CURRENT BUSINESS REPORTS

Advance Monthly Retail Sales

U.S. Department of Commerce
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

October 1989

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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 $144.5 billion, a decrease of 1.0 percent (± 1.0%) from the previous month, but 4.6 percent above October 1988. Total sales in the August through October period were 6.3 percent above the same period a year ago.

Durable goods decreased 2.7 percent (± 2.6%) from the previous month. Automotive sales decreased 5.1 percent from last month.

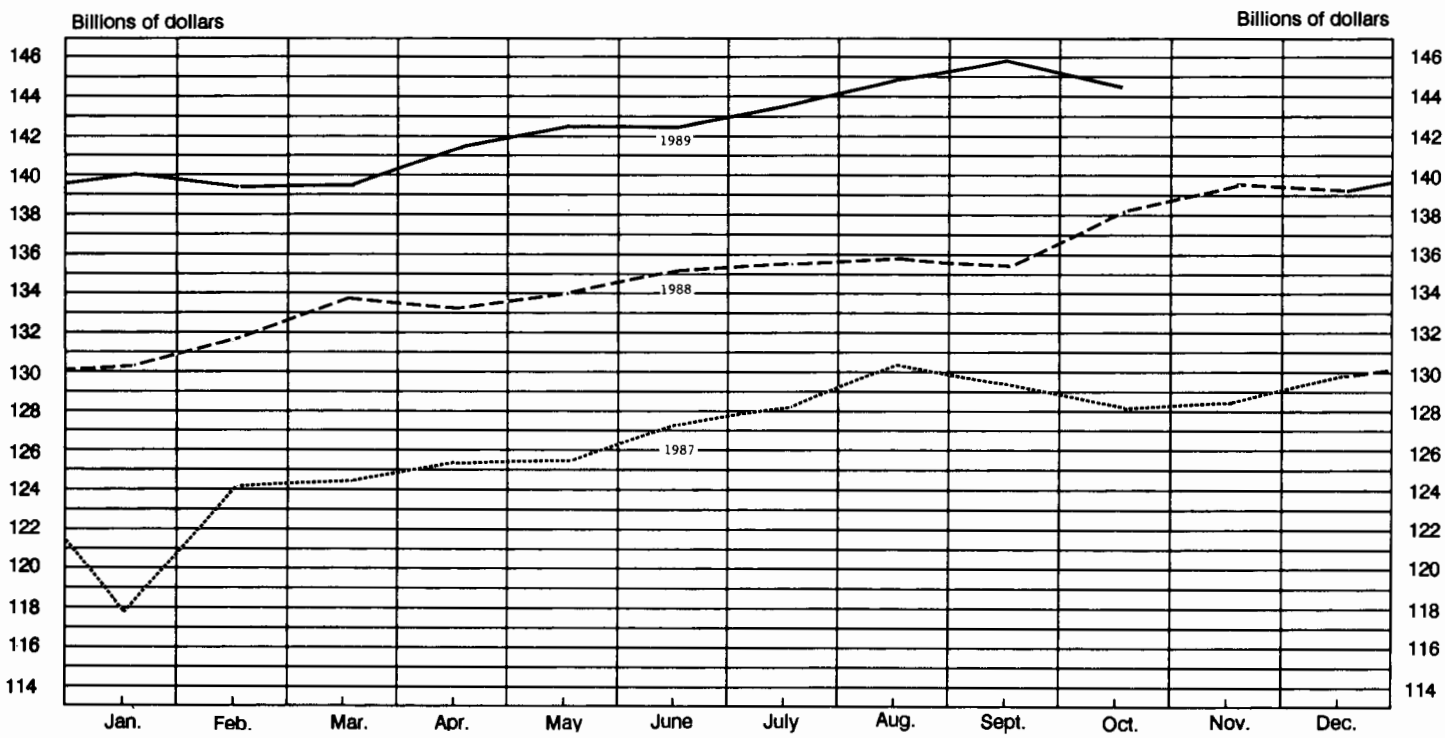
Nondurable goods increased 0.1 percent (± 1.1%) from the previous month and were 6.1 percent above October 1988. General merchandise stores were up 5.5 percent from last year while food stores were up 8.4 percent.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for November is scheduled to be released December 13, 1989 at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

