



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE • Social and Economic Statistics Administration • BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

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The Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce, announced today that total sales of retail stores in September were estimated at \$37.1 billion. The Bureau, part of the Department's Social and Economic Statistics Administration (SESA), said this advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal and holiday variations and trading day differences but not for price changes, was \$37.3 billion, about 1½ percent below August but about 6 percent above September sales last year. Adjusted total July-through-September sales averaged about 2 percent above the prior 3 months and 9 percent above the comparable period a year ago.

Based on the full sample, the total U. S. adjusted sales estimate for August was about \$0.2 billion less than the \$38.0 billion published earlier in the August Advance Monthly Retail Sales report released September 11, 1972. The seasonally adjusted sales for August as revised were about 1 percent above July.

The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting, by a small subsample of the Census Bureau's retail survey panel, of sales figures for the weeks and part-weeks comprising the month. Because retailers' weekly records often differ

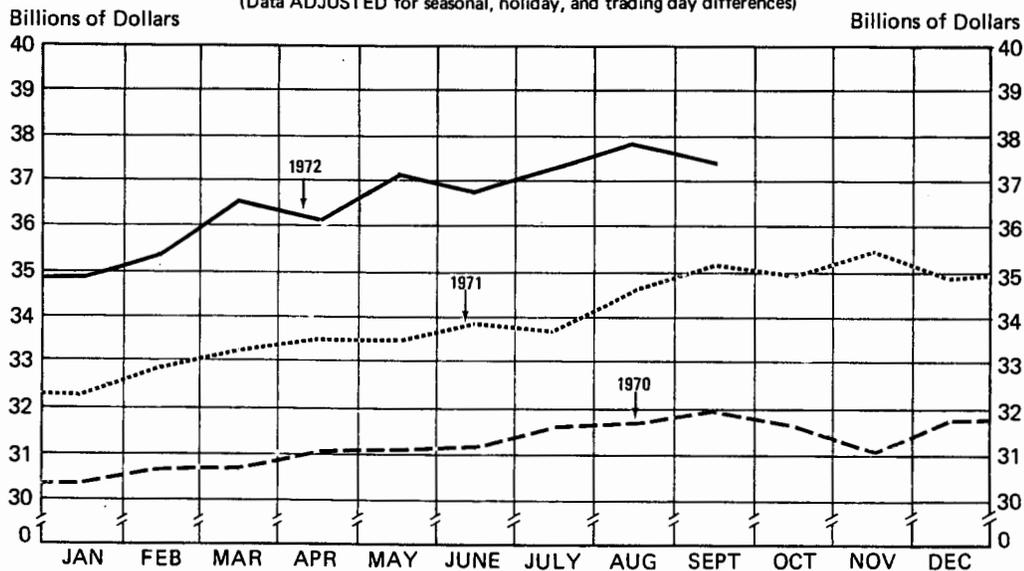
from their monthly records (in reflecting such elements as carrying charges, sales taxes, merchandise returns), the sales figures estimated for the advance report can differ from the subsequently issued report based on the monthly records of the full sample of retailers. Additionally, sampling variability between sub-sample and later full sample results can be a cause of difference. For most months, such differences have been reduced by modifying the advance estimate, prior to publication, on the basis of the relationship between the advance and full-sample data for previous months.

The differences between the month-to-month change in advance and full-sample estimates for total retail sales seldom exceed 1.0 percent and for the past year has averaged 0.4 percent. For individual kind of business groups, differences have been greater, ranging on the average from 0.7 percent for the general merchandise group to 2.4 percent for the Building materials group.

Even for figures derived from the full sample, sales movements from one month to the next can be relatively irregular. Data for 3 months are generally required to indicate the underlying trend.

MONTHLY SALES OF ALL RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES

(Data ADJUSTED for seasonal, holiday, and trading day differences)



Annual subscription to current retail trade reports are for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. (Weekly Retail Sales Report, Advance Monthly Retail Trade Report, Monthly Retail Trade Report, and Annual Retail Trade Report sold as a single subscription.) Price: \$6.00. Single copies of the Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report are available only from the Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233, at 10 cents each.

Table 1. Sales of Retail Stores in the United States, by Kind-of-Business Group

Part A. NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal variations or trading day differences

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)		
	1972		1971
	September ¹	August ²	September
Total, retail stores ³	37,092	37,871	34,102
Total (excluding automotive group).....	30,062	30,457	27,344
Durable goods stores, total ³	12,212	12,739	11,418
Nondurable goods stores, total ³	24,880	25,132	22,684
Food group.....	8,096	7,991	7,350
Grocery stores.....	7,550	7,390	6,818
Eating and drinking places.....	2,927	3,124	2,650
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	6,147	6,255	5,620
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	5,590	5,745	5,082
Department stores.....	3,729	3,788	3,444
Apparel group.....	1,832	1,751	1,674
Furniture and appliance group.....	1,789	1,796	1,524
Building materials, hardware, farm equipment group.....	2,382	2,477	2,199
Automotive group.....	7,030	7,414	6,758
Gasoline service stations.....	2,655	2,788	2,475
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,199	1,205	1,087

Part B. ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)					Percentage change August 1972 from--	
	1972			1971		July 1972	August 1971
	September ¹	August ²	July ^r	September	August		
Total, retail stores ³	37,297	37,843	37,342	35,219	34,655	+1	+9
Total (excluding automotive group).....	29,966	30,110	29,943	27,854	27,825	+1	+8
Durable goods stores, total ³	12,326	12,800	12,468	11,833	11,298	+3	+13
Nondurable goods stores, total ³	24,971	25,043	24,874	23,386	23,357	+1	+7
Food group.....		7,930	7,956	7,516	7,478	0	+6
Eating and drinking places.....		2,794	2,818	2,573	2,614	-1	+7
General merchandise group with nonstores.....		6,320	6,267	5,872	5,757	+1	+10
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....		5,782	5,801	5,315	5,251	0	+10
Apparel group.....		1,804	1,801	1,683	1,749	0	+3
Furniture and appliance group.....		1,776	1,781	1,497	1,542	0	+15
Building materials, hardware, farm equipment group.....		2,233	2,206	1,996	1,987	+1	+14
Automotive group ⁴		7,733	7,399	7,365	6,830	+5	+13
Gasoline service stations.....		2,650	2,577	2,523	2,511	+3	+6
Drug and proprietary stores.....		1,228	1,204	1,138	1,187	+2	+5

¹Advance sample estimates. ²Preliminary estimates of full sample. ³Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately. ⁴During months of model changeover, seasonal adjustment factors are less reliable than in other months. ^rRevised.

Table 2. Percentage Changes for Retail Sales

(ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	September 1972 from--		July 1972 through September 1972 from--	
	August 1972	September 1971	April 1972 through June 1972	July 1971 through September 1971
Total, retail stores.....	-1 ¹ / ₂	+6	+2	+9
Total (excluding automotive group).....	-1 ¹ / ₂	+7 ¹ / ₂	+2	+9
Durable goods stores, total.....	-3 ¹ / ₂	+4	+3	+11
Nondurable goods stores, total.....	-1 ¹ / ₂	+7	+2	+7

Source: Bureau of the Census