

Intention to Revise Retail Estimates: Monthly retail sales estimates will be revised based on the results of the 2000 Annual Retail Trade Survey. Revised unadjusted and corresponding adjusted data are scheduled for release on May 3.

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. ET, Friday, April 12, 2002.

**ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL TRADE AND FOOD SERVICES
MARCH 2002**

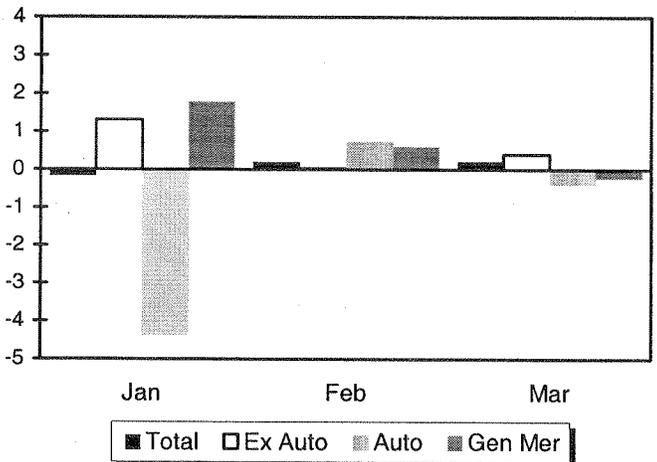
The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for March, adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$297.3 billion, an increase of 0.2 percent ($\pm 1.0\%$) from the previous month and up 3.6 percent ($\pm 1.7\%$) from March 2001. Total sales for the January through March period were up 3.2 percent ($\pm 0.3\%$) from the same period a year ago. The January to February 2002 percent change was revised from 0.3 percent ($\pm 1.0\%$) to 0.2 percent ($\pm 0.2\%$).

Retail trade sales were up 0.3 percent ($\pm 1.2\%$) from February and were 3.4 percent ($\pm 1.7\%$) above last year. Electronics and appliance stores were up 9.5 percent ($\pm 2.6\%$) from March 2001 and sales of health and personal care stores were up 7.2 percent ($\pm 3.6\%$) from last year. Sales of gasoline stations decreased 6.3 percent ($\pm 4.8\%$) from March a year ago.

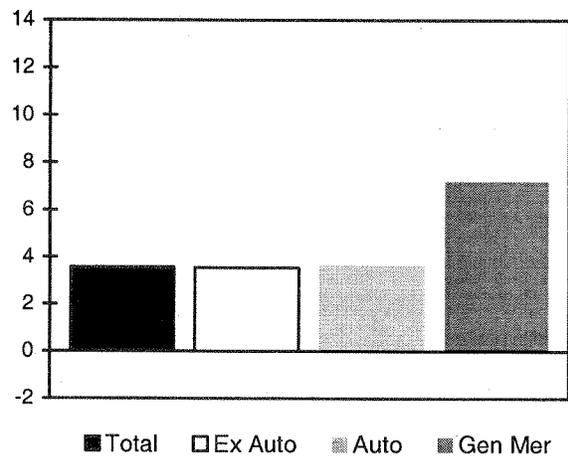
The advance estimates are based on a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail sales and food services sample. Estimates from the advance and the subsequent full survey can differ because of the earlier reporting in the advance and because of sampling variability present in both surveys. For an explanation of the measures of sampling variability included in this report, please see the Reliability of Estimates section on the last page of this publication.

Percent Change in Retail Sales and Food Services 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 April is scheduled to be released May 14, 2002 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 Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services, by Kind of Business

(In Millions of Dollars and Annual Percent Change)

