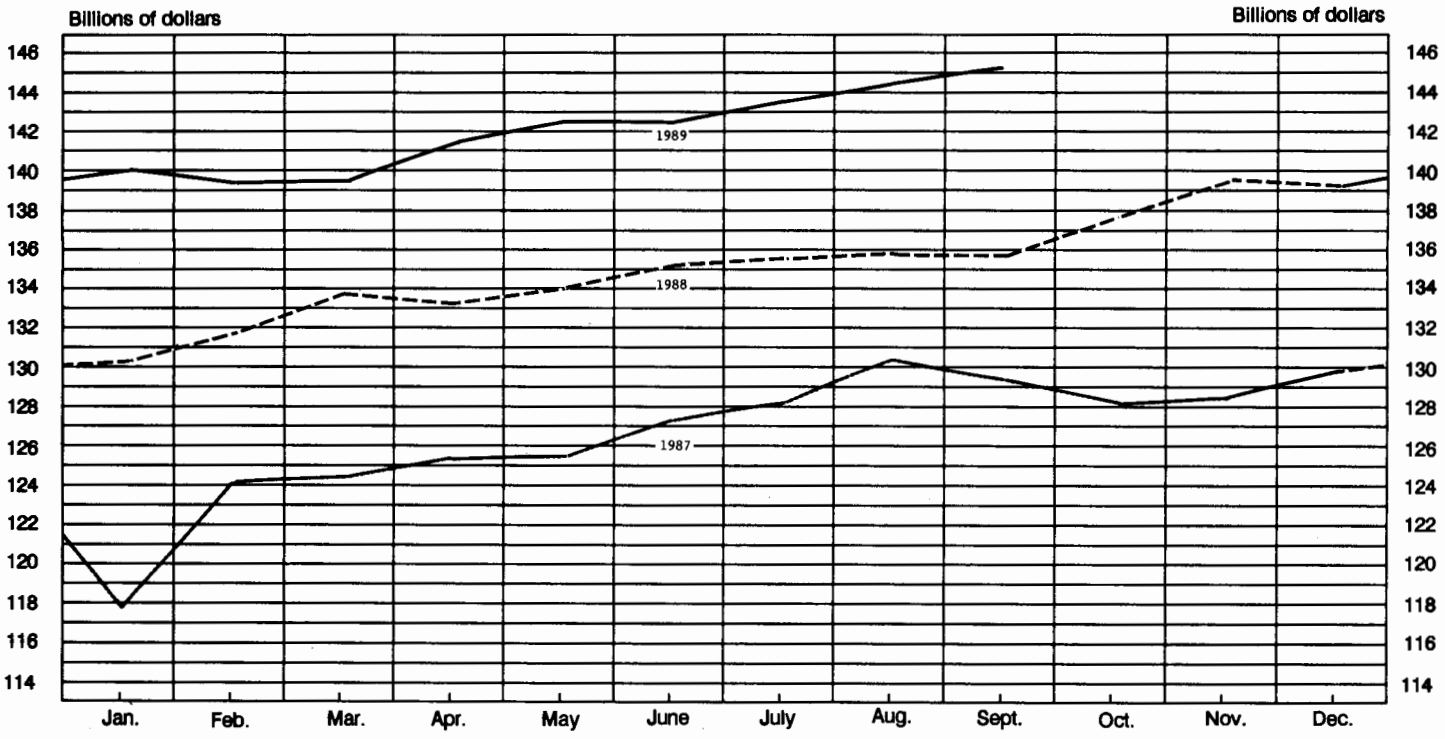
Note: Since this survey is based on a sample, the estimates will differ from the universe values due to both sampling and nonsampling error. For the year-to-year and quarter-to-quarter percent changes shown at the total, durable, and nondurable levels, the margins of sampling error range from 1.6 to 4.3 percentage points above and below the estimate. See page 4 for a more complete description.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for October is scheduled to be released November 14, 1989 at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

January 1987-September 1989

(Data adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences)



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This report is available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's online Economic Bulletin Board (N-8-1) (202-377-3870) and through the Census Bureau's online information service-CENDATA. CENDATA is available from Dialog Information Services, INC. (1-800-334-2464) and CompuServe (1-800-848-8199). The CENDATA staff at the Bureau of the Census (301-763-2074) can provide content information and general guidance.

