

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. ET, Friday, November 12, 1999

**ADVANCE MONTHLY RETAIL SALES
OCTOBER 1999**

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for October adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$252.5 billion, unchanged ($\pm 0.7\%$) from the previous month and up 8.5 percent ($\pm 0.9\%$) from October 1998. Total sales for the August through October period were up 9.8 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from the same period a year ago. The August to September 1999 percent change was revised from +0.1 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) to -0.1 percent ($\pm 0.3\%$).

Durable goods decreased 0.6 percent ($\pm 1.4\%$) from September but were 8.1 percent above last year. Automotive sales were up 8.7 percent from October a year ago, while building materials sales were up 8.3 percent during the same period.

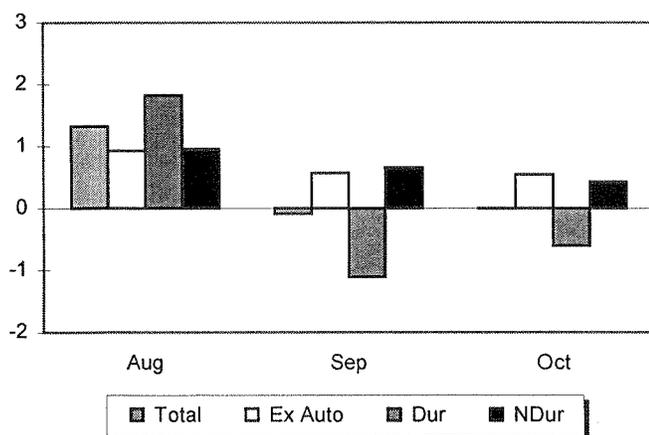
Nondurable goods increased 0.4 percent ($\pm 0.6\%$) from September and were up 8.8 percent from October 1998. Gasoline sales were up 18.0 percent from October a year ago, while drug store sales were up 12.0 percent during the same period.

The advance estimates are based on a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail sales sample. Estimates from the advance and the subsequent full survey can differ because of the earlier reporting in the advance and because of sampling variability present in both surveys.

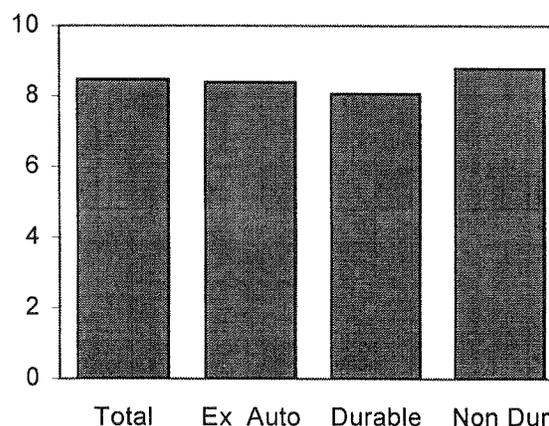
Percent Change in Retail Sales

(Data adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)

From Previous Month



From Previous Year



The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for November is scheduled to be released December 14, 1999 at 8:30 a.m.

Address inquiries concerning this report to Scott Scheleur, Service Sector Statistics Division, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC 20233. Telephone: 301-457-2713 or 301-457-2666.

This report is available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's online Economic Bulletin Board. For information call 202-482-1986. The data are also available on the Internet - <http://www.census.gov/svsd/www/advtable.html>.