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted							Adjusted ¹				
		3 Month Total		2002			2001		2002			2001	
		2002	% Chg. 2001	Mar. ² (a)	Feb. (p)	Jan. (r)	Mar.	Feb.	Mar. ² (a)	Feb. (p)	Jan. (r)	Mar. (r)	Feb. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	827,544	2.9	297,506	263,769	266,269	290,332	255,884	297,342	296,705	296,099	287,134	287,977
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	617,576	3.1	221,391	195,547	200,638	213,877	190,196	224,445	223,520	223,452	216,795	217,497
	Retail	748,307	2.7	269,063	238,328	240,916	263,054	231,868	269,701	268,961	268,511	260,753	261,759
	GAFO ³	(*)	(*)	(*)	65,620	64,974	69,364	61,876	(*)	78,289	78,030	73,605	74,088
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	209,968	2.3	76,115	68,222	65,631	76,455	65,688	72,897	73,185	72,647	70,339	70,480
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	192,857	2.4	70,067	62,783	60,007	70,251	60,366	66,794	67,004	66,527	64,274	64,425
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	53,292	51,714	59,966	52,019	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,439	5,624	6,204	5,322	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	22,215	3.2	7,840	7,173	7,202	7,621	6,836	7,984	7,997	7,914	7,606	7,638
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,094	4,055	4,250	3,842	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,079	3,147	3,371	2,994	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	21,817	7.4	7,408	7,016	7,393	6,923	6,472	7,755	7,720	7,647	7,085	7,127
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,972	5,141	4,739	4,503	(*)	5,562	5,475	5,036	5,048
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,044	2,252	2,184	1,969	(*)	2,158	2,172	2,049	2,079
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	64,916	3.4	23,850	20,200	20,866	23,710	19,411	25,065	24,888	24,947	24,102	23,940
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	17,970	18,601	20,139	16,881	(*)	22,022	22,065	20,805	20,688
445	Food & beverage stores	117,750	3.9	41,457	36,905	39,388	39,757	35,911	41,015	40,876	40,911	39,724	39,811
4451	Grocery stores	107,198	3.8	37,646	33,493	36,059	36,137	32,679	37,090	36,887	36,984	35,921	36,030
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,192	2,192	2,365	2,083	(*)	2,603	2,573	2,471	2,474
446	Health & personal care stores	44,881	8.8	15,506	14,397	14,978	14,363	13,212	15,098	15,139	15,114	14,081	13,922
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	12,408	13,029	12,235	11,350	(*)	13,116	13,108	12,066	11,998
447	Gasoline stations	50,318	-11.4	18,305	15,592	16,421	19,741	17,971	18,698	18,005	18,105	19,961	20,704
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	36,749	4.8	14,271	11,952	10,526	13,242	11,625	14,737	14,776	14,699	14,175	14,460
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	662	670	810	696	(*)	852	839	898	902
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,243	2,006	2,744	2,211	(*)	2,797	2,740	2,674	2,788
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,627	3,396	4,391	3,598	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,547	1,377	1,801	1,477	(*)	1,887	1,853	1,812	1,808
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	20,027	8.8	7,002	5,948	7,077	6,559	5,666	7,644	7,474	7,740	7,065	7,102
452	General merchandise stores	94,165	8.6	34,906	30,046	29,213	31,537	27,929	36,513	36,597	36,380	34,057	34,185
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	52,541	7.9	19,789	16,675	16,077	17,790	15,749	20,567	20,638	20,593	19,343	19,571
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	16,976	16,370	18,143	16,061	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	13,371	13,136	13,747	12,180	(*)	15,959	15,787	14,714	14,614
45291	Warehouse clubs & superstores	(*)	(*)	(*)	10,560	10,380	10,892	9,625	(*)	12,601	12,401	11,674	11,569
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,811	2,756	2,855	2,555	(*)	3,358	3,386	3,040	3,045
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	26,289	1.5	8,922	8,746	8,621	9,215	8,493	9,239	9,365	9,364	9,372	9,104
454	Nonstore retailers	39,212	-5.0	13,481	12,131	13,600	13,931	12,654	13,056	12,939	13,043	13,186	13,286
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	8,138	9,064	9,125	7,792	(*)	9,269	9,364	8,999	8,895
722	Food services & drinking places ...	79,237	5.0	28,443	25,441	25,353	27,278	24,016	27,641	27,744	27,588	26,381	26,218

(*) Advance estimates are not available from the subsample panel for these business classifications.

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

Note: Totals include data for business classifications not shown separately.

