

Advance Monthly Retail Sales

April 1985

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EDT, Tuesday, May 14, 1985

CB-85-95

Advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for April, adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$112.2 billion, little changed from the revised level of \$111.3 billion in March but 4.5 percent above previous year sales. February through April sales were 1.2 percent above the previous 3 months and 5.6 above the same months last year.

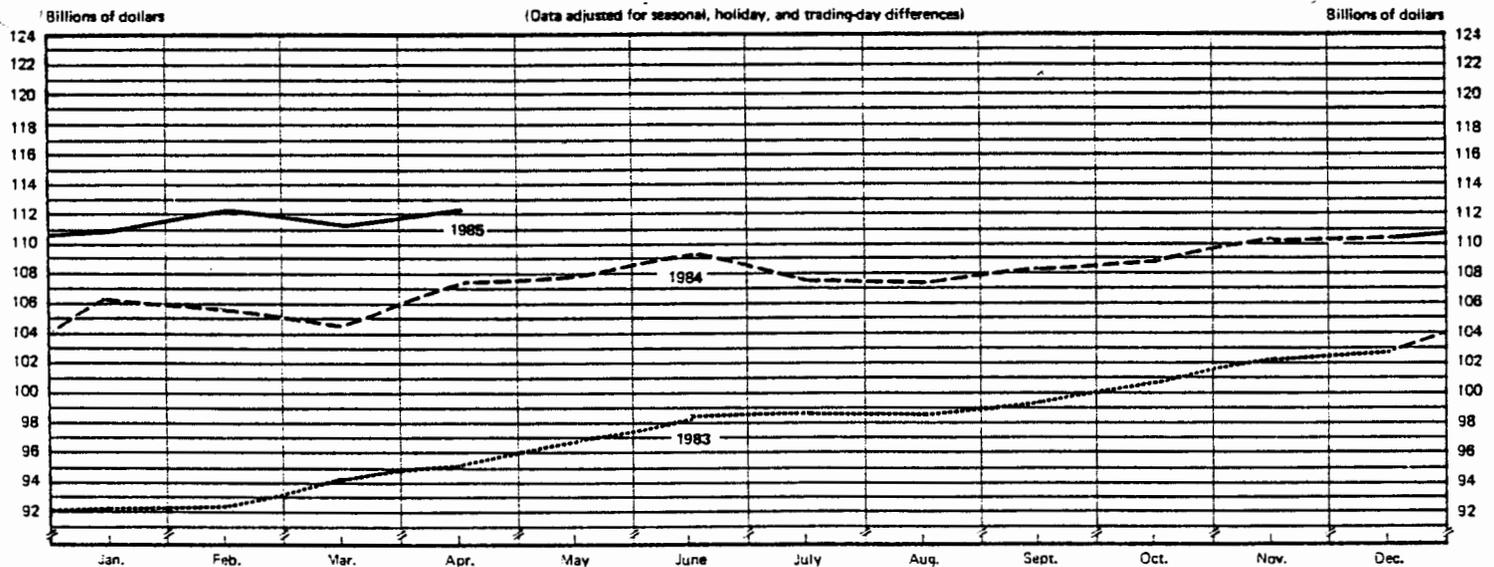
Durable goods sales were virtually unchanged during the month but rose 6.6 percent above April 1984. Automotive group and furniture store sales were little changed in April but were 7.6 and 9.0 percent, respectively, above the previous year.

The nondurable goods group increased 1.0 percent in April and was 3.3 above April last year. After a decline of 1.7 percent in March, general merchandise sales gained 1.5 in April and were 6.7 above the year ago level. Food stores were little changed during the month but rose 3.5 percent from year ago sales. Eating and drinking establishments showed a decline in April but were up 3.0 percent above April 1984. Gasoline service stations sales rose 1.8 percent during the month after a gain of 3.1 percent in March; however, compared to a year ago, sales indicated a decline. Apparel and drug stores showed little change during the month.