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

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted[1]				
		1989			1988		1989			1988	
		Sep.[2] adv.	Aug. prel.	July final	Sep.	Aug.	Sep.[2] adv.	Aug. prel.	July final	Sep.[r]	Aug.[r]
	Retail trade, total.....	141,519	150,370	142,630	133,000	140,201	145,212	144,511	143,555	135,715	135,800
	Total (excl. auto group)..	109,309	114,645	109,756	103,252	107,238	112,389	111,952	111,704	105,916	105,692
	Durable goods, total.....	54,875	59,562	55,307	51,076	55,153	56,042	55,728	54,653	51,441	51,679
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..	7,839	8,548	8,187	7,811	8,150	7,596	7,736	7,605	7,419	7,362
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	6,157	5,873	5,707	5,957	(*)	5,382	5,325	5,274	5,221
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,244	1,268	1,187	1,186	(*)	1,215	1,208	1,214	1,168
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	32,210	35,725	32,874	29,748	32,963	32,823	32,559	31,851	29,799	30,108
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	29,596	32,884	30,146	27,161	30,188	30,293	30,004	29,268	27,297	27,594
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	29,353	26,724	24,300	27,001	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	2,841	2,728	2,587	2,775	(*)	2,555	2,583	2,502	2,514
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	8,315	8,485	7,962	7,543	7,837	8,476	8,368	8,238	7,772	7,714
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	4,086	3,808	3,780	3,910	(*)	3,948	3,894	3,810	3,763
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	3,808	3,634	3,220	3,372	(*)	3,827	3,762	3,411	3,389
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	822	841	804	920	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	86,644	90,808	87,323	81,924	85,048	89,170	88,783	88,902	84,274	84,121
53	General merchandise group stores..	14,864	15,914	14,166	13,972	14,791	16,273	16,000	16,090	15,243	15,186
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)	12,574	13,462	11,931	11,816	12,451	13,653	13,462	13,497	12,802	12,705
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts)[3]	(*)	13,905	12,305	12,263	12,883	(*)	13,905	13,920	13,286	13,146
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	659	606	589	659	(*)	676	672	674	683
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	1,793	1,629	1,567	1,681	(*)	1,862	1,921	1,767	1,798
54	Food stores.....	29,829	30,562	30,794	27,875	28,482	29,883	29,787	29,775	27,999	28,101
541	Grocery stores.....	27,996	28,684	28,952	26,128	26,668	28,024	27,957	27,946	26,233	26,326
554	Gasoline service stations.....	9,143	9,747	9,887	8,594	9,222	9,098	9,075	9,327	8,517	8,619
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	7,262	7,775	6,557	6,735	7,031	7,403	7,443	7,385	6,968	6,837
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	679	649	696	684	(*)	758	766	784	768
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	2,771	2,501	2,606	2,592	(*)	2,791	2,785	2,678	2,634
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	2,075	1,669	1,675	1,843	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,522	1,175	1,244	1,342	(*)	1,350	1,351	1,226	1,221
58	Eating and drinking places.....	13,751	14,834	14,627	13,435	14,298	13,737	13,710	13,734	13,408	13,288
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	5,028	5,200	4,956	4,707	4,831	5,332	5,258	5,179	4,960	4,910
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,686	1,725	1,512	1,582	(*)	1,658	1,655	1,564	1,576
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	289	254	264	296	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57 594	GAF[4].....	(*)	37,296	33,252	32,698	34,414	(*)	37,146	36,944	34,914	34,706

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

NA Not available. [r]Revised

[1]Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. 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-89-08.

[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.

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					
		Sep. 1989 advance from--		Aug. 1989 preliminary from--		July 1989 through Sep. 1989	
		Aug. 1989 prelim.	Sep. 1988 final	July 1989 final	Aug. 1988 final	Apr. 1989 through June 1989	July 1988 through Sep. 1988
	Retail trade, total	+0.5	+7.0	+0.7	+6.4	+1.6	+6.4
	Total (excl. automotive group)	+0.4	+6.1	+0.2	+5.9	+1.0	+6.2
	Durable goods, total	+0.6	+8.9	+2.0	+7.8	+2.7	+7.0
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers	-1.8	+2.4	+1.7	+5.1	+1.1	+3.9
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers	+0.8	+10.1	+2.2	+8.1	+3.7	+7.1
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers	+1.0	+11.0	+2.5	+8.7	+4.1	+7.6
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores	+1.3	+9.1	+1.6	+8.5	-0.1	+8.2
	Nondurable goods, total	+0.4	+5.8	-0.1	+5.5	+0.9	+6.0
53	General merchandise group stores	+1.7	+6.8	-0.6	+5.4	+1.5	+6.1
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.)	+1.4	+6.6	-0.3	+6.0	+1.3	+6.4
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.)[2]	(NA)	(NA)	-0.1	+5.8	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores	+0.3	+6.7	0.0	+6.0	+1.1	+6.8
541	Grocery stores	+0.2	+6.8	0.0	+6.2	+1.1	+7.0
554	Gasoline service stations	+0.3	+6.8	-2.7	+5.3	-1.8	+7.6
56	Apparel and accessory stores	-0.5	+6.2	+0.8	+8.9	+1.6	+7.8
58	Eating and drinking places	+0.2	+2.5	-0.2	+3.2	+0.7	+3.4
591	Drug and proprietary stores	+1.4	+7.5	+1.5	+7.1	+3.2	+7.0