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

(In Millions of Dollars and Annual Percent Change)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted						Adjusted ¹					
		10 month total		1999			1998		1999			1998	
		1999	Change from 1998	Oct. ² (a)	Sept. (p)	Aug. (r)	Oct.	Sept.	Oct. ² (a)	Sept. (p)	Aug. (r)	Oct. (r)	Sept. (r)
	Retail trade, total.....	2,422,535	8.6	249,941	245,626	256,823	234,928	222,104	252,540	252,549	252,768	232,794	229,505
	Total (excl. auto dealers).....	1,795,083	7.7	189,419	182,599	188,904	177,226	167,160	190,252	189,222	188,153	175,516	174,094
	Durable goods, total.....	1,031,129	9.9	102,067	104,199	110,798	97,193	93,393	104,945	105,583	106,764	97,115	94,797
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.	153,411	10.5	15,696	15,541	16,011	14,867	14,548	15,180	14,919	15,114	14,022	13,881
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores..	(*)	(*)	(*)	11,946	12,474	11,453	11,148	(*)	11,399	11,647	10,595	10,557
525		(*)	(*)	(*)	1,275	1,295	1,268	1,260	(*)	1,274	1,275	1,227	1,266
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	627,452	11.1	60,522	63,027	67,919	57,702	54,944	62,288	63,327	64,615	57,278	55,411
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	595,196	11.6	57,201	59,771	64,477	54,365	51,787	59,092	60,132	61,407	54,148	52,310
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	(*)	(*)	51,786	55,685	47,027	44,866	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,256	3,442	3,337	3,157	(*)	3,195	3,208	3,130	3,101
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	128,595	7.6	13,397	13,437	13,738	12,639	12,251	13,883	14,010	13,759	12,872	12,787
571	Furniture and home furnishings.	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,431	6,512	6,145	5,800	(*)	6,562	6,441	6,007	5,930
5722,31,4	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,000	6,252	5,503	5,465	(*)	6,403	6,277	5,805	5,820
5722	Household appliance stores.	(*)	(*)	(*)	944	969	911	872	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	1,391,406	7.6	147,874	141,427	146,025	137,735	128,711	147,595	146,966	146,004	135,679	134,708
53	General merchandise group stores.	289,722	8.6	31,213	29,251	30,845	29,271	26,500	32,140	32,182	31,882	29,779	29,555
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts)..	225,312	7.8	24,272	22,684	24,044	22,864	20,665	25,100	25,121	24,865	23,402	23,219
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) ³ ..	(*)	(*)	(*)	23,110	24,507	23,324	21,079	(*)	25,638	25,358	23,826	23,707
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,077	1,089	1,015	860	(*)	1,164	1,159	990	958
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,490	5,712	5,392	4,975	(*)	5,897	5,858	5,387	5,378
54	Food stores.....	378,853	4.9	39,029	38,310	38,544	37,388	35,967	38,973	38,731	38,499	36,869	36,716
541	Grocery stores.....	359,377	5.1	37,097	36,405	36,590	35,416	34,077	37,023	36,736	36,517	34,893	34,737
554	Gasoline service stations.....	147,398	8.4	16,172	15,808	16,500	13,841	13,404	15,808	15,761	15,449	13,399	13,364
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	104,524	6.7	11,307	10,748	12,022	10,816	9,778	11,375	11,269	11,379	10,595	10,403
561	Men's and boy's clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	859	938	945	820	(*)	943	978	918	917
562,3	Women's clothing, specialty stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,825	2,920	2,833	2,618	(*)	2,986	3,048	2,805	2,797
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,211	4,754	4,339	3,717	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,676	2,136	1,708	1,624	(*)	1,751	1,792	1,781	1,709
58	Eating and drinking places.....	236,816	6.8	24,611	23,439	24,934	23,385	21,978	24,034	23,844	23,702	22,704	22,404
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	96,374	11.4	9,965	9,545	9,627	9,033	8,556	10,200	10,058	9,976	9,106	9,044
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,224	2,235	2,148	2,011	(*)	2,324	2,269	2,123	2,110
5961	Total mail order.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,257	6,750	6,835	6,086	(*)	7,497	7,508	6,225	6,229
53,56,57,594	GAF ⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	61,026	64,786	60,159	55,848	(*)	66,057	65,569	61,523	61,006

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

NA Not available. (a) Advance estimates. (p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

(1) Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes. 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-99-09.

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

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

(4) GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise (general merchandise, apparel, furniture, and miscellaneous shopping goods stores).

