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## ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES December 2006

**Intention to Revise Retail Estimates:** Monthly retail sales estimates will be revised based on the 2005 Annual Retail Trade Survey. Revised unadjusted and corresponding adjusted data are scheduled for release the week of March 26, 2007.

The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for December, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$369.9 billion, an increase of 0.9 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) from the previous month and up 5.4 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) from December 2005. Total sales for the 12 months of 2006 were up 6.0 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ ) from 2005. Total sales for the October through December 2006 period were up 4.9 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ ) from the same period a year ago. The October to November 2006 percent change was revised from +1.0 percent ( $\pm 0.8\%$ ) to +0.6 percent ( $\pm 0.2\%$ ).

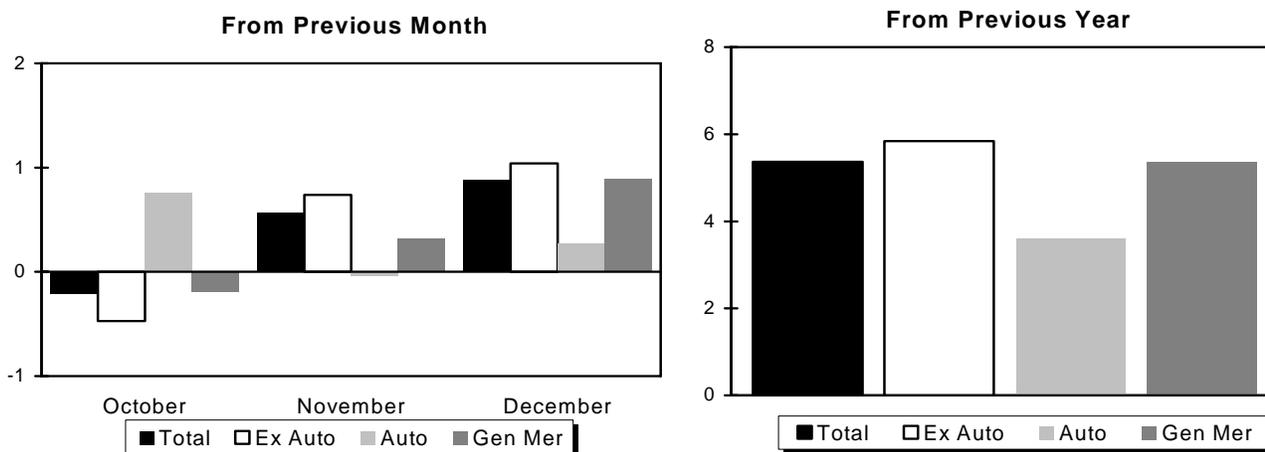
Retail trade sales were up 0.7 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ )\* from November and were 4.9 percent ( $\pm 0.8\%$ ) above last year. Electronics and appliance stores were up 15.0 percent ( $\pm 1.7\%$ ) from December 2005 and sales of health and personal care stores were up 10.2 percent ( $\pm 1.7\%$ ) from last year.

The scheduled release dates for 2007 are as follows: January 12, February 14, March 13, April 16, May 11, June 13, July 13, August 13, September 14, October 12, November 14, December 13.

*The advance estimates are based on a subsample of the Census 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

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



The Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services for January is scheduled to be released February 14, 2007 at 8:30 a.m. EST.

For information, visit the Census Bureau's Web site at <http://www.census.gov/retail>. This report is also available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's STAT-USA (202-482-1986).

\* The 90 percent confidence interval includes zero. The Census Bureau does not have sufficient statistical evidence to conclude that the actual change is different than zero.

# Table 1. Estimated Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services, by Kind of Business

(Total sales estimates are shown in millions of dollars and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, Monthly Retail Trade Survey, and administrative records.)

