CURRENT BUSINESS REPORTS

ADVANCE MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

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 $151.2 billion, an increase of 1.1 percent(±1.2%) from the previous month, and 2.8 percent above September 1989. Total sales in the third quarter were 2.8 percent above the same quarter a year ago.

Durable goods increased 1.4 percent (±2.7%) from the previous month, but were down 3.1 percent from last year.

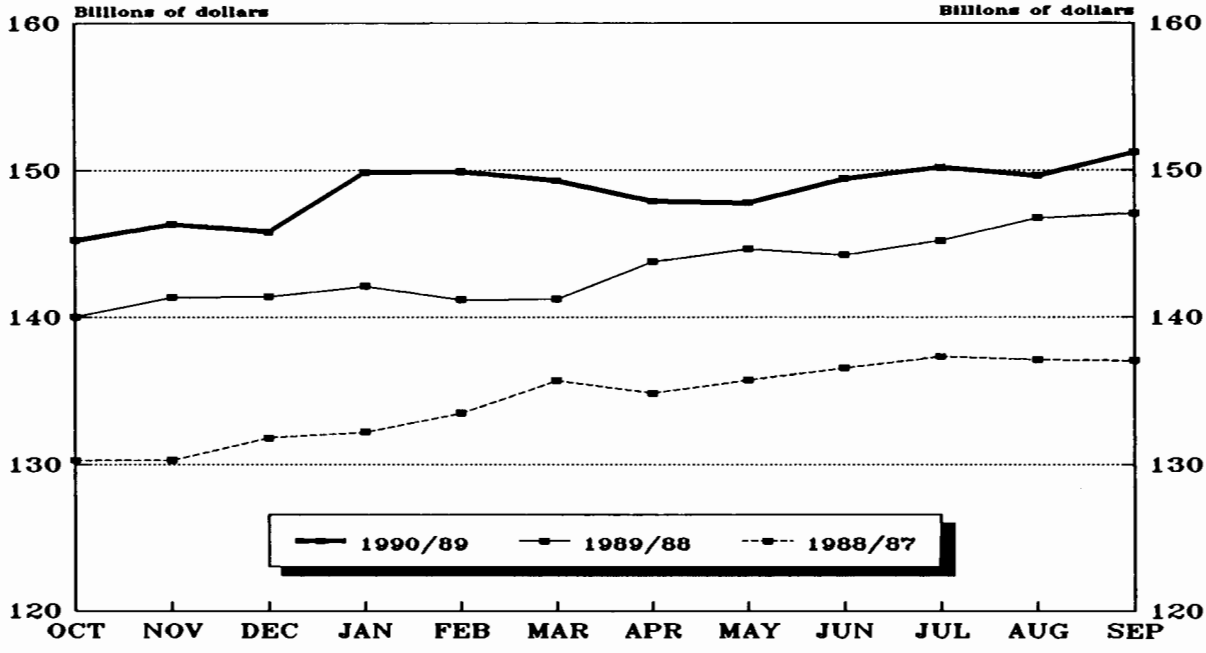
Nondurable goods increased 0.9 percent (±1.3%) from the previous month and were 6.5 percent above the previous year. General merchandise stores were up 2.5 percent from September 1989 while food stores were up 5.6 percent in the same period. Gasoline service stations increased 4.9 percent from August and were up 18.0 percent from the previous year.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for October is scheduled to be released November 14, 1990 at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

