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ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES July 2008

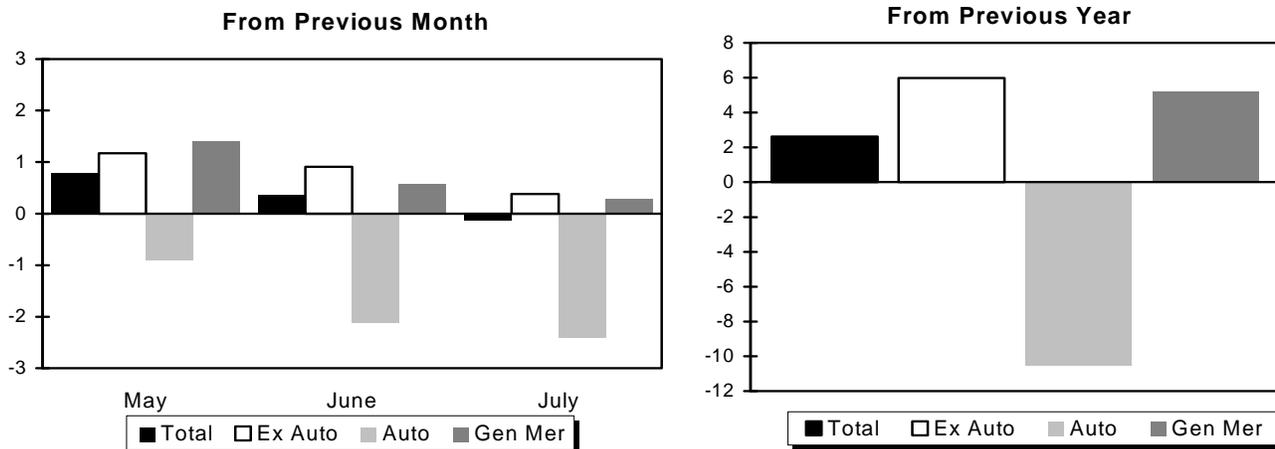
The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for July, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$384.6 billion, a decrease of 0.1 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$)* from the previous month and 2.6 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) above July 2007. Total sales for the May through July 2008 period were up 2.7 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from the same period a year ago. The May to June 2008 percent change was revised from +0.1 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$)* to +0.3 percent ($\pm 0.2\%$).

Retail trade sales were down 0.1 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$)* from June 2008, but were 2.6 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) above last year. Gasoline station sales were up 24.6 percent ($\pm 2.0\%$) from July 2007 and sales of nonstore retailers were up 7.7 percent ($\pm 2.0\%$) from last year.

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 August is scheduled to be released September 12, 2008 at 8:30 a.m. EDT.

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 ¹ code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted						Adjusted ²					
		7 Month Total		2008			2007		2008			2007	
		2008	% Chg. 2007	Jul. ³ (a)	Jun. (p)	May (r)	Jul.	Jun.	Jul. ³ (a)	Jun. (p)	May (r)	Jul. (r)	Jun. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	2,634,373	3.3	393,194	385,821	405,376	376,319	380,587	384,631	385,102	383,769	374,758	372,603
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	2,120,358	5.8	319,538	314,249	327,268	296,300	299,831	316,704	315,494	312,653	298,832	296,604
	Retail	2,367,743	3.2	353,457	346,787	364,540	337,869	342,285	346,238	346,645	345,425	337,572	335,739
	GAFO⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	94,381	99,696	91,434	93,141	(*)	99,720	99,675	97,541	96,642
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	514,015	-5.8	73,656	71,572	78,108	80,019	80,756	67,927	69,608	71,116	75,926	75,999
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	468,762	-6.6	66,668	64,748	71,327	73,433	74,085	61,445	63,046	64,608	69,605	69,694
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	49,518	55,328	58,903	58,581	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,824	6,781	6,586	6,671	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	63,655	-4.7	9,596	8,977	9,454	9,839	9,792	9,482	9,390	9,502	9,959	9,901
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,666	5,156	5,164	5,160	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,311	4,298	4,675	4,632	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	61,200	3.7	9,000	8,762	8,973	8,501	8,468	9,659	9,584	9,657	9,214	9,103
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,053	7,376	6,796	6,828	(*)	7,708	7,830	7,355	7,295
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,709	1,597	1,705	1,640	(*)	1,876	1,827	1,859	1,808
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	196,976	-2.2	30,606	31,582	34,385	29,948	31,779	28,008	27,923	28,017	28,293	28,096
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	26,093	27,372	26,644	27,464	(*)	23,851	24,138	24,901	24,854
445	Food & beverage stores	339,258	6.1	51,187	48,854	51,398	47,536	47,254	49,584	49,370	48,891	46,967	46,601
4451	Grocery stores	305,288	6.4	45,727	43,674	46,008	42,479	42,131	44,309	44,160	43,775	41,975	41,631
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,517	3,655	3,450	3,486	(*)	3,517	3,468	3,359	3,336
446	Health & personal care stores	142,372	4.0	20,279	20,019	20,917	19,418	19,526	20,525	20,532	20,407	19,957	19,763
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	16,494	17,297	16,208	16,189	(*)	17,004	16,859	16,658	16,452
447	Gasoline stations	305,575	21.2	50,696	48,840	47,418	40,167	39,974	46,045	45,688	43,946	36,952	37,013
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	120,494	1.7	17,648	17,347	19,409	17,123	17,550	19,126	19,080	19,094	18,948	18,730
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	857	908	760	863	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,235	3,642	2,981	3,304	(*)	3,356	3,369	3,391	3,351
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,568	7,173	6,785	6,668	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,091	2,366	2,107	2,073	(*)	2,280	2,275	2,230	2,180
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	47,087	3.3	7,003	6,925	6,998	6,858	7,044	7,514	7,527	7,509	7,471	7,353
452	General merchandise stores	329,036	5.2	48,567	49,280	51,427	45,636	46,908	50,726	50,589	50,306	48,208	47,787
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	107,389	-2.6	15,578	16,014	16,823	15,671	16,325	17,195	17,183	17,128	17,556	17,386
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁵	(*)	(*)	(*)	16,445	17,287	16,110	16,782	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	33,266	34,604	29,965	30,583	(*)	33,406	33,178	30,652	30,401
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	29,574	30,682	26,589	27,083	(*)	29,604	29,389	27,049	26,815
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,692	3,922	3,376	3,500	(*)	3,802	3,789	3,603	3,586
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	67,658	1.1	10,020	10,147	10,667	9,805	10,475	10,046	10,051	9,904	10,044	10,196
454	Nonstore retailers	180,417	7.2	25,199	24,482	25,386	23,019	22,759	27,596	27,303	27,076	25,633	25,197
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	17,293	17,827	16,733	16,346	(*)	18,535	18,397	17,973	17,539
722	Food services & drinking places ...	266,630	4.5	39,737	39,034	40,836	38,450	38,302	38,393	38,457	38,344	37,186	36,864