NAICS <sup>1</sup> code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted							Adjusted <sup>2</sup>				
		12 Month Total		2006			2005		2006			2005	
		2006	% Chg. 2005	Dec. <sup>3</sup> (a)	Nov. (p)	Oct. (r)	Dec.	Nov.	Dec. <sup>3</sup> (a)	Nov. (p)	Oct. (r)	Dec. (r)	Nov. (r)
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>												
	<b>total</b> .....	4,364,542	6.0	423,874	363,938	354,740	409,063	346,993	369,865	366,633	364,538	351,025	350,460
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	3,455,415	7.3	352,778	295,523	283,580	337,946	281,633	292,642	289,620	287,492	276,486	276,890
	Retail .....	3,935,699	5.8	385,477	329,408	318,366	373,878	314,773	332,441	330,055	328,091	316,798	316,329
	<b>GAFO<sup>4</sup></b> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	104,350	90,031	140,327	98,987	(*)	95,188	94,692	90,109	90,680
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	909,127	1.6	71,096	68,415	71,160	71,117	65,360	77,223	77,013	77,046	74,539	73,570
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	833,420	1.4	65,208	62,301	64,741	65,062	59,237	70,878	70,716	70,678	68,199	67,238
44111	New car dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	51,159	52,740	54,689	48,798	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,114	6,419	6,055	6,123	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	120,201	8.0	12,172	10,976	9,895	11,583	10,506	10,169	10,098	10,087	9,448	9,595
4421	Furniture stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,469	5,066	5,518	5,341	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,507	4,829	6,065	5,165	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	107,500	7.0	15,704	10,400	7,958	13,806	9,528	9,665	9,384	8,866	8,406	8,587
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	8,508	6,498	11,522	7,844	(*)	7,563	7,367	6,762	6,942
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,892	1,460	2,284	1,684	(*)	1,821	1,499	1,644	1,645
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	355,002	8.6	24,409	27,688	29,840	25,499	27,583	28,431	28,758	28,893	28,669	28,706
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	24,631	26,689	22,951	24,899	(*)	25,057	25,250	25,221	25,304
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	544,581	4.9	51,650	46,415	44,971	49,303	43,776	46,614	46,298	46,122	44,112	43,983
4451	Grocery stores .....	482,797	4.1	44,074	40,961	39,874	42,388	38,940	41,229	40,920	40,771	39,285	39,175
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,372	3,120	4,351	3,083	(*)	3,277	3,243	3,041	3,023
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	224,341	7.7	21,874	18,955	18,871	20,149	17,396	19,636	19,401	19,217	17,815	17,806
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	15,972	16,069	16,662	14,480	(*)	16,281	16,199	14,877	14,791
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	425,166	9.5	32,644	31,755	33,327	31,978	32,054	34,544	33,286	32,356	33,415	33,635
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	214,009	6.1	31,346	19,486	17,330	30,440	18,479	18,114	18,003	18,138	17,175	17,249
44811	Men's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	914	871	1,357	876	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
44812	Women's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,377	3,204	4,741	3,329	(*)	3,216	3,256	3,131	3,195
44814	Family clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,947	6,974	11,315	7,563	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,178	2,113	2,866	2,079	(*)	2,229	2,231	2,098	2,157
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	86,684	5.9	12,592	7,619	6,279	12,344	7,390	7,237	7,242	7,242	7,010	6,881
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	553,191	5.2	69,807	51,853	44,687	66,982	49,509	47,040	46,625	46,474	44,645	44,954
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	212,799	-0.9	30,523	21,247	16,681	30,965	21,103	17,708	17,669	17,660	17,801	18,026
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) <sup>5</sup> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	21,754	17,070	31,732	21,658	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	30,606	28,006	36,017	28,406	(*)	28,956	28,814	26,844	26,928
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	26,705	24,608	30,789	24,665	(*)	25,482	25,343	23,449	23,558
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,901	3,398	5,228	3,741	(*)	3,474	3,471	3,395	3,370
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	118,833	7.1	11,735	10,189	10,041	11,732	9,585	9,832	10,093	10,066	9,372	9,503
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	277,064	11.3	30,448	25,657	24,007	28,945	23,607	23,936	23,854	23,584	22,192	21,860
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses ....	(*)	(*)	(*)	17,085	15,833	19,370	15,391	(*)	15,893	15,754	14,295	14,211
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ...	428,843	8.1	38,397	34,530	36,374	35,185	32,220	37,424	36,578	36,447	34,227	34,131

(\*) Advance estimates are not available for this kind of business.