- 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-12-ARIMA 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 released on the Internet at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>.
- 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.
- GAFO represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise (furniture & home furnishings (442), electronics & appliances(443), clothing & accessories(448), sporting goods, hobby, book, music (451), general merchandise(452), office supplies, stationery, and gift stores(4532)).
- Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services, by Kind of Business

(Adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Percent Change ¹					
		Mar. 2002 Advance from --		Feb. 2002 Preliminary from --		Jan. 2002 through Mar. 2002 from --	
		Feb. 2002 (p)	Mar. 2001 (r)	Jan. 2002 (r)	Feb. 2001 (r)	Oct. 2001 through Dec. 2001	Jan. 2001 through Mar. 2001
	Retail & food services, total	0.2	3.6	0.2	3.0	-0.8	3.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.4	3.5	0.0	2.8	2.0	3.0
	Retail	0.3	3.4	0.2	2.8	-1.0	3.0
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	-0.4	3.6	0.7	3.8	-8.3	3.8
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	-0.3	3.9	0.7	4.0	-9.2	4.0
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	-0.2	5.0	1.0	4.7	2.6	3.7
443	Electronics & appliance stores	0.5	9.5	1.0	8.3	0.4	8.2
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	0.7	4.0	-0.2	4.0	2.3	4.6
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.3	3.2	-0.1	2.7	0.7	3.1
4451	Grocery stores	0.6	3.3	-0.3	2.4	0.7	3.0
446	Health & personal care stores	-0.3	7.2	0.2	8.7	2.8	8.4
447	Gasoline stations	3.8	-6.3	-0.6	-13.0	1.7	-10.7
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	-0.3	4.0	0.5	2.2	4.2	2.8
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	2.3	8.2	-3.4	5.2	0.2	8.1
452	General merchandise stores.....	-0.2	7.2	0.6	7.1	3.2	6.5
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	-0.3	6.3	0.2	5.5	3.4	5.3
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	-1.3	-1.4	0.0	2.9	-0.5	1.7
454	Nonstore retailers	0.9	-1.0	-0.8	-2.6	4.1	-2.7
722	Food services & drinking places	-0.4	4.8	0.6	5.8	1.1	4.7

(p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

(1) Percent change rounded to nearest tenth.

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

Reliability of Estimates

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.

nonsampling errors. Such errors can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, and response errors. Additionally, estimates of sales prior to March 2001 have been restated from SIC-based estimates. The restatement methodology may have introduced additional nonsampling error. Precautionary steps are taken to minimize nonsampling 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 will be 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, the techniques used in developing the estimates, and an explanation of confidence intervals and sampling variability (Appendix B, Reliability of Estimates).

Estimates from the Advance and the full survey are subject to

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

NAICS Code	Kind of Business	Level of sales: Median CV ⁽²⁾ for Current Mo. (%)	Trend (percent change): Median standard error ⁽²⁾ for			Revision for month- to-month change ⁽¹⁾	
			Current Mo. to Previous Mo.	Current Qtr. to Previous Qtr.	Current Mo. to Current Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	Retail & food services,						
	total	0.7	0.6	0.2	1.0	0.1	0.3
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.7	0.6	0.2	1.0	0.1	0.2
	Retail	0.7	0.7	0.2	1.0	0.0	0.2
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1.8	1.8	0.7	2.1	0.0	0.8
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers	2.0	1.9	0.7	2.3	0.0	0.8
442	Furniture & home furn. stores.....	3.7	2.0	1.0	5.0	0.0	0.9
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.3	0.7	0.8	1.6	0.4	0.5
444	Building material & garden eq. & ..						
	supplies dealers.....	1.8	1.1	0.5	3.6	0.1	0.4
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.8	0.1	0.2
4451	Grocery stores	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.9	0.1	0.2
446	Health & personal care stores	2.1	0.6	0.6	2.2	-0.1	0.4
447	Gasoline stations	1.8	1.0	0.3	2.9	-0.3	0.8
448	Clothing & clothing accessories						
	stores	1.5	1.0	0.4	2.1	-0.1	0.5
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book &						
	music stores.....	2.5	2.4	1.1	3.1	0.3	1.3
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.3
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.1	0.5
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	3.6	3.7	1.6	11.9	0.6	1.0
454	Nonstore retailers	6.4	3.2	1.1	5.7	0.6	1.0
722	Food services & drinking places ..	2.3	1.4	0.6	2.8	0.3	0.8



(1) These columns measure the difference between the estimates of trend for the same pair of data months, i.e. the difference between the Advance/Preliminary ratio and the Preliminary/Final ratio estimates. These revisions combine data from the SIC-based and NAICS-based samples.

(2) Medians are based on the period February 2001 to present.