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

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales report for May is scheduled to be released June 13, 1985, at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES January 1983-April 1985



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U.S. Department of Commerce
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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 \$37 per year. Add \$9.25 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. This report is available electronically in CENDATA, the Bureau's on-line information service, through a commercial vendor. For further information, contact Customer Services, DUSD, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233, or call (301) 763-4100 or (301) 763-7561.

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

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted ¹				
		1985			1984		1985			1984	
		Apr. ² adv.	Mar. prel.	Feb. final	Apr.	Mar.	Apr. ² adv.	Mar. prel.	Feb. final	Apr.	Mar.
	Retail trade, total.....	109,937	109,607	95,585	104,629	104,381	112,225	111,266	112,096	107,443	104,525
	Total (excl. auto group)..	83,962	83,395	73,256	80,712	80,509	87,448	86,891	87,147	84,407	82,757
	Durable goods, total.....	41,310	40,997	35,195	38,325	37,731	40,822	40,576	41,073	38,302	36,635
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..	5,887	5,219	4,162	5,743	5,051	5,772	5,843	5,618	5,679	5,527
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	3,856	3,058	4,036	3,678	(*)	4,333	4,094	4,110	4,033
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	745	606	787	705	(*)	820	807	782	765
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	25,975	26,212	22,329	23,917	23,872	24,777	24,375	24,949	23,036	21,768
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	23,888	24,276	20,742	21,895	21,956	22,707	22,333	22,945	20,992	19,780
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	21,946	18,980	19,719	19,994	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	1,936	1,587	2,022	1,916	(*)	2,042	2,004	2,044	1,988
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	5,287	5,439	4,875	4,698	4,920	5,613	5,684	5,708	5,150	5,020
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	2,973	2,613	2,748	2,791	(*)	3,037	3,049	2,908	2,794
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	2,069	1,902	1,612	1,779	(*)	2,225	2,251	1,864	1,861
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	635	579	550	566	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	68,627	68,610	60,390	66,304	66,650	71,403	70,690	71,023	69,141	67,890
53	General merchandise group stores..	12,283	11,775	9,315	11,499	10,924	13,384	13,188	13,419	12,547	12,077
531	Department stores.....	10,340	9,933	7,785	9,681	9,218	11,251	11,037	11,266	10,557	10,119
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	693	565	723	671	(*)	762	772	740	737
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	1,149	965	1,095	1,035	(*)	1,389	1,381	1,250	1,221
54	Food stores.....	22,453	23,052	20,799	21,566	22,579	23,238	22,942	23,067	22,443	22,116
541	Grocery stores.....	20,992	21,597	19,512	20,076	21,177	21,799	21,468	21,680	20,978	20,701
554	Gasoline service stations.....	8,255	8,030	7,202	8,311	8,277	8,519	8,365	8,110	8,612	8,604
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	5,744	5,491	4,260	5,447	4,962	5,922	5,899	5,791	5,555	5,386
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	585	489	668	572	(*)	707	699	717	691
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	2,336	1,822	2,275	2,128	(*)	2,438	2,423	2,314	2,233
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	1,419	1,091	1,335	1,222	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	927	673	927	820	(*)	937	884	857	854
58	Eating and drinking places.....	10,453	10,645	9,268	10,149	10,100	10,484	10,666	10,616	10,180	10,060
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	3,800	3,792	3,584	3,549	3,520	3,882	3,865	3,904	3,640	3,545
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,490	1,342	1,457	1,490	(*)	1,604	1,575	1,601	1,583
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	348	278	380	364	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAF ³	(*)	25,756	21,285	24,506	23,598	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
594											

*Advance estimates are not available from the subsample panel for these kinds of business.

NA Not available.

¹Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-85-03).

²Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.