(NA) Not available. (S) Suppressed. (a) Advance estimate. (p) Preliminary estimate. (r) Revised estimate.

(1) For a full description of the NAICS codes used in this table, see <http://www.census.gov/epcd/www/naics.html>

(2) Estimates are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variation and for 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. The factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted estimates shown in this table. Year-to-date seasonally adjusted sales estimates are not tabulated. Adjustment factors and explanatory material can be found on the Internet at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>

(3) Advance estimates are based on early reports obtained from a small sample of firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey (MRTS) sample. All other estimates are from the MRTS sample

(4) GAFO represents firms which specialize in department store types of merchandise and is comprised of furniture & home furnishings (442), electronics & appliances (443), clothing & accessories (448), sporting goods, hobby, book, and music (451), general merchandise (452), office supply, stationery, and gift stores (4532).

(5) Estimates include data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line are not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

Note: Table 3 provides estimated measures of sampling variability. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>

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

(Estimates are shown as percents and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, Monthly Retail Trade Survey, and administrative records.)

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Percent Change <sup>1</sup>					
		Dec. 2006 Advance from --		Nov. 2006 Preliminary from --		Oct. 2006 through Dec. 2006 from --	
		Nov. 2006 (p)	Dec. 2005 (r)	Oct. 2006 (r)	Nov. 2005 (r)	Jul. 2006 through Sep. 2006	Oct. 2005 through Dec. 2005
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>						
	<b>total</b> .....	0.9	5.4	0.6	4.6	0.1	4.9
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	1.0	5.8	0.7	4.6	-0.3	4.6
	Retail .....	0.7	4.9	0.6	4.3	-0.2	4.6
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	0.3	3.6	0.0	4.7	1.3	6.2
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	0.2	3.9	0.1	5.2	1.5	6.7
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	0.7	7.6	0.1	5.2	0.1	6.3
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	3.0	15.0	5.8	9.3	5.2	9.1
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	-1.1	-0.8	-0.5	0.2	-2.8	0.2
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	0.7	5.7	0.4	5.3	1.5	5.3
4451	Grocery stores .....	0.8	4.9	0.4	4.5	1.3	4.5
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	1.2	10.2	1.0	9.0	3.1	9.3
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	3.8	3.4	2.9	-1.0	-8.4	-2.8
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	0.6	5.5	-0.7	4.4	-0.2	5.2
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	-0.1	3.2	0.0	5.2	-0.7	4.0
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	0.9	5.4	0.3	3.7	0.9	4.2
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.2	-0.5	0.1	-2.0	0.0	-1.4
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	-2.6	4.9	0.3	6.2	0.4	5.5
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	0.3	7.9	1.1	9.1	0.5	8.6
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ....	2.3	9.3	0.4	7.2	2.6	8.1

(p) Preliminary estimates (r) Revised estimates

(1) Estimates shown in this table are derived from adjusted estimates provided in Table 1 of this report.

Note: Table 3 provides estimated measures of sampling variability. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Survey Description

The U.S. Census Bureau conducts the Advance Monthly Retail Trade and Food Services Survey (MARTS) to provide an early estimate of monthly sales by kind of business for retail and food service firms located in the United States. Each month, questionnaires are mailed to a probability sample of approximately 5,000 employer firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey (MRTS). Firms responding to MARTS account for approximately 65% of the total national sales estimate. Advance sales estimates are computed using a link relative estimator. The change in sales from the previous month is estimated using only units that have reported data for both the current and

previous month. There is no imputation or adjustment for nonrespondents in MARTS. The total sales estimate is derived by multiplying this ratio by the preliminary sales estimate for the previous month (derived from the larger MRTS sample). Detailed industry estimates are summed to derive total estimates at broad industry levels. The monthly estimates are adjusted using annual survey estimates and for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences. Additional information on MARTS and MRTS can be found on the Census Bureau website at: <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>.

