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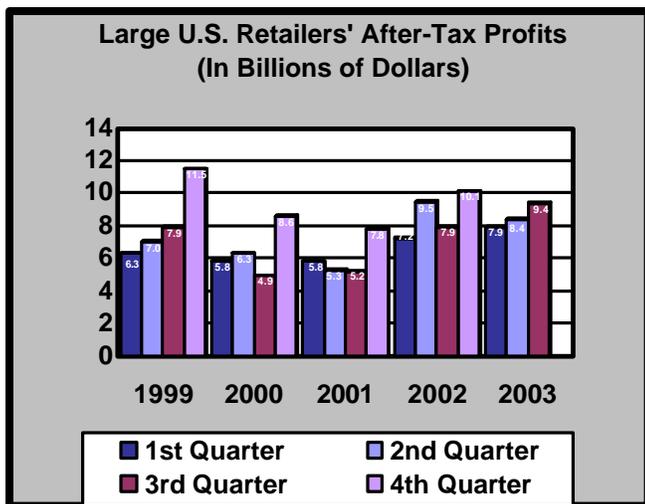
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**THIRD QUARTER 2003 ADVANCE DATA FROM THE QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REPORT  
LARGE U.S. RETAIL TRADE CORPORATIONS**



For the third quarter of 2003, large retail corporations with assets of \$50 million and over reported after-tax profits of \$9.4 billion, up \$1.0 ( $\pm 0.1$ ) billion from the preceding quarter, and up \$1.6 ( $\pm 0.1$ ) billion from the same quarter a year ago, the Commerce Department's Census Bureau reported. Sales in the third quarter 2003, at \$379.3 billion, were up \$13.7 ( $\pm 1.8$ ) billion or 3.7 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ ) from last quarter, and up \$31.1 ( $\pm 1.8$ ) billion or 8.9 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ ) from the third quarter of 2002. These data are not adjusted for seasonality.

After-tax profits for these corporations averaged 2.5 cents per dollar of sales for the third quarter of 2003, up from the 2.3 cents of the preceding quarter, and the 2.3 cents recorded in the third quarter of 2002.

The annual rate of after-tax profit on stockholders' equity was 13.2 percent, up from the 12.2 percent of the second quarter of 2003, and the 11.9 percent of the third quarter of 2002.

These data are based on quarterly financial reports obtained from approximately 500 corporations. More detailed information on the retail trade sector for the third quarter will be published in the Quarterly Financial Report for Manufacturing, Mining, and Trade Corporations - Fourth Quarter 2003, scheduled for release on April 5, 2004.

**EXPLANATORY NOTES:**

This quarter's publication contains data revised due to the reclassification of corporations by industry, and revisions that reflect respondents' corrections of data submitted subsequent to original publication.

The data presented in this report are estimated from a sample survey and therefore are subject to sampling variability as well as non-sampling variability such as response error, non-reporting, and coverage errors. Estimates of sampling variability are presented in the publication. A statement such as "up 2.5 ( $\pm 0.1$ ) cents", appearing in the text, indicates the range (+2.4 to +2.6 cents) in which the actual change is likely to have occurred. The range given for the change is a 90 percent confidence interval that accounts only for sampling variability. If the range had contained zero (0), it would have been uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease; that is, the change would not have been statistically significant. For any comparison cited without a confidence interval, the change is statistically significant. The quarterly publication includes more detailed explanations of confidence intervals and sampling variability, along with additional measures of sampling variability.

This report is available on the day of issue on the Department of Commerce's Internet site at <http://www.census.gov/csd/qfr/>.

**Table 1. Income Statement For U.S. Retail Trade Corporations - Assets \$50 Million And Over**

Item	3Q 2003	2Q 2003 <sup>1</sup>	3Q 2002 <sup>1</sup>
	(million dollars)		
Net sales, receipts, and operating revenues .....	379,270	365,575	348,218
Less: Depreciation, depletion, and amortization .....	7,409	7,261	6,890
Less: All other operating costs and expenses .....	355,593	341,586	326,874
<b>Income (or loss) from operations .....</b>	<b>16,269</b>	<b>16,729</b>	<b>14,454</b>
Interest expense.....	3,276	3,370	3,469
Net nonoperating income (expense).....	1,404	239	1,788
<b>Income (or loss) before income taxes .....</b>	<b>14,397</b>	<b>13,597</b>	<b>12,773</b>
Less: Provision for current and deferred domestic income taxes.....	4,947	5,157	4,923
<b>Income (or loss) after income taxes .....</b>	<b>9,449</b>	<b>8,440</b>	<b>7,851</b>
Cash dividends charged to retained earnings in current quarter.....	2,332	1,820	1,005
<b>Net income retained in business.....</b>	<b>7,117</b>	<b>6,620</b>	<b>6,846</b>
Retained earnings at beginning of quarter.....	193,185	191,410	173,548
Other direct credits (or charges) to retained earnings (net).....	(993)	(3,875)	(1,601)
<b>Retained earnings at end of quarter .....</b>	<b>199,308</b>	<b>194,155</b>	<b>178,792</b>

**Table 2. Income Statement Ratios For U.S. Retail Trade Corporations - Assets \$50 Million And Over**

Item	3Q 2003	2Q 2003 <sup>1</sup>	3Q 2002 <sup>1</sup>
	(cents)		
Net sales, receipts, and operating revenues .....	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less: Depreciation, depletion, and amortization.....	2.0	2.0	2.0
Less: All other operating costs and expenses .....	93.8	93.4	93.9
<b>Income (or loss) from operations .....</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.2</b>
Interest expense.....	0.9	0.9	1.0
Net nonoperating income (expense) .....	0.4	0.1	0.5
<b>Income (or loss) before income taxes .....</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.7</b>
Less: Provision for current and deferred domestic income taxes .....	1.3	1.4	1.4
<b>Income (or loss) after income taxes .....</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.3</b>

**Table 3. Operating Ratios For U.S. Retail Trade Corporations - Assets \$50 Million And Over**

Item	3Q 2003	2Q 2003 <sup>1</sup>	3Q 2002 <sup>1</sup>
	(percent)		
Annual rate of profit on stockholders' equity at end of period:			
<b>Before income taxes .....</b>	<b>20.04</b>	<b>19.60</b>	<b>19.40</b>
<b>After income taxes .....</b>	<b>13.15</b>	<b>12.17</b>	<b>11.92</b>
Annual rate of profit on total assets:			
<b>Before income taxes .....</b>	<b>7.72</b>	<b>7.64</b>	<b>7.30</b>
<b>After income taxes .....</b>	<b>5.06</b>	<b>4.74</b>	<b>4.49</b>

<sup>1</sup>Revised.