

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. ET, Thursday, December 11, 2003

## ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES NOVEMBER 2003

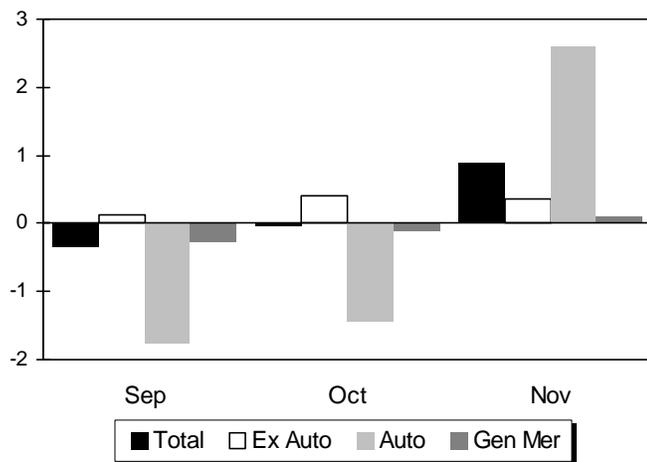
The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for November, adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$322.4 billion, an increase of 0.9 percent ( $\pm 1.0\%$ ) from the previous month and up 6.9 percent ( $\pm 1.0\%$ ) from November 2002. Total sales for the September through November 2003 period were up 6.9 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ ) from the same period a year ago. The September to October 2003 percent change was revised from -0.3 percent ( $\pm 1.0\%$ ) to 0.0 percent ( $\pm 0.4\%$ ).

Retail trade sales were up 1.0 percent ( $\pm 1.0\%$ ) from October and were 6.6 percent ( $\pm 1.0\%$ ) above last year. Electronics and appliance stores were up 15.0 percent ( $\pm 1.8\%$ ) from November 2002 and sales of building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers were up 11.0 percent ( $\pm 2.1\%$ ) from last year.

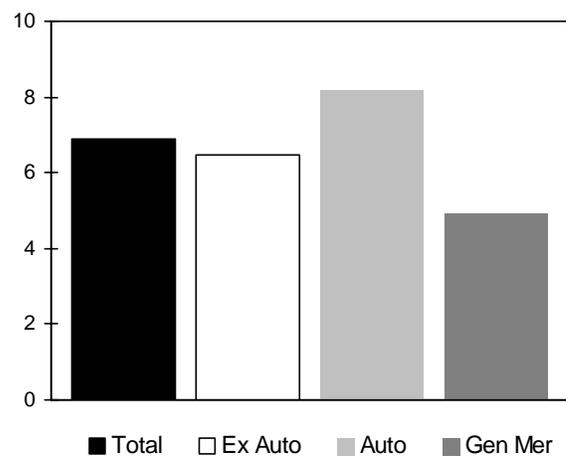
*The advance estimates are based on a subsample of the Bureau's full retail and food services sample. A stratified random sampling method is used to select approximately 5,000 retail and food services firms whose sales are then weighted and benchmarked to represent the complete universe of over three million retail and food services firms. Responding firms account for approximately 65% of the MARTS dollar volume estimate. 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 and Food Services Sales

From Previous Month



From Previous Year



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

The Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services for December is scheduled to be released January 15, 2004 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: 301-763-2713.

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/retail>.