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, but not for price changes)

SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change ¹					
		Oct. 1999 Advance from --		Sept. 1999 Preliminary from --		Aug. 1999 through Oct. 1999 from --	
		Sept. 1999 (p)	Oct. 1998 (r)	Aug. 1999 (r)	Sept. 1998 (r)	May 1999 through July 1999	Aug. 1998 through Oct. 1998
	Retail trade, total	0.0	8.5	-0.1	10.0	1.9	9.8
	Total (excl. automotive dealers)	0.5	8.4	0.6	8.7	1.8	8.4
	Durable goods, total	-0.6	8.1	-1.1	11.4	1.7	11.2
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers	1.7	8.3	-1.3	7.5	-0.1	8.6
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-1.6	8.7	-2.0	14.3	2.2	14.0
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	-1.7	9.1	-2.1	15.0	2.3	14.6
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-0.9	7.9	1.8	9.6	2.5	8.4
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.4	8.8	0.7	9.1	2.0	8.8
53	General merchandise group stores.....	-0.1	7.9	0.9	8.9	1.5	8.5
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	-0.1	7.3	1.0	8.2	1.3	7.6
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ²	(NA)	(NA)	1.1	8.1	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	0.6	5.7	0.6	5.5	1.3	5.2
541	Grocery stores.....	0.8	6.1	0.6	5.8	1.5	5.5
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.3	18.0	2.0	17.9	7.1	17.0
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	0.9	7.4	-1.0	8.3	-0.3	7.7
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.8	5.9	0.6	6.4	0.8	6.4
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	1.4	12.0	0.8	11.2	1.9	11.3

NA Not available. (p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

(1) Percent change rounded to nearest tenth.

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

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

Reliability of Data

The Advance estimates are based on a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail sales sample. Estimates from the Advance and the subsequent full survey can differ because of the earlier reporting in the Advance and because of sampling variability present in each survey. The margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is a 90% confidence interval. If, for example, the trend estimate is +1.2% and the standard error is 0.9%, then the margin of sampling error is $\pm 1.65 \times 0.9\%$ or $\pm 1.5\%$, and the 90% confidence interval is -0.3% to +2.7%. If the interval contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. For monthly level, the coefficient of variation (CV) is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated value $\pm 1.65 \times CV \times$ (the estimated value).

Estimates of sampling variability are given in Table 3. They are based on two components. The first component is a measure of the average

difference between the Advance and the Preliminary estimates. The second reflects the variability of the Preliminary estimate. Additionally, both the Advance and the full survey are subject to nonsampling errors. Such errors can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, and response errors, among others. Precautionary steps are taken to minimize these errors, but their magnitude is not directly measured.

Preliminary estimates for the current month and final estimates for the previous month based on the full sample are published next month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report. This report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and additional measures of sampling variability. It will also present a description of revisions and the techniques used in developing the estimates, and an explanation of confidence intervals and sampling variability (Appendix B, Reliability of Data).

Table 3. Measures of Variability of and Revision to Advance Estimates for Level and Trend

SIC code	Kind of Business	Level of sales: Estimated CV ¹ for Current Mo. (x 100)	Trend (percent change): Estimated standard error ¹ for			Revision for month- to-month change ²	
			Current Mo. to Previous Mo.	Current Qtr. to Previous Qtr.	Current Mo. to Current Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	Retail trade, total.....	7.0	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.2	0.3
	Total (excl. auto dealers)	1.0	0.6	0.3	0.7	0.2	0.3
	Durable goods, total	1.4	0.9	0.6	1.1	0.1	0.4
52	Building materials, group stores	3.5	1.9	1.1	2.7	0.2	1.1
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.6	1.2	0.8	1.5	0.1	0.5
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	1.8	1.3	0.9	1.6	0.2	0.7
57	Furniture, home furn, and equipment stores	2.0	1.4	0.7	1.8	0.1	0.4
	Nondurable goods, total.....	1.1	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.3
53	General merch. group, total.....	0.6	0.6	0.2	0.6	0.1	0.3
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)..	0.4	0.5	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.3
54	Food stores.....	1.2	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.2	0.3
541	Grocery stores	1.2	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.3
554	Gasoline service stations	2.2	1.2	1.4	1.4	0.5	1.0
56	Apparel and accessory stores	1.9	1.5	0.6	1.6	0.1	0.7
58	Eating and drinking places	5.1	1.0	0.9	2.2	0.5	0.5
591	Drug and proprietary stores	1.7	0.8	0.4	1.2	-0.1	0.3



- (1) The coefficients of variation (CVs) for level of sales and the standard errors for trends are medians based on estimates for the preceding 12 months.
- (2) These columns measure the difference between the Advance/Preliminary ratio and the Preliminary/Final ratio estimates -- i.e., the difference between estimates of trend for the same pair of data months. The revisions are based on the latest 12 months of data.