October 1987 - September 1990

(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]				
		1990			1989		1990			1989	
		Sept.[2] adv.	Aug. prel.	July final	Sept.	Aug.	Sept.[2] adv.	Aug. prel.	July final	Sept.[r]	Aug.[r]
	Retail trade, total	145,382	156,760	148,933	144,079	153,030	151,242	149,643	150,201	147,052	146,731
	Total (excl. auto group)	114,819	123,117	116,000	111,110	116,864	120,107	119,375	118,772	114,301	113,862
	Durable goods, total	51,971	56,885	55,397	54,908	59,703	53,574	52,839	54,200	55,310	55,606
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers	7,917	8,578	8,611	8,029	8,808	7,823	7,864	7,959	7,790	7,973
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores	(*)	6,329	6,271	5,908	6,529	(*)	5,596	5,665	5,600	5,717
525	Hardware stores	(*)	1,063	1,125	1,020	1,050	(*)	1,049	1,071	1,025	1,026
55 ex 554	Automotive dealers	30,563	33,643	32,933	32,969	36,166	31,135	30,268	31,429	32,751	32,869
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers	27,880	30,739	30,079	30,166	33,301	28,507	27,618	28,729	30,076	30,274
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)	(*)	27,215	26,540	26,654	29,224	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores	(*)	2,904	2,854	2,803	2,865	(*)	2,650	2,700	2,675	2,595
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores	7,192	7,587	7,324	7,346	7,696	7,531	7,478	7,614	7,524	7,558
571	Furniture and home furnishings	(*)	4,172	3,996	3,998	4,296	(*)	4,035	4,103	4,047	4,151
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores	(*)	2,716	2,714	2,630	2,721	(*)	2,746	2,812	2,754	2,726
5722	Household appliance stores	(*)	780	806	667	707	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total	93,411	99,875	93,536	89,171	93,327	97,668	96,804	96,001	91,742	91,125
53	General merchandise group stores	15,848	17,503	15,313	15,600	16,616	17,583	17,746	17,716	17,154	16,792
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts)	12,924	14,297	12,429	12,692	13,528	14,218	14,398	14,319	13,841	13,582
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts)[3]	(*)	14,724	12,786	13,087	13,940	(*)	14,858	14,764	14,194	14,010
533	Variety stores	(*)	607	530	521	575	(*)	609	598	600	592
539	Misc. general mdse. stores	(*)	2,599	2,354	2,387	2,513	(*)	2,739	2,799	2,713	2,618
54	Food stores	30,294	31,877	31,302	29,396	30,140	31,048	30,560	30,705	29,399	29,361
541	Grocery stores	28,537	29,976	29,431	27,815	28,460	29,179	28,713	28,854	27,759	27,712
554	Gasoline service stations	11,174	11,713	10,723	9,593	10,264	11,344	10,815	10,107	9,612	9,513
56	Apparel and accessory stores	7,682	8,517	7,116	7,533	8,107	7,977	8,101	8,081	7,677	7,719
561	Men's and boys'clothing and furnishings stores	(*)	698	653	720	697	(*)	788	791	789	779
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers	(*)	2,764	2,521	2,651	2,702	(*)	2,803	2,858	2,686	2,727
565	Family clothing stores	(*)	2,640	2,115	2,117	2,351	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores	(*)	1,735	1,318	1,446	1,618	(*)	1,535	1,494	1,422	1,422
58	Eating and drinking places	15,455	16,726	16,273	14,677	15,672	15,486	15,331	15,352	14,589	14,511
591	Drug and proprietary stores	5,220	5,547	5,327	4,936	5,065	5,613	5,592	5,566	5,223	5,121
592	Liquor stores	(*)	1,825	1,792	1,651	1,716	(*)	1,763	1,731	1,697	1,684
5961 (pt)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise)	(*)	381	323	356	375	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57 594	GAF[4]	(*)	38,892	34,647	35,405	37,571	(*)	38,859	39,043	37,841	37,481

*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-90-08.

[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					
		Sept. 1990 advance from--		Aug. 1990 preliminary from--		July 1990 through Sept. 1990	
		Aug. 1990 prelim.	Sept. 1989 final	July 1990 final	Aug. 1989 final	Apr. 1990 through June 1990	July 1989 through Sept. 1989
	Retail trade, total	+1.1	+2.8	-0.4	+2.0	+1.3	+2.8
	Total (excl. automotive group)	+0.6	+5.1	+0.5	+4.8	+1.7	+4.9
	Durable goods, total	+1.4	-3.1	-2.5	-5.0	-0.2	-2.7
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers	-0.5	+0.4	-1.2	-1.4	+1.6	+0.3
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers	+2.9	-4.9	-3.7	-7.9	+0.0	-4.6
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers	+3.2	-5.2	-3.9	-8.8	+0.3	-5.2
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores	+0.7	+0.1	-1.8	-1.1	-2.4	+0.5
	Nondurable goods, total	+0.9	+6.5	+0.8	+6.2	+2.2	+6.0
53	General merchandise group stores	-0.9	+2.5	+0.2	+5.7	+2.2	+4.4
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.)[2]	-1.3	+2.7	+0.6	+6.0	+2.1	+4.6
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.)	(NA)	(NA)	+0.6	+6.1	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores	+1.6	+5.6	-0.5	+4.1	+0.8	+4.9
541	Grocery stores	+1.6	+5.1	-0.5	+3.6	+0.8	+4.4
554	Gasoline service stations	+4.9	+18.0	+7.0	+13.7	+8.0	+11.5
56	Apparel and accessory stores	-1.5	+3.9	+0.2	+4.9	+1.5	+4.8
58	Eating and drinking places	+1.0	+6.1	-0.1	+5.7	+1.4	+6.0
591	Drug and proprietary stores	+0.4	+7.5	+0.5	+9.2	+2.4	+8.9