(*) 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 ¹					
		Jul. 2008 Advance from --		Jun. 2008 Preliminary from --		May 2008 through Jul. 2008 from --	
		Jun. 2008 (p)	Jul. 2007 (r)	May 2008 (r)	Jun. 2007 (r)	Feb. 2008 through Apr. 2008	May 2007 through Jul. 2007
	Retail & food services, total	-0.1	2.6	0.3	3.4	1.3	2.7
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	0.4	6.0	0.9	6.4	2.8	5.7
	Retail	-0.1	2.6	0.4	3.2	1.2	2.5
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	-2.4	-10.5	-2.1	-8.4	-5.3	-9.2
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	-2.5	-11.7	-2.4	-9.5	-5.9	-10.3
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	1.0	-4.8	-1.2	-5.2	-0.1	-4.9
443	Electronics & appliance stores	0.8	4.8	-0.8	5.3	2.3	5.1
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	0.3	-1.0	-0.3	-0.6	3.5	-1.8
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.4	5.6	1.0	5.9	1.5	5.6
4451	Grocery stores	0.3	5.6	0.9	6.1	1.2	5.8
446	Health & personal care stores	0.0	2.8	0.6	3.9	0.9	3.4
447	Gasoline stations	0.8	24.6	4.0	23.4	7.6	20.8
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	0.2	0.9	-0.1	1.9	1.2	1.2
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	-0.2	0.6	0.2	2.4	1.6	1.5
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.3	5.2	0.6	5.9	2.5	5.5
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.1	-2.1	0.3	-1.2	0.9	-2.0
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	0.0	0.0	1.5	-1.4	1.7	-0.7
454	Nonstore retailers	1.1	7.7	0.8	8.4	4.1	8.0
722	Food services & drinking places	-0.2	3.2	0.3	4.3	1.7	4.1

(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

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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 ± 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 ⁽¹⁾ for Current Mo. (%)	Median standard error ⁽¹⁾ for Percent change			Revision for month-to-month change ⁽²⁾	
			Previous Mo. to Current Mo.	Previous Qtr. to Current Qtr.	Current Mo. to same Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	Retail & food services,						
	total	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.1
	Retail	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.1
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1.7	1.2	0.6	1.4	0.0	0.7
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	1.9	1.3	0.6	1.5	0.0	0.7
442	Furniture & home furn. stores.....	2.4	1.5	0.7	1.9	-0.2	0.6
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.3	0.6	0.5	1.3	0.1	0.6
444	Building material & garden eq. &... supplies dealers.....	2.3	1.2	0.8	1.5	0.2	0.6
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.0	0.3
4451	Grocery stores	0.9	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
446	Health & personal care stores	1.6	0.4	0.4	1.1	-0.2	0.3
447	Gasoline stations	2.0	0.6	0.3	1.2	0.5	0.6
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	1.9	0.7	0.6	1.0	-0.1	0.6
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	2.2	1.5	1.1	1.7	0.1	0.5
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.1	0.3
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	3.3	2.6	1.5	3.1	0.4	0.7
454	Nonstore retailers	1.6	0.9	0.6	1.2	0.2	0.6
722	Food services & drinking places ..	1.9	0.8	0.7	1.3	0.1	0.3

- (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 most recent 12 months.
- (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 revisions 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>

