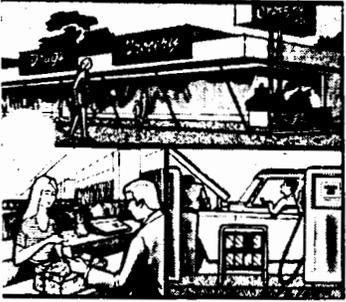


Advance Monthly Retail Sales

DECEMBER 1983



FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EST, Friday, January 13, 1984

CB-84-08

Advance U.S. retail sales for December, adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$102.1 billion, up 0.1 percent from the revised November level of \$102.0 billion and 10.4 percent above year-ago sales. This slight increase follows three monthly increases of greater than 1 percent. (The revised November estimate represented an increase of 1.1 percent from October.) Excluding the automotive group, total sales declined 0.6 percent from November but were 7.2 percent above December 1982 sales.

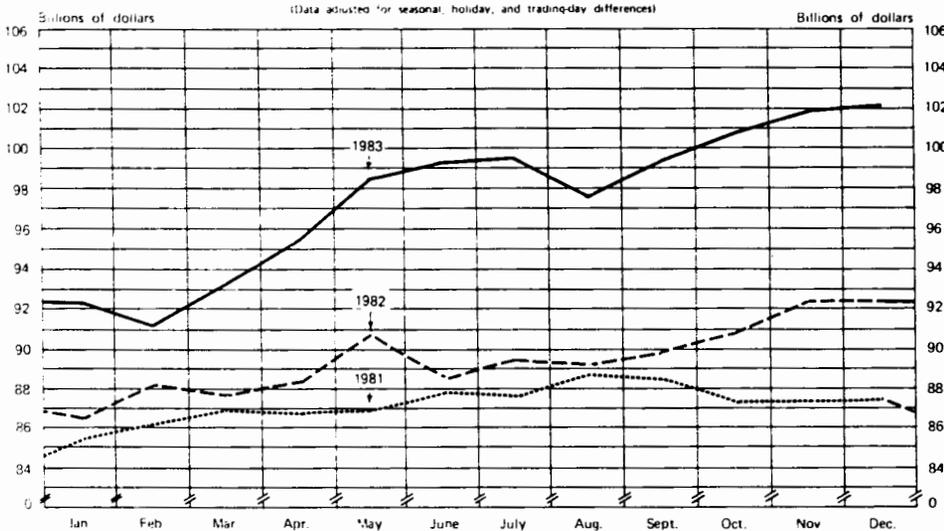
Sales of durable goods rose 1.6 percent from November and 20.6 percent over the year-ago level. Automotive group sales increased for the fourth consecutive month, up 2.9 percent from November and 24.8 percent above the previous year. After a decline of 0.9 percent last month, furniture group sales rose 3.4 percent in December. Building materials dealers were the only major durable kind-of-business group showing a decline, down 3.5 percent from November, but up 15.0 percent from December 1982.

Nondurable goods sales decreased 0.7 percent from November but remained about 6 percent above the previous year level. This is only the third decline in nondurable goods sales this year and is the largest decrease since March 1982. Sales in these groups may have been adversely affected by the unusually bad weather in December. All of the major kinds of business in the nondurable goods group showed a decline except for the general merchandise group, which increased 0.2 percent from November and 7.2 percent above December 1982. The largest month-to-month drop was for gasoline service stations, with December sales down 1.9 percent from November and 0.3 percent below the previous year. This is the first year-to-year decline since April 1983.

For a description of the sample design and reliability of the data, see back page.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for January is scheduled to be released February 14, 1984, at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES
January 1981—December 1983



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Inquiries concerning this report should be addressed to Ronald Pienycoski, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233. Telephone (301) 763-5294.



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The Advance Monthly Retail Sales report, the Monthly Retail Trade report, and the Annual Retail Trade report are available on a single subscription from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, at \$39 per year. Add \$9.75 for each subscription to a foreign address. Postage stamps not acceptable; currency submitted at sender's risk. Remittances from foreign countries must be by international money order or by a draft on a U.S. bank. Single copies of the Advance Monthly Retail Sales report are for sale by Subscriber Services (Publications), Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233, at \$1.75 each.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, by Kind of Business