**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 <sup>1</sup>					
		11 Month Total		2003			2002		2003			2002	
		2003	% Chg. 2002	Nov. <sup>2</sup> (a)	Oct. (p)	Sept. (r)	Nov.	Oct.	Nov. <sup>2</sup> (a)	Oct. (p)	Sept. (r)	Nov. (r)	Oct. (r)
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>												
	<b>total</b> .....	3,405,165	5.4	315,101	319,942	308,814	301,391	298,773	322,356	319,495	319,621	301,630	299,924
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	2,573,564	5.2	248,447	246,109	232,933	237,574	229,121	245,264	244,359	243,383	230,368	229,496
	Retail .....	3,077,842	5.2	285,522	288,708	279,478	274,014	270,824	291,577	288,813	289,594	273,522	272,197
	GAFO <sup>3</sup> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	79,849	74,935	87,844	75,626	(*)	82,512	82,423	78,562	78,988
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	831,601	5.8	66,654	73,833	75,881	63,817	69,652	77,092	75,136	76,238	71,262	70,428
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	759,473	6.0	60,400	66,822	69,147	57,870	63,048	70,396	68,465	69,564	65,022	64,204
44111	New car dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	56,643	58,952	49,872	54,481	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,011	6,734	5,947	6,604	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	89,969	5.2	9,507	8,722	8,376	8,909	7,968	8,730	8,644	8,608	8,019	7,905
4421	Furniture stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,608	4,459	4,835	4,319	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,114	3,917	4,074	3,649	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	82,299	5.6	9,499	7,792	7,556	8,310	7,032	8,564	8,382	8,253	7,449	7,593
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,426	5,262	6,267	4,958	(*)	6,016	5,919	5,412	5,540
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,366	2,294	2,043	2,074	(*)	2,366	2,334	2,037	2,053
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	297,428	6.6	25,609	29,814	28,143	23,771	26,687	28,204	28,116	27,692	25,398	25,110
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	26,921	25,570	21,476	24,058	(*)	24,744	24,306	22,301	22,112
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	461,438	3.4	42,530	42,877	41,349	41,917	40,733	42,692	42,799	42,931	41,523	41,034
4451	Grocery stores .....	416,911	3.2	38,181	38,528	37,277	37,784	36,912	38,334	38,375	38,549	37,521	37,060
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,815	2,627	2,747	2,531	(*)	2,809	2,798	2,589	2,588
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	172,893	6.0	15,927	16,556	15,666	14,875	15,315	16,608	16,392	16,285	15,194	15,269
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	14,238	13,497	12,753	13,024	(*)	14,055	13,972	13,013	12,946
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	241,741	9.5	20,707	22,508	22,401	19,993	21,298	22,170	21,831	22,245	20,935	20,942
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	151,743	3.5	16,498	14,612	13,574	15,816	13,939	15,230	15,071	15,064	14,409	14,535
44811	Men's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	873	775	932	821	(*)	850	858	818	822
44812	Women's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,031	2,849	3,016	2,789	(*)	3,001	2,993	2,878	2,811
44814	Family clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,295	4,804	6,008	5,189	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,766	1,705	1,761	1,664	(*)	1,873	1,849	1,810	1,793
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	69,144	-0.9	7,563	6,109	6,375	7,901	6,133	6,753	6,788	6,811	6,906	6,883
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	414,530	4.5	45,327	39,284	35,820	43,428	37,122	40,334	40,291	40,332	38,447	38,608
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	186,387	-4.0	20,850	17,542	15,887	21,598	17,960	17,875	18,080	18,266	18,437	18,931
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) <sup>4</sup> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	17,820	16,143	21,944	18,242	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	21,742	19,933	21,830	19,162	(*)	22,211	22,066	20,010	19,677
45291	Warehouse clubs & superstores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	18,376	16,930	18,375	16,092	(*)	18,828	18,707	16,920	16,573
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,366	3,003	3,455	3,070	(*)	3,383	3,359	3,090	3,104
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	93,420	-0.2	8,436	9,034	8,529	8,567	8,882	8,751	8,842	8,746	8,565	8,720
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	171,636	6.9	17,265	17,567	15,808	16,710	16,063	16,449	16,521	16,389	15,415	15,170
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses ....	(*)	(*)	(*)	11,061	10,301	10,821	10,254	(*)	10,465	10,426	9,837	9,692
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ...	327,323	7.0	29,579	31,234	29,336	27,377	27,949	30,779	30,682	30,027	28,108	27,727

(\*) 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.

(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-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>.

(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) 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)).

