

Advance Monthly Retail Sales

CURRENT BUSINESS REPORTS

January 1988

CB 88-26

INTENTION TO REVISE SALES ESTIMATES. The unadjusted and adjusted monthly retail sales benchmark revisions through February 1988 are scheduled for release the week of March 14, 1988

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EST, Thursday, February 11, 1988

Advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for January adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$128.1 billion, an increase of 0.5 percent (+1.3%) from the previous month and 8.5 percent above January 1987. Total sales in the November through January period were virtually unchanged from the prior three months and were 3.8 percent above the same period a year ago.

Durable goods increased 1.3 percent (+2.7%) from the previous month and were 15.7 percent above the previous year. Durable goods less automotive increased 0.8 percent (+ 2.7%) from December and were 4.3 percent above last year. Automotive dealers were up 25.4 percent from January a year ago. Building materials were 5.4 percent above last year, while furniture stores were up 0.3 percent in the same period.

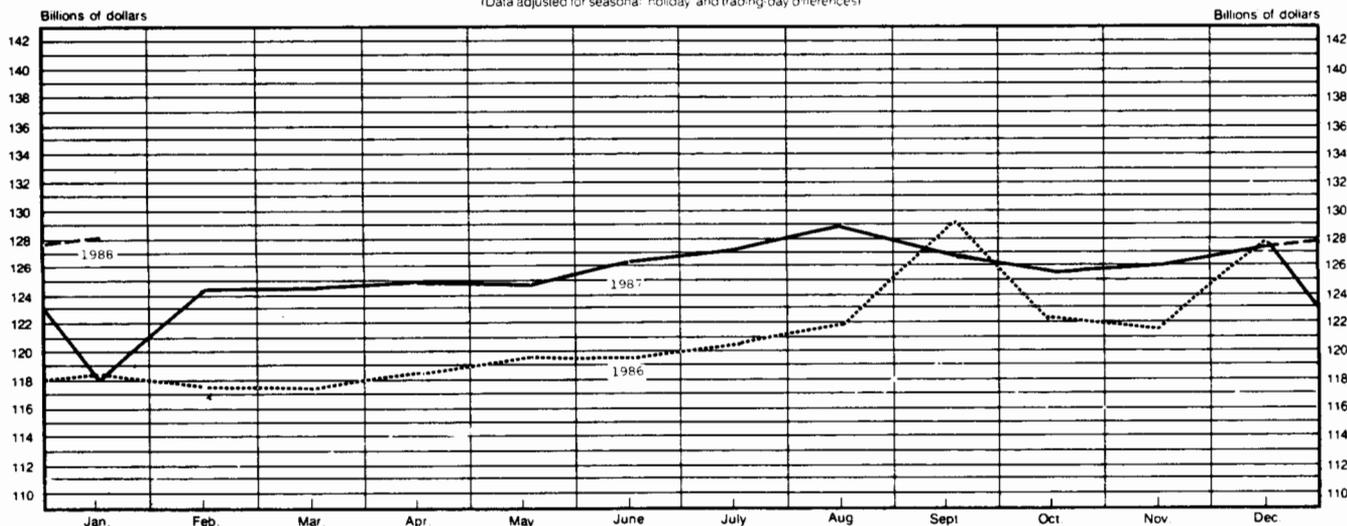
Nondurable goods were virtually unchanged from December but were 4.3 percent above the previous year. The general merchandise group increased 2.5 percent from December and was up 10.6 percent above sales a year ago. Apparel stores were up 7.5 percent from a year ago, drug stores were up 6.8 percent, and gasoline service stations were up 11.0 percent in the same period.

