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ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES April 2009

Notice of Revision: Monthly retail sales and inventories were revised based on the results of the 2007 Annual Retail Trade Survey. The Annual Revision of Monthly Retail and Food Services showing revised data can be found on our website at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/benchmark/2009/html/annrev09.html>.

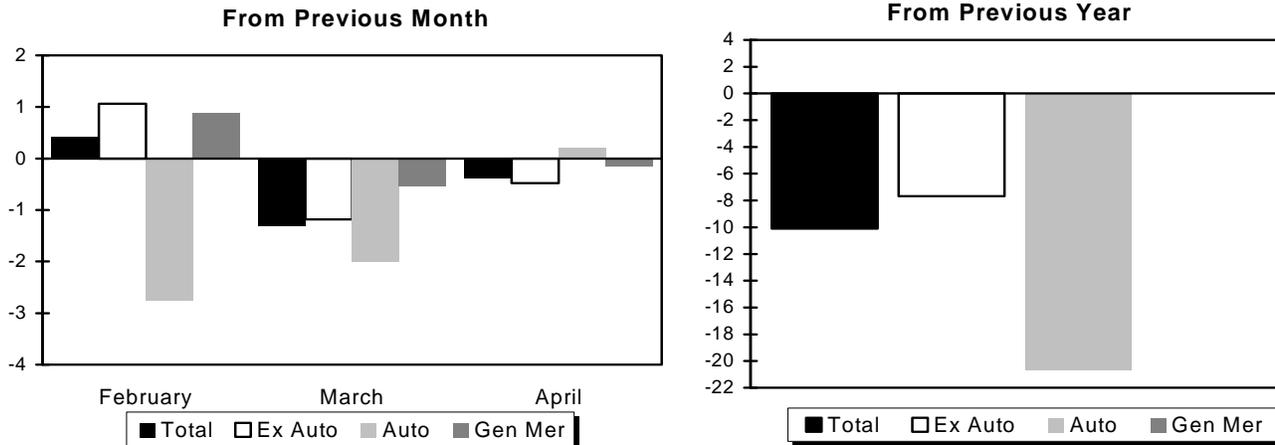
The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for April, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$337.7 billion, a decrease of 0.4 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$)* from the previous month and 10.1 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) below April 2008. Total sales for the February through April 2009 period were down 9.2 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from the same period a year ago. The February to March 2009 percent change was revised from -1.2 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) to -1.3 percent ($\pm 0.3\%$).

Retail trade sales were down 0.4 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$)* from March 2009 and 11.4 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) below last year. Gasoline stations sales were down 36.4 percent ($\pm 1.5\%$) from April 2008 and motor vehicle and parts dealers sales were down 20.7 percent ($\pm 2.3\%$) 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 May is scheduled to be released June 11, 2009 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				
		4 Month Total		2009			2008		2009			2008	
		2009	% Chg. 2008	Apr. ³ (a)	Mar. (p)	Feb. (r)	Apr.	Mar.	Apr. ³ (a)	Mar. (p)	Feb. (r)	Apr. (r)	Mar. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	1,286,827	-10.0	335,188	333,990	304,056	370,144	373,587	337,677	338,930	343,438	375,614	374,845
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	1,065,968	-6.9	276,364	274,807	252,560	296,029	296,836	282,279	283,640	287,013	305,724	302,814
	Retail	1,139,189	-11.3	297,332	295,440	269,015	332,714	335,581	299,516	300,837	304,889	337,996	337,621
	GAFO⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	87,455	82,918	88,721	93,025	(*)	94,132	95,912	97,725	97,419
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	220,859	-22.7	58,824	59,183	51,496	74,115	76,751	55,398	55,290	56,425	69,890	72,031
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	195,612	-25.0	52,152	52,531	45,544	67,527	70,283	48,831	48,730	49,775	63,406	65,563
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	40,605	35,304	53,160	56,311	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,652	5,952	6,588	6,468	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	29,526	-14.3	7,307	7,572	7,219	8,525	8,838	7,840	7,879	8,066	9,137	9,187
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,255	4,296	4,663	4,935	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,317	2,923	3,862	3,903	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	32,239	-6.9	7,184	7,933	8,481	8,153	8,703	8,322	8,565	9,287	9,462	9,388
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,145	6,759	6,435	6,833	(*)	6,716	7,411	7,553	7,468
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,788	1,722	1,718	1,870	(*)	1,849	1,876	1,909	1,920
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	88,448	-11.2	27,617	23,456	18,457	30,843	25,492	24,467	24,400	24,586	27,412	27,038
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	19,433	15,944	25,375	21,616	(*)	20,349	20,546	23,517	23,143
445	Food & beverage stores	187,485	0.1	47,402	47,253	44,201	46,805	48,436	48,301	48,780	48,702	48,923	48,454
4451	Grocery stores	168,828	-0.5	42,362	42,489	39,800	42,168	43,753	43,007	43,489	43,450	43,879	43,492
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,136	2,897	3,126	3,106	(*)	3,512	3,503	3,394	3,380
446	Health & personal care stores	83,061	2.8	21,073	21,481	19,843	20,000	20,692	21,094	21,019	20,887	20,284	20,089
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	17,836	16,485	16,563	17,136	(*)	17,469	17,316	16,798	16,637
447	Gasoline stations	101,494	-34.6	26,664	26,348	23,801	41,674	40,386	26,479	27,107	28,001	41,632	41,379
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	60,997	-6.1	16,559	15,903	14,930	17,077	17,814	17,337	17,427	17,940	18,551	18,660
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	653	589	806	773	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,848	2,343	3,355	3,308	(*)	2,918	2,947	3,292	3,246
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,244	5,687	6,303	6,654	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,077	1,930	2,222	2,302	(*)	2,164	2,224	2,293	2,222
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	25,521	-2.2	6,258	6,439	5,727	6,409	6,637	7,268	7,243	7,305	7,392	7,366
452	General merchandise stores	180,854	0.5	47,048	46,742	43,640	45,620	47,978	49,784	49,857	50,122	49,794	49,442
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	54,903	-6.7	14,817	14,306	13,127	15,099	15,904	15,903	15,939	16,020	16,941	16,921
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁵	(*)	(*)	(*)	14,716	13,495	15,559	16,386	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	32,436	30,513	30,521	32,074	(*)	33,918	34,102	32,853	32,521
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	28,822	27,188	27,001	28,496	(*)	30,086	30,209	29,096	28,813
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,614	3,325	3,520	3,578	(*)	3,832	3,893	3,757	3,708
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	35,070	-4.9	9,090	9,079	8,570	9,298	9,184	9,624	9,634	9,643	9,912	9,805
454	Nonstore retailers	93,635	-5.8	22,306	24,051	22,650	24,195	24,670	23,602	23,636	23,925	25,607	24,782
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	16,645	15,118	16,576	15,980	(*)	16,933	16,948	17,412	16,803
722	Food services & drinking places ...	147,638	1.7	37,856	38,550	35,041	37,430	38,006	38,161	38,093	38,549	37,618	37,224