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

## Reliability of Estimates

Because the estimates presented in this report are based on a sample survey, they contain sampling error and nonsampling error.

Sampling error is the difference between the estimate and the result that would be obtained from a complete enumeration of the sampling frame conducted under the same survey conditions. This error occurs because only a subset of the entire sampling frame is measured in a sample survey. Standard errors and coefficients of variation (CV), as given in Table 3 of this report, are estimated measures of sampling variation.

The margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is a 90 percent confidence interval. If, for example, the percent change estimate is +1.2 percent and its estimated standard error is 0.9 percent, then the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 1.65 \times 0.9$  percent or  $\pm 1.5$  percent, and the 90 percent confidence interval is -0.3 percent to +2.7 percent. If the interval contains 0, then one does not have sufficient evidence to conclude at the 90 percent

confidence level that the change is different from zero and therefore the change is not statistically significant. Estimated changes shown in the text are statistically significant unless otherwise noted. For a monthly total, the median estimated coefficient of variation is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated value  $\pm 1.65 \times CV \times$  (the estimated monthly total). The Census Bureau recommends that individuals using estimates in this report incorporate this information into their analyses, as sampling error could affect the conclusions drawn from the estimates.

Nonsampling error encompasses all other factors that contribute to the total error of a sample survey estimate. This type of error can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, mistakes in the recording and coding of data, and other errors of collection, response, coverage, or processing. Although nonsampling error is not measured directly, the Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the process to minimize this type of error.

**Table 3. Estimated Measures of Sampling Variability and Revision to Advance Estimates**

(Estimates are shown as percents and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey and Monthly Retail Trade Survey)

NAICS Code	Kind of Business	Median CV <sup>(1)</sup> for Current Mo. (%)	Median standard error <sup>(1)</sup> for Percent change			Revision for month-to-month change <sup>(2)</sup>	
			Previous Mo. to Current Mo.	Previous Qtr. to Current Qtr.	Current Mo. to same Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>						
	total .....	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.3
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
	<b>Retail .....</b>	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.3
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers .....</b>	2.0	1.5	0.7	1.4	0.2	1.1
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	2.2	1.6	0.8	1.6	0.2	1.2
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores.....</b>	2.1	1.7	0.9	1.9	0.4	0.4
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores .....</b>	1.3	0.6	1.0	1.0	0.4	0.8
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp;.....</b>						
	<b>supplies dealers.....</b>	2.3	1.3	0.7	1.2	-0.1	0.7
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores.....</b>	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.5	-0.1	0.1
4451	Grocery stores .....	0.7	0.3	0.4	0.5	-0.1	0.1
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores .....</b>	1.6	0.7	0.8	1.0	0.1	0.1
447	<b>Gasoline stations .....</b>	3.1	1.2	0.8	1.2	-0.2	0.7
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories</b>						
	<b>stores .....</b>	1.5	0.5	1.0	0.9	0.0	0.3
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp;</b>						
	<b>music stores.....</b>	2.3	1.6	1.5	2.1	-0.2	0.3
452	<b>General merchandise stores.....</b>	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers .....</b>	3.5	3.0	2.0	3.1	0.3	0.7
454	<b>Nonstore retailers .....</b>	1.4	1.3	0.9	2.7	0.1	0.5
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places ..</b>	1.6	0.9	0.6	1.1	0.1	0.4

(1) Estimated measures of sampling variability are based on estimates not adjusted for seasonal variation or holiday or trading-day differences. Medians are based on estimates for the period August 2006 to present.

(2) These columns provide measures of the difference between the advance-to-preliminary and preliminary-to-final estimates of month-to-month change for the same pair of months as measured by the Advance sample and MRTS sample. The average and median differences are based on estimates for the most recent 12 months.

Note: Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>