³GAF 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					
		Apr. 1985 advance from--		Mar. 1985 preliminary from--		Feb. 1985 through Apr. 1985	
		Mar. 1985 prelim.	Apr. 1984 final	Feb. 1985 final	Mar. 1984 final	Nov. 1984 through Jan. 1985	Feb. 1984 through Apr. 1984
	Retail trade, total.....	+0.9	+4.5	-0.7	+6.4	+1.2	+5.6
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	+0.6	+3.6	-0.3	+5.0	+0.7	+4.6
	Durable goods, total.....	+0.6	+6.6	-1.2	+10.8	+1.3	+8.6
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	-1.2	+1.6	+4.0	+5.7	-2.3	+2.6
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+1.6	+7.6	-2.3	+12.0	+2.7	+9.3
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+1.7	+8.2	-2.7	+12.9	+2.7	+10.2
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-1.2	+9.0	-0.4	+13.2	+1.4	+12.1
	Nondurable goods, total.....	+1.0	+3.3	-0.5	+4.1	+1.1	+4.0
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+1.5	+6.7	-1.7	+9.2	+1.9	+7.7
531	Department stores.....	+1.9	+6.6	-2.0	+9.1	+1.7	+7.6
54	Food stores.....	+1.3	+3.5	-0.5	+3.7	+1.1	+4.0
541	Grocery stores.....	+1.5	+3.9	-1.0	+3.7	+1.1	+4.2
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+1.8	-1.1	+3.1	-2.8	-0.1	-2.2
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+0.4	+6.6	+1.9	+9.5	+3.6	+8.0
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-1.7	+3.0	+0.5	+6.0	+0.3	+4.6
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+0.4	+6.6	-1.0	+9.0	+1.4	+8.7

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		
		Mar. 1985 prelim.	Feb. 1985 final	Mar. 1984	Mar. 1985 prelim.	Feb. 1985 final	Mar. 1984
	Retail trade, total.....	37,083	31,534	35,398	38,652	38,902	36,364
53	General merchandise group stores.....	10,921	8,605	10,124	12,238	12,463	11,182
531	Department stores.....	9,499	7,444	8,822	10,554	10,788	9,673
533	Variety stores.....	590	471	560	647	653	614
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	832	690	742	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	12,976	11,637	12,685	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	12,813	11,473	12,532	12,586	12,635	12,050
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	2,120	1,547	1,866	2,222	2,259	2,036
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	942	694	843	966	986	891
566	Shoe stores.....	453	320	402	436	440	417
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	2,071	1,938	1,883	2,153	2,168	1,933

¹Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-85-03).

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 subsample 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 -1.1 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 March 1985 and final estimates for February 1985 based on the full sample will be published late this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for March (BR-85-03). 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.

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	0.7	-1.1	+1.2	0.0	0.4
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0.6	0.9	0.7	-0.9	+1.0	0.0	0.4
	Durable goods stores, total.....	1.0	1.7	1.4	-2.0	+2.7	0.0	1.0
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	1.3	3.6	2.0	-2.4	+5.0	+0.6	1.6
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.5	2.4	1.8	-2.0	+2.4	+0.1	1.1
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	1.2	2.2	1.4	-2.4	+2.9	+0.2	1.3
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	1.3	3.3	2.5	-4.6	+3.4	-0.4	1.6
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0.4	0.7	0.5	-0.6	+0.7	0.0	0.3
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.4	0.6	0.5	-1.3	+1.6	+0.2	0.6
531	Department stores.....	0.1	0.5	0.2	-1.1	+1.9	+0.3	0.7
54	Food stores.....	0.8	1.1	1.0	-1.0	+0.6	+0.1	0.4
541	Grocery stores.....	0.2	0.5	0.4	-1.2	+0.6	0.0	0.3
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.6	1.3	0.9	-3.8	+3.0	-0.4	1.7
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.1	3.7	2.1	-1.7	+2.2	0.0	1.1
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.5	1.2	0.9	-2.5	+3.2	+0.1	1.4
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	0.5	1.4	0.6	-2.1	+2.2	-0.1	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 1983.
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, April 1984-March 1985. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period December 1983-November 1984.

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