(4) 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 <sup>1</sup>					
		Nov. 2003 Advance from --		Oct. 2003 Preliminary from --		Sept. 2003 through Nov. 2003 from --	
		Oct. 2003 (p)	Nov. 2002 (r)	Sept. 2003 (r)	Oct. 2002 (r)	Jun. 2003 through Aug. 2003	Sept. 2002 through Nov. 2002
	<b>Retail &amp; food services, total .....</b>	0.9	6.9	0.0	6.5	1.1	6.9
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ....	0.4	6.5	0.4	6.5	1.7	6.7
	Retail .....	1.0	6.6	-0.3	6.1	1.0	6.6
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers .....</b>	2.6	8.2	-1.4	6.7	-0.8	7.5
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	2.8	8.3	-1.6	6.6	-1.1	7.5
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores .....</b>	1.0	8.9	0.4	9.3	2.6	8.9
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores .....</b>	2.2	15.0	1.6	10.4	5.3	12.0
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers.....</b>	0.3	11.0	1.5	12.0	3.2	10.9
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores.....</b>	-0.3	2.8	-0.3	4.3	0.6	4.1
4451	Grocery stores .....	-0.1	2.2	-0.5	3.5	0.2	3.4
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores .....</b>	1.3	9.3	0.7	7.4	2.4	7.8
447	<b>Gasoline stations .....</b>	1.6	5.9	-1.9	4.2	2.3	6.4
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores .....</b>	1.1	5.7	0.0	3.7	1.3	6.0
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores.....</b>	-0.5	-2.2	-0.3	-1.4	-1.3	-1.5
452	<b>General merchandise stores.....</b>	0.1	4.9	-0.1	4.4	0.8	5.2
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	-1.1	-3.0	-1.0	-4.5	-1.7	-3.1
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers .....</b>	-1.0	2.2	1.1	1.4	0.4	0.9
454	<b>Nonstore retailers .....</b>	-0.4	6.7	0.8	8.9	3.2	8.5
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places ....</b>	0.3	9.5	2.2	10.7	1.3	9.3

(p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

(1) Percent change rounded to nearest tenth.

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

### Source of Data and Reliability of Estimates

**Source of Data:** The Census Bureau conducts the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey each month to provide an early indication of sales of retail and food service companies. The Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey is a voluntary survey of a sub-sample of about 5,000 firms selected from the Monthly Retail Trade Survey. Firms responding to this survey account for approximately 65% of the dollar volume estimate.

**Reliability of Estimates:** The reliability of the estimates is a function of sampling and nonsampling errors. The margin of sampling error, as included 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 error, on the other hand, can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, and response errors. Although not directly measured, precautionary steps are taken to minimize nonsampling error. Additional survey information is available at <http://www.census.gov/retail>.

**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 <sup>(2)</sup> for Current Mo. (%)	Trend (percent change): Median standard error <sup>(2)</sup> for			Revision for month- to-month change <sup>(1)</sup>	
			Current Mo. to Previous Mo.	Current Qtr. to Previous Qtr.	Current Mo. to Current Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>						
	total .....	0.7	0.6	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.4
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.2	0.2
	<b>Retail .....</b>	0.8	0.6	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.4
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers .....</b>	2.0	1.5	0.7	1.9	0.8	1.2
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	2.1	1.7	0.8	2.1	0.8	1.3
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores.....</b>	3.7	1.7	1.2	2.0	0.3	0.9
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores .....</b>	1.7	0.6	0.5	1.1	0.2	0.6
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; ..</b>						
	supplies dealers.....	2.1	1.1	0.8	1.3	0.0	0.5
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores.....</b>	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.2
4451	Grocery stores .....	0.9	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.2
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores .....</b>	2.9	0.5	0.4	1.1	0.0	0.2
447	<b>Gasoline stations .....</b>	1.8	0.7	0.5	1.3	0.4	0.5
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories</b>						
	stores .....	1.5	0.7	0.5	1.1	0.5	0.7
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp;</b>						
	music stores.....	2.4	1.8	1.3	1.8	0.2	0.8
452	<b>General merchandise stores.....</b>	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.2	-0.1	0.2
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.2	0.3
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers .....</b>	3.4	3.2	1.8	3.3	0.3	0.7
454	<b>Nonstore retailers .....</b>	4.5	2.2	0.9	2.6	0.0	0.9
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places ..</b>	2.2	0.8	0.8	1.6	0.3	0.6



(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. Revisions are based on estimates from the 12 most recent months.  
 (2) Medians are based on estimates from the 12 most recent months.