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. 1990 prelim.	July 1990 final	Aug. 1989	Aug. 1990 prelim.	July 1990 final	Aug.[r] 1989
	Retail trade, total	58,571	54,408	54,922	57,735	57,552	54,409
53	General merchandise group stores	16,037	13,947	15,261	16,301	16,280	15,443
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.)	13,853	12,057	13,109	13,965	13,891	13,148
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.)[2]	14,268	12,401	13,508	14,383	14,303	13,562
533	Variety stores	470	409	455	469	468	464
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores	1,714	1,481	1,697	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores	17,633	17,381	16,537	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores	17,423	17,182	16,348	16,883	17,131	16,186
56	Apparel and accessory stores	4,891	3,914	4,558	4,546	4,506	4,227
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers	1,554	1,421	1,508	1,546	1,577	1,492
566	Shoe stores	1,135	828	1,044	990	933	897
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores	3,337	3,195	3,017	3,412	3,395	3,104

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-90-08.

[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 sub-sample 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 +1.2 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.4 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 1990 and final estimates for July 1990 based on the full sample are published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for October (BR-90-08). 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 0.8 percent and the margin of sampling error is 1.2 percentage points above or below the estimate, then the indicated range is -0.4 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	Ave. of absolute diff.
	Retail trade, total.....	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.9	0.8	1.0	-0.4	+1.2	+0.2	0.4
	Total (excl. auto).....	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.9	-0.3	+0.5	+0.1	0.2
	Durable goods, total.....	1.4	2.0	1.6	2.3	1.8	2.2	-0.9	+1.7	-0.1	0.7
52	Building materials, group stores....	1.1	3.0	1.7	3.8	3.2	3.1	-1.9	+3.1	0.0	0.7
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.6	2.4	2.0	3.2	2.6	3.0	-2.1	+2.9	-0.1	0.9
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	1.3	2.0	1.6	4.0	2.8	3.3	-2.5	+3.3	-0.1	1.0
57	Furniture, home furn., and equipment stores.....	1.3	3.8	2.1	4.2	3.9	3.1	-1.9	+5.0	+0.5	1.5
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.5	0.7	0.6	1.0	0.7	0.9	-0.2	+0.7	+0.1	0.2
53	General merch. group, total.....	0.2	0.9	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	-0.9	+1.3	0.0	0.4
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)..	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	-0.5	+1.2	+0.1	0.4
54	Food stores.....	0.8	1.3	1.0	1.7	1.3	1.6	-0.4	+1.5	+0.2	0.4
541	Grocery stores.....	0.2	0.5	0.3	1.8	1.3	1.6	-0.5	+1.3	+0.2	0.4
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.6	1.0	0.9	2.9	2.1	2.7	-1.8	+1.9	0.0	0.7
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.1	3.6	1.7	2.5	2.0	1.9	-3.9	+3.8	+0.2	1.4
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.4	1.9	0.8	2.7	2.3	2.6	-1.3	+1.6	+0.2	0.8
591	Drug and proprietary.....	0.6	1.8	0.7	2.5	1.9	2.1	-1.7	+2.1	+0.3	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 November 1988 - October 1989.

[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 1989 - August 1990. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period October 1988 - September 1989.

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 of the measures of sampling variability.