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted						Adjusted ¹					
		12 month total		1983			1982		1983			1982	
		1983	Percent change from 1982	Dec. ² advance	Nov. prelim.	Oct. final	Dec.	Nov.	Dec. ² advance	Nov. prelim.	Oct. final	Dec.	Nov.
	Retail trade, total.....	1,173,801	-9.1	125,149	103,819	100,665	113,189	94,196	102,059	101,981	100,841	92,459	92,492
	Total (excl. auto group).	952,824	-6.7	106,584	84,832	81,455	98,229	77,963	81,190	81,694	81,472	75,732	75,388
	Durable goods stores, total	378,564	-18.0	37,167	33,455	33,037	31,142	28,423	34,654	34,111	33,092	28,723	28,721
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.	56,461	+15.3	4,366	4,862	5,257	3,864	4,039	4,766	4,941	4,793	4,143	4,057
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,597	3,926	2,650	2,901	(*)	3,597	3,474	3,018	2,864
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	745	728	808	687	(*)	744	717	674	682
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	220,977	+21.2	18,565	18,987	19,210	14,960	16,233	20,869	20,287	19,369	16,727	17,104
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	197,866	+22.5	16,450	16,872	17,141	13,154	14,395	18,800	18,220	17,402	14,965	15,298
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	(*)	(*)	15,361	15,502	12,009	13,140	(*)	NA	NA	NA	NA
553	Auto and home supply stores....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,115	2,069	1,806	1,838	(*)	2,067	1,967	1,762	1,806
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	51,778	-11.3	5,991	4,847	4,455	5,318	4,193	4,605	4,452	4,491	4,100	3,868
571	Furniture and home furnishings.	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,869	2,704	2,684	2,442	(*)	2,630	2,715	2,324	2,249
572,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,647	1,445	2,081	1,421	(*)	1,501	1,460	1,455	1,301
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	(*)	(*)	746	672	821	668	(*)	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Nondurable goods total.....	795,237	-5.4	87,982	70,364	67,628	82,047	65,773	67,405	67,870	67,749	63,736	63,771
53	General merchandise group stores.	141,407	-7.7	23,081	14,601	11,939	21,238	13,197	12,235	12,207	11,904	11,410	11,043
531	Department stores.....	115,614	-8.0	18,665	11,896	9,797	17,149	10,705	9,960	9,946	9,758	9,265	8,928
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	855	744	1,429	770	(*)	811	765	744	729
539	Misc. general mdae. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,850	1,398	2,660	1,722	(*)	1,450	1,381	1,401	1,386
54	Food stores.....	263,866	-4.4	24,781	21,951	22,145	23,608	20,680	22,117	22,449	22,445	21,423	21,333
541	Grocery stores.....	247,913	-4.8	23,126	20,647	20,852	22,052	19,385	20,759	21,068	21,084	20,139	19,964
554	Gasoline service stations.....	104,006	-0.6	8,706	8,654	8,940	8,706	8,585	8,603	8,768	8,904	8,628	8,733
56	Apparel and accessory stores....	54,876	+5.5	8,095	5,209	4,692	7,232	4,762	4,745	4,764	4,638	4,341	4,354
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	809	702	1,316	787	(*)	701	687	682	680
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,078	1,878	2,649	1,768	(*)	1,912	1,823	1,638	1,626
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,062	909	1,645	997	(*)	NA	NA	NA	NA
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	942	915	1,133	861	(*)	890	891	813	818
58	Eating and drinking places.....	119,529	-11.3	10,227	9,773	10,417	9,382	8,878	10,136	10,298	10,233	9,345	9,345
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	39,092	+9.0	4,525	3,274	3,189	4,171	3,021	3,293	3,337	3,315	3,016	3,067
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,623	1,566	2,197	1,559	(*)	1,623	1,618	1,548	1,565
5961(pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	(*)	(*)	625	541	540	589	(*)	NA	NA	NA	NA
53,56,57,594	GAP ³	(*)	(*)	(*)	28,357	24,161	40,087	25,448	(*)	NA	NA	NA	NA

¹Advance estimates are not available from the subsample panel for these kinds of business.
NA Not available.

²Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-83-11).

³Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.
⁴GAP 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 for the United States

(Adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences)

SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change					
		Dec. 1983 advance from--		Nov. 1983 preliminary from--		Oct. 1983 through Dec. 1983	
		Nov. 1983 prelim.	Dec. 1982 final	Oct. 1983 final	Nov. 1982 final	July 1983 through Sep. 1983	Oct. 1982 through Dec. 1982
	Retail trade, total.....	+0.1	+10.4	+1.1	+10.3	+2.8	+10.5
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	-0.6	+7.2	+0.3	+8.4	+1.4	+8.0
	Durable goods stores, total.....	+1.6	+20.6	+3.1	+18.8	+6.6	+20.4
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	-3.5	+15.0	+3.1	+21.8	+0.6	+18.6
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+2.9	+24.8	+4.7	+18.6	+9.0	+22.2
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+3.2	+25.6	+4.7	+19.1	+9.7	+23.2
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+3.4	+12.3	-0.9	+15.1	+2.5	+14.8
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	-0.7	+5.8	+0.2	+6.4	+1.0	+6.2
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+0.2	+7.2	+2.5	+10.5	+3.1	+9.1
531	Department stores.....	+0.1	+7.5	+1.9	+11.4	+2.8	+9.6
54	Food stores.....	-1.5	+3.2	0.0	+5.2	+0.3	+4.5
541	Grocery stores.....	-1.5	+3.1	-0.1	+5.5	+0.3	+4.7
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-1.9	-0.3	-1.5	+0.4	-1.8	+0.6
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-0.4	+9.3	+2.7	+9.4	+4.6	+9.0
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-1.6	+8.5	+0.6	+10.2	+1.4	+9.5
1	Drug and proprietary stores.....	-1.3	+9.2	+0.7	+8.8	+0.4	+9.0

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		
		Nov. 1983 prelim.	Oct. 1983 final	Nov. 1982	Nov. 1983 prelim.	Oct. 1983 final	Nov. 1982
	Retail trade, total.....	38,319	35,097	35,274	35,584	35,196	32,817
53	General merchandise group stores.....	13,344	10,832	12,020	11,070	10,843	9,934
531	Department stores.....	11,456	9,414	10,291	9,571	9,395	8,547
533	Variety stores.....	671	583	633	627	607	588
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	1,217	835	1,096	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	11,789	11,746	11,135	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	11,634	11,595	10,987	11,884	11,748	11,257
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	2,201	1,890	1,934	1,948	1,876	1,725
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	945	823	803	846	808	723
566	Shoe stores.....	443	410	393	413	412	368
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	1,841	1,747	1,625	1,892	1,864	1,651

¹Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, RR-83-11).

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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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			Preliminary-to-final percent change minus the advance-to-preliminary percent change			
		Range ¹		Median	Range ²		Mean	Average of absolute difference
		From	To		From	To		
	Retail trade, total.....	0.6	0.8	0.8	-0.8	+1.4	-0.1	0.6
	Total (excl. automotive group)....	0.7	0.9	0.8	-1.1	+0.9	-0.1	0.5
	Durable goods stores, total.....	1.2	2.1	1.5	-3.7	-2.3	-0.2	1.2
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	1.6	4.2	2.4	-4.7	-4.9	+0.4	2.5
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.5	2.7	2.0	-4.5	+2.7	-0.2	1.6
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	1.1	2.3	1.6	-4.6	+3.0	-0.2	1.8
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	1.6	6.7	2.7	-2.7	+3.9	+0.2	1.9
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0.6	0.8	0.7	-0.8	+0.9	-0.1	0.6
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.4	0.7	0.5	-1.8	+2.2	-0.1	1.1
531	Department stores.....	0.2	0.5	0.3	-1.3	-2.6	-0.1	0.9
54	Food stores.....	0.7	1.6	1.0	-1.6	+1.4	-0.1	0.7
541	Grocery stores.....	0.3	0.7	0.4	-1.6	+1.4	-0.2	0.7
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.7	1.2	1.0	-3.6	+3.2	-0.1	1.4
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.2	3.0	1.9	-3.6	+8.7	+0.4	2.1
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.8	1.5	1.0	-3.0	+4.0	-0.5	1.5
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	0.3	2.5	1.1	-1.9	+2.4	-0.2	0.9

¹The ranges of sampling variability shown are based on sales estimates unadjusted for seasonal variation, holiday, and trading-day differences for the data months of January-December 1982.

²The 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, December 1982-November 1983. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period January-December 1982.

Note: See appendix B, Reliability of Data, in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for a discussion on the measures of sampling variability.

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. For most months, such differences have been reduced by modifying the advance estimates prior to publication on the basis of the relationship between the advance and full sample data for previous months.

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 -0.8 percent to +1.4 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.6 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 November 1983 and final estimates for October 1983 based on the full sample will be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for November (BR-83-11). 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 complete report will include additional measures of sampling variability.