January 1987-October 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	
		Oct.[2] adv.	Sep. prel.	Aug. final	Oct.	Sep.	Oct.[2] adv.	Sep. prel.	Aug. final	Oct.[r]	Sep.[r]
	Retail trade, total	141,486	142,547	150,861	135,898	133,000	144,466	145,904	144,860	138,176	135,421
	Total (excl. auto group)	111,995	109,910	114,819	106,238	103,252	113,235	113,005	112,136	106,599	105,883
	Durable goods, total	52,366	55,029	59,946	51,113	51,076	54,399	55,903	55,876	53,258	51,188
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers	8,238	7,831	8,564	7,876	7,811	7,699	7,634	7,731	7,419	7,442
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores	(*)	5,592	6,199	5,691	5,707	(*)	5,280	5,395	5,279	5,284
525	Hardware stores	(*)	1,213	1,238	1,222	1,187	(*)	1,231	1,215	1,193	1,211
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers	29,491	32,637	36,042	29,660	29,748	31,231	32,899	32,724	31,577	29,538
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers	26,693	29,825	33,158	27,073	27,161	28,579	30,218	30,116	29,111	27,053
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)	(*)	26,730	29,506	24,127	24,300	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores	(*)	2,812	2,884	2,587	2,587	(*)	2,681	2,608	2,466	2,485
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores	8,162	8,129	8,489	7,713	7,543	8,346	8,317	8,365	7,853	7,777
571	Furniture and home furnishings	(*)	3,863	4,126	3,931	3,780	(*)	3,894	3,967	3,892	3,818
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores	(*)	3,620	3,764	3,237	3,220	(*)	3,783	3,791	3,390	3,418
5722	Household appliance stores	(*)	792	828	814	804	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total	89,120	87,518	90,915	84,785	81,924	90,067	90,001	88,984	84,918	84,233
53	General merchandise group stores	15,957	14,940	15,908	15,357	13,972	16,396	16,343	16,012	15,543	15,255
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)	13,390	12,596	13,431	12,990	11,816	13,691	13,676	13,444	13,068	12,816
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts)[3]	(*)	13,024	13,874	13,438	12,263	(*)	14,126	13,902	13,533	13,286
533	Variety stores	(*)	600	653	669	589	(*)	690	672	697	674
539	Misc. general mdse. stores	(*)	1,744	1,824	1,698	1,567	(*)	1,977	1,896	1,778	1,765
54	Food stores	29,778	30,124	30,651	27,927	27,875	30,492	30,181	29,895	28,135	28,005
541	Grocery stores	28,046	28,329	28,761	26,199	26,128	28,706	28,357	28,060	26,357	26,233
554	Gasoline service stations	9,245	9,144	9,707	8,724	8,594	9,028	9,108	9,072	8,587	8,517
56	Apparel and accessory stores	7,340	7,333	7,786	7,018	6,735	7,467	7,454	7,444	7,032	6,958
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores	(*)	720	687	799	696	(*)	786	768	790	780
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers	(*)	2,756	2,793	2,744	2,606	(*)	2,789	2,801	2,688	2,678
565	Family clothing stores	(*)	1,874	2,070	1,812	1,675	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores	(*)	1,363	1,512	1,184	1,244	(*)	1,344	1,340	1,223	1,227
58	Eating and drinking places	14,088	14,060	14,850	13,681	13,435	13,962	13,990	13,750	13,492	13,381
591	Drug and proprietary stores	5,242	5,070	5,187	4,796	4,707	5,427	5,371	5,250	4,960	4,950
592	Liquor stores	(*)	1,618	1,674	1,508	1,512	(*)	1,668	1,649	1,548	1,562
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise)	(*)	274	289	333	264	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57 594	GAF[4]	(*)	35,420	37,396	34,563	32,698	(*)	37,665	37,268	35,335	34,905

*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-89-09.

[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.

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					
		Oct. 1989 advance from--		Sep. 1989 preliminary from--		Aug. 1989 through Oct. 1989	
		Sep. 1989 prelim.	Oct. 1988 final	Aug. 1989 final	Sep. 1988 final	May 1989 through July 1989	Aug. 1988 through Oct. 1988
	Retail trade, total	-1.0	+4.6	+0.7	+7.7	+1.5	+6.3
	Total (excl. automotive group)	+0.2	+6.2	+0.8	+6.7	+1.2	+6.3
	Durable goods, total	-2.7	+2.1	0.0	+9.2	+2.1	+6.4
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers	+0.9	+3.8	-1.3	+2.6	+1.1	+3.8
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers	-5.1	-1.1	+0.5	+11.4	+2.8	+6.2
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers	-5.4	-1.8	+0.3	+11.7	+2.9	+6.2
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores	+0.3	+6.3	-0.6	+6.9	0.0	+7.2
	Nondurable goods, total	+0.1	+6.1	+1.1	+6.8	+1.2	+6.2
53	General merchandise group stores	+0.3	+5.5	+2.1	+7.1	+1.9	+6.0
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.)	+0.1	+4.8	+1.7	+6.7	+1.6	+5.8
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.)[2]	(NA)	(NA)	+1.6	+6.3	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores	+1.0	+8.4	+1.0	+7.8	+1.8	+7.5
541	Grocery stores	+1.2	+8.9	+1.1	+8.1	+2.0	+7.9
554	Gasoline service stations	-0.9	+5.1	+0.4	+6.9	-3.3	+5.8
56	Apparel and accessory stores	+0.2	+6.2	+0.1	+7.1	+1.6	+7.4
58	Eating and drinking places	-0.2	+3.5	+1.7	+4.6	+1.6	+3.8
591	Drug and proprietary stores	+1.0	+9.4	+2.3	+8.5	+4.2	+8.3

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]		
		Sep. 1989 prelim.	Aug. 1989 final	Sep. 1988	Sep. 1989 prelim.	Aug. 1989 final	Sep. 1988[r]
	Retail trade, total	51,512	53,899	48,067	53,829	53,308	50,122
53	General merchandise group stores	13,794	14,760	12,986	15,129	14,847	14,193
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.)	12,181	13,012	11,434	13,240	12,999	12,388
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.)[2]	12,591	13,441	11,857	13,671	13,441	12,846
533	Variety stores	467	516	473	541	529	546
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores	1,146	1,232	1,079	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores	16,542	16,754	15,569	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores	16,320	16,521	15,354	16,452	16,293	15,478
56	Apparel and accessory stores	3,980	4,369	3,585	4,080	4,076	3,707
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers	1,471	1,576	1,370	1,532	1,553	1,432
566	Shoe stores	857	976	779	852	849	776
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores	2,981	3,089	2,714	3,209	3,175	2,896

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-89-09.

[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 September 1989 and final estimates for August 1989 based on the full sample will published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for September (BR-89-09). 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			Ratio to same month a year ago	Dollar volume sales est.	Ratio of current quarter to prev. quarter	Preliminary-to-final percent change minus the Advance-to-preliminary percent change			
		Range[1]		Median	Median	Median	Median	Range[2]		Mean	Aver. of absolute diff.
		From	To					From	To		
	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, October 1988 - September 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.