(*) 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					
		Apr. 2009 Advance from --		Mar. 2009 Preliminary from --		Feb. 2009 through Apr. 2009 from --	
		Mar. 2009 (p)	Apr. 2008 (r)	Feb. 2009 (r)	Mar. 2008 (r)	Nov. 2008 through Jan. 2009	Feb. 2008 through Apr. 2008
	Retail & food services, total	-0.4	-10.1	-1.3	-9.6	-0.6	-9.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	-0.5	-7.7	-1.2	-6.3	-0.1	-6.2
	Retail	-0.4	-11.4	-1.3	-10.9	-0.8	-10.5
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	0.2	-20.7	-2.0	-23.2	-2.9	-22.1
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	0.2	-23.0	-2.1	-25.7	-3.2	-24.5
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	-0.5	-14.2	-2.3	-14.2	-2.7	-13.4
443	Electronics & appliance stores	-2.8	-12.0	-7.8	-8.8	-2.6	-7.3
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	0.3	-10.7	-0.8	-9.8	-2.4	-10.2
445	Food & beverage stores.....	-1.0	-1.3	0.2	0.7	-0.6	0.2
4451	Grocery stores	-1.1	-2.0	0.1	0.0	-1.0	-0.4
446	Health & personal care stores	0.4	4.0	0.6	4.6	1.5	4.0
447	Gasoline stations	-2.3	-36.4	-3.2	-34.5	-2.9	-34.0
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	-0.5	-6.5	-2.9	-6.6	2.3	-5.1
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	0.3	-1.7	-0.8	-1.7	0.8	-1.0
452	General merchandise stores.....	-0.1	0.0	-0.5	0.8	0.7	0.9
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	-0.2	-6.1	-0.5	-5.8	-1.4	-6.0
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	-0.1	-2.9	-0.1	-1.7	4.5	-1.8
454	Nonstore retailers	-0.1	-7.8	-1.2	-4.6	-0.4	-4.7
722	Food services & drinking places	0.2	1.4	-1.2	2.3	1.1	2.6

(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 ± 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	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.4	-0.1	0.2
	Retail	0.7	0.4	0.2	0.4	-0.1	0.3
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	2.1	1.5	0.7	1.4	0.2	1.1
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	2.3	1.7	0.7	1.5	0.2	1.2
442	Furniture & home furn. stores.....	2.9	2.1	0.8	2.2	-0.4	0.5
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.5	0.7	0.6	1.2	0.0	0.7
444	Building material & garden eq. &... supplies dealers.....	2.6	1.4	0.9	1.4	0.1	0.5
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.6	-0.1	0.3
4451	Grocery stores	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.6	-0.2	0.3
446	Health & personal care stores	1.8	0.4	0.3	0.9	-0.1	0.2
447	Gasoline stations	2.2	0.7	0.4	0.9	-0.6	0.6
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	2.0	0.7	0.6	1.0	-0.2	0.7
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	2.4	1.3	1.2	1.6	0.0	0.4
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	-0.1	0.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.1	0.2
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	4.4	3.5	1.6	3.6	0.6	1.5
454	Nonstore retailers	1.7	1.0	0.6	1.2	0.2	0.6
722	Food services & drinking places ..	1.9	0.9	0.6	1.4	0.5	0.6



- (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>