Data in this report are based on a sample and, therefore, are subject to sampling as well as nonsampling errors. A discussion of the reliability of the data is on page 4.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales report for February is scheduled to be released March 11, 1988 at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES January 1986-January 1988

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



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U.S. Department of Commerce
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

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. 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				
		1988	1987			1986	1988	1987			1986
		Jan. ² adv.	Dec. prel.	Nov. final	Jan.	Dec.	Jan. ² adv.	Dec. prel.	Nov. final	JanF	DecF.
	Retail trade, total.....	113,168	154,752	125,375	106,393	152,106	128,078	127,459	125,990	118,049	127,687
	Total (excl. auto group)..	87,506	128,262	99,906	85,496	122,564	98,547	98,394	97,476	94,491	95,277
	Durable goods, total.....	42,951	54,850	46,257	37,769	56,692	50,319	49,692	48,786	43,481	52,523
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..	5,884	7,089	7,288	5,641	6,936	7,804	7,585	7,582	7,401	7,492
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	5,306	5,810	4,378	5,140	(*)	5,896	6,008	5,686	5,737
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,192	993	822	1,030	(*)	1,029	1,022	975	892
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	25,662	26,490	25,469	20,897	29,542	29,531	29,065	28,514	23,558	32,410
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	23,550	24,104	23,138	18,996	27,382	27,069	26,693	26,174	21,368	30,256
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	22,327	21,299	17,230	25,319	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores....	(*)	2,386	2,331	1,901	2,160	(*)	2,372	2,340	2,190	2,154
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	6,230	9,244	7,046	6,288	9,493	6,772	6,600	6,636	6,754	6,820
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	4,133	3,782	3,274	4,248	(*)	3,526	3,575	3,563	3,628
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	4,223	2,766	2,582	4,404	(*)	2,564	2,571	2,724	2,705
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	1,158	889	734	1,151	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	70,217	99,902	79,118	68,624	95,414	77,759	77,767	77,204	74,568	75,164
53	General merchandise group stores..	10,032	26,291	16,409	9,276	24,038	14,443	14,090	13,893	13,062	13,049
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)	8,564	22,302	14,094	7,877	20,272	12,358	12,055	11,904	11,110	11,090
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts.) ³	(*)	23,910	15,101	8,537	21,901	(*)	12,883	12,743	12,058	11,961
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	1,383	730	552	1,269	(*)	738	723	721	685
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	2,606	1,585	847	2,497	(*)	1,297	1,266	1,231	1,274
54	Food stores.....	24,513	27,058	24,370	24,961	26,938	24,954	25,146	25,102	24,942	25,283
541	Grocery stores.....	23,323	25,351	22,995	23,659	25,005	23,606	23,781	23,706	23,495	23,724
554	Gasoline service stations.....	7,356	7,591	7,395	6,641	6,922	7,607	7,486	7,531	6,853	6,826
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	5,665	11,951	7,649	5,377	11,426	7,198	7,237	7,096	6,693	6,943
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	1,579	876	648	1,554	(*)	819	767	794	806
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	4,849	3,193	2,312	4,790	(*)	2,977	2,943	2,861	2,962
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	3,170	1,941	1,090	2,933	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,911	1,325	1,081	1,735	(*)	1,406	1,325	1,292	1,300
58	Eating and drinking places.....	11,904	12,800	12,101	11,843	12,476	12,939	13,061	12,725	12,859	12,770
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	4,377	5,996	4,381	4,182	5,648	4,569	4,491	4,535	4,280	4,237
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	2,278	1,605	1,474	2,224	(*)	1,619	1,620	1,599	1,600
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	367	346	193	369	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAF ⁴	(*)	57,964	36,489	24,505	54,163	(*)	32,893	32,556	30,893	31,179

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

NA Not available. [†]Revised

¹Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-11 program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publication. Factors and explanatory material are contained in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-87-12.

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.

³Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

⁴GAF 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					
		Jan. 1988 advance from--		Dec. 1987 preliminary from--		Nov. 1987 through Jan. 1988	
		Dec. 1987 prelim.	Jan. 1987 final	Nov. 1987 final	Dec. 1986 final	Aug. 1987 through Oct. 1987	Nov. 1986 through Jan. 1987
	Retail trade, total.....	+0.5	+8.5	+1.2	-0.2	0.0	+3.8
	Total (excl. automotive group)....	+0.2	+4.3	+0.9	+3.3	+0.8	+3.7
	Durable goods, total.....	+1.3	+15.7	+1.9	-5.4	-0.5	+3.7
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+2.9	+5.4	0.0	+1.2	+1.4	+3.2
55 ex. 554 551,2,5, 6,7,9 57	Automotive dealers.....	+1.6	+25.4	+1.9	-10.3	-2.3	+4.2
	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous auto- motive dealers.....	+1.4	+26.7	+2.0	-11.8	-2.6	+3.7
	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+2.6	+0.3	-0.5	-3.2	-0.9	-1.8
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.0	+4.3	+0.7	+3.5	+0.4	+3.9
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+2.5	+10.6	+1.4	+8.0	+2.7	+8.8
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	+2.5	+11.2	+1.3	+8.7	+2.8	+9.4
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	(NA)	(NA)	+1.1	+7.7	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	-0.8	0.0	+0.2	-0.5	-0.9	-0.1
541	Grocery stores.....	-0.7	+0.5	+0.3	+0.2	-0.7	+0.5
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+1.6	+11.0	-0.6	+9.7	-1.6	+10.1
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-0.5	+7.5	+2.0	+4.2	+0.3	+5.1
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.9	+0.6	+2.6	+2.3	+2.6	+1.9
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+1.7	+6.8	-1.0	+6.0	+0.8	+6.9

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		
		Dec. 1987 prelim.	Nov. 1987 final	Dec. 1986	Dec. 1987 prelim.	Nov. 1987 final	Dec. ² 1986
	Retail trade, total.....	67,724	49,444	62,971	46,881	46,676	44,242
53	General merchandise group stores.....	24,660	15,336	22,520	13,103	12,934	12,120
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	21,591	13,660	19,632	11,652	11,537	10,728
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	23,126	14,624	21,161	12,487	12,362	11,570
533	Variety stores.....	1,141	595	1,050	591	586	547
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.	1,928	1,081	1,838	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	15,863	14,123	15,251	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	15,529	13,925	14,795	14,273	14,341	13,788
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	6,746	4,258	6,413	3,834	3,843	3,667
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	2,785	1,774	2,734	1,599	1,601	1,589
566	Shoe stores.....	1,182	809	1,113	812	799	770
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	3,816	2,577	3,593	2,610	2,651	2,468

NA Not available. ² Revised

¹ Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-11 program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publication. Factors and explanatory material are contained in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-87-12.

² Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

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 -1.6 percent to +1.0 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 December 1987 and final estimates for November 1987 based on the full sample will be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for December (BR-87-12). 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.

Whenever a statement such as "up 0.8 percent (+1.3%)" appears in the text, this indicates a range from -0.5 percent to +2.1 percent. All ranges given are 90 percent confidence intervals. If the range contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. The Monthly Retail Trade Report includes explanations of confidence intervals and sampling variability along with 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.....	0.7	0.9	0.8	-1.6	-1.0	0.0	0.6
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0.8	0.9	0.8	-0.7	+0.6	0.0	0.4
	Durable goods stores, total.....	1.3	1.7	1.6	-2.1	+0.8	-0.3	0.7
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	0.9	2.0	1.3	-2.6	+4.2	+0.5	1.7
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.5	2.2	1.7	-2.6	+1.7	-0.5	1.1
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	0.9	1.6	1.2	-2.6	+1.7	-0.5	1.2
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	1.8	2.5	2.1	-3.4	+2.7	+0.1	1.5
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0.5	0.7	0.6	-0.7	+0.8	0.0	0.3
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.5	1.0	0.6	-0.6	+1.1	+0.1	0.4
531	Department stores.....	0.2	0.5	0.2	-0.7	+0.6	+0.1	0.3
54	Food stores.....	1.0	1.2	1.0	-0.6	+0.5	-0.1	0.3
541	Grocery stores.....	0.3	0.5	0.4	-0.7	+0.5	-0.1	0.3
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.6	1.3	0.9	-5.2	+3.1	-0.5	1.8
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.1	3.1	1.7	-1.3	+2.2	+0.6	0.9
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.8	1.3	0.9	-2.1	+1.5	0.0	1.0
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	0.3	1.8	0.6	-0.8	+1.2	+0.2	0.6

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, January 1987 - December 1987. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period August 1985-July 1986.

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