

# UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF **COMMERCE**

Office of the Secretary

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## ADVANCE REPORT ON RETAIL TRADE, APRIL 1956

Total sales of retail stores in April were \$14.8 billion, the U. S. Department of Commerce announced today. This advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal factors and trading day differences, was 2 percent below March 1956 and slightly above April a year ago.

The April sales figures are based on the Advance Report on Retail Trade, a monthly survey of the Bureau of the Census conducted in cooperation with a representative cross-section of about 1,700 retail firms which, in total, operate some 35,000 stores in the United States. The firms which are cooperating in the early reporting of sales are part of a larger group which furnishes figures at a later date. Therefore, the advance estimates are preliminary and subject to revision.

The preliminary Census figures are shown in table 1 on the reverse side. The Office of Business Economics commented that a major factor in the decline from March to April was the lower sales by automotive dealers. Most of the major nondurable goods stores in April showed small declines from March when, in aggregate, this sector was at a record rate.

(more)

Table 1.--SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP  
(NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal factors and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)		
	1956		April 1955
	April	March	
Retail stores, total <sup>1</sup> .....	14,850	15,864	15,622
Food group.....	3,519	3,939	3,689
Grocery stores.....	3,006	3,377	3,127
Eating and drinking places.....	1,103	1,114	1,081
General merchandise group.....	1,497	1,648	1,650
Department stores <sup>2</sup> .....	829	882	897
Apparel group.....	812	1,003	986
Furniture and appliance group.....	793	808	757
Lumber, building, hardware group <sup>3</sup> .....	1,148	1,056	1,176
Automotive group.....	2,991	3,195	3,431
Gasoline service stations.....	1,081	1,078	988
Drug and proprietary stores.....	443	479	416

See footnotes below table 2.

Source: Bureau of the Census

Table 2.--SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP  
(ADJUSTED for seasonal factors and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)			Percent change, March 1956 from--	
	1956		March 1955	February 1956	March 1955
	March	February			
Retail stores, total <sup>1</sup> .....	15,740	15,346	15,060	+3	+5
Durable goods stores, total <sup>1</sup> .....	5,466	5,354	5,458	+2	0
Nondurable goods stores, total <sup>1</sup> ..	10,274	9,992	9,602	+3	+7
Food group.....	3,756	3,680	3,602	+2	+4
Eating and drinking places.....	1,192	1,152	1,083	+3	+10
General merchandise group.....	1,702	1,645	1,615	+3	+5
Apparel group.....	916	924	867	-1	+6
Furniture and appliance group.....	877	859	836	+2	+5
Lumber, building, hardware group <sup>3</sup> ..	1,119	1,064	1,093	+5	+2
Automotive group.....	3,049	3,008	3,169	+1	-4
Gasoline service stations.....	1,154	1,088	1,007	+6	+15
Drug and proprietary stores.....	485	455	418	+7	+16

Source: Office of Business Economics

<sup>1</sup> Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

<sup>2</sup> Based on preliminary estimates supplied by Federal Reserve Board.

<sup>3</sup> Includes farm equipment dealers.