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]		
		Aug. 1989 prelim.	July 1989 final	Aug. 1988	Aug. 1989 prelim.	July 1989 final	Aug.[r] 1988
	Retail trade, total	53,982	50,966	49,716	53,355	53,286	49,906
53	General merchandise group stores	14,791	13,066	13,741	14,851	14,925	14,104
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.)	13,042	11,545	12,073	13,003	13,030	12,294
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.)[2]	13,472	11,906	12,485	13,445	13,453	12,727
533	Variety stores	520	471	536	531	535	554
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores	1,229	1,050	1,132	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores	16,756	16,941	15,745	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores	16,523	16,712	15,520	16,295	16,352	15,567
56	Apparel and accessory stores	4,364	3,496	3,814	4,077	4,017	3,630
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers	1,573	1,403	1,391	1,557	1,552	1,404
566	Shoe stores	975	735	856	850	852	766
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores	3,093	2,955	2,798	3,169	3,127	2,882

NA Not available. [r]Revised

[1]Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. 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-89-08.

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

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).

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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 -0.4 percent to +0.7 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.3 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 August 1989 and final estimates for July 1989 based on the full sample will be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for August (BR-89-08). 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 margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, indicates a range about the estimate which corresponds to a 90 percent confidence interval. If, for example, the estimate is up .8 percent and the margin of sampling error is 1.2 percentage points above or below the estimate, then the indicated range is -.4 percent to +2.0 percent. If the range contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. The Monthly Retail Trade Report includes explanations of confidence intervals and sampling variability along with 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: Range[1] From	Range[1] To	Median	Ratio to same month a year ago: Median	Dollar volume sales est.: Median	Ratio of current quarter to prev. quarter: Median	Preliminary-to-final percent change minus the Advance-to-preliminary percent change: Range[2] From	Range[2] To	Mean	Aver. of absolute diff.
	Retail trade, total.....	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.9	0.8	1.0	-0.4	+0.7	0.0	0.3
	Total (excl. auto).	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.9	-1.0	+1.8	0.0	0.4
	Durable goods, total..	1.4	1.7	1.6	2.3	1.7	2.2	-1.6	+1.8	+0.3	1.0
52	Building materials, group stores.....	0.6	3.6	1.6	3.9	3.3	3.1	-5.2	+1.5	-0.9	1.6
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.7	2.2	1.9	3.1	2.3	3.0	-2.1	+2.7	+0.4	1.2
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	1.2	2.2	1.5	3.7	2.4	3.2	-2.5	+2.8	+0.3	1.2
57	Furniture, home furn, and equipment stores.....	1.6	2.3	1.9	3.7	3.3	2.7	-3.3	+4.4	+0.5	1.5
	Nondur. stores, total...	0.5	0.7	0.6	1.0	0.7	0.9	-0.8	+0.7	0.0	0.4
53	General merch. group, total.	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.5	-2.6	+1.8	-0.2	0.8
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.).....	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	-2.1	+2.0	-0.2	0.8
54	Food stores.....	0.8	1.4	1.0	1.6	1.3	1.6	-0.9	+0.8	+0.1	0.3
541	Grocery stores.....	0.3	1.1	0.5	1.8	1.4	1.6	-0.8	+0.9	+0.1	0.3
554	Gasoline service stations...	0.7	1.2	0.8	3.0	2.2	2.8	-1.4	+2.3	-0.1	1.0
56	Apparel and acc. stores.....	1.2	3.4	1.5	2.4	1.8	1.8	-2.8	+2.2	-0.5	1.3
58	Eating and drinking	0.8	1.3	1.1	2.7	2.3	2.6	-1.7	+1.8	+0.3	0.9
591	Drug and proprietary	0.4	0.7	0.5	2.3	1.7	2.1	-1.6	+1.3	-0.1	0.7

[1]The ranges of sampling variability shown are based on sales estimates unadjusted for seasonal variation, holiday, and trading-day differences for the data months of March - July 1988.
[2]The 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, September 1988 - August 1989. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period May 1987-April 1988.

Note: Coefficients of variation for the ratio of current quarter to current quarter a-year-ago estimates are approximately the same as those for the ratio of current quarter to previous quarter. See appendix B, Reliability of Data, in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for a discussion on the measures of sampling variability.