

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 10:00 A.M. ET, Friday, October 15, 2004

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MANUFACTURING AND TRADE INVENTORIES AND SALES August 2004

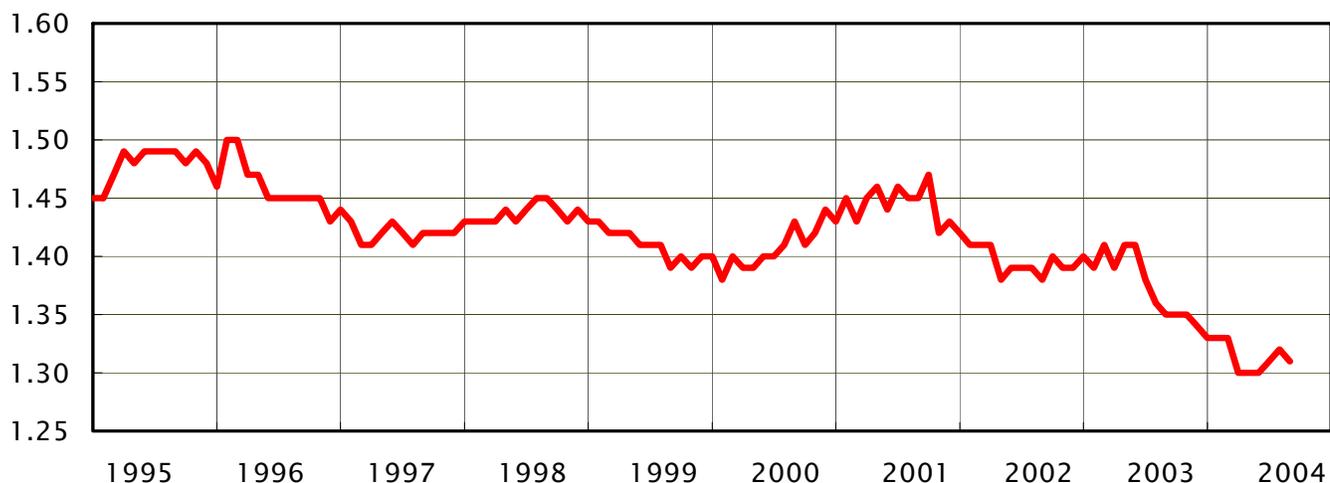
Sales. The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that the combined value of distributive trade sales and manufacturers' shipments for August, adjusted for seasonal and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were estimated at \$955.9 billion, up 0.7 percent ($\pm 0.2\%$) from July and up 10.9 percent ($\pm 0.4\%$) from August 2003.

Inventories. Manufacturers' and trade inventories adjusted for seasonal variations but not for price changes, were estimated at an end-of-month level of \$1,256.4 billion, up 0.7 percent ($\pm 0.2\%$) from July and up 7.7 percent ($\pm 2.2\%$) from August 2003.

Inventories/Sales Ratio. The total business inventories/sales ratio based on seasonally adjusted data at the end of August was 1.31. The August 2003 ratio was 1.35.

Total Business Inventories/Sales Ratios: 1995 to 2004

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



The Manufacturing and Trade Inventories and Sales Report for September is scheduled for release November 12, 2004 at 10:00 a.m. Questions concerning this report may be addressed to: Scott Scheleur (301) 763-2713 (Retail), Chris Savage (301) 763-4834 (Manufacturing), or Nancy Piesto (301) 763-2747 (Wholesale). Electronic inquiries may be sent to: retail.trade@census.gov.

The wholesale and manufacturing data in this report also appear in the following monthly Census Bureau publications: Current Industrial Reports (see M3 series for manufacturers data) and Current Business Reports (see BW series for merchant wholesalers). Retail data are available on the Census website at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>. August data was released October 4 for Manufacturers and October 8 for merchant wholesalers. The data are also available the day of issue on the Internet-<http://www.census.gov/bussales> - and on Department of Commerce's STAT-USA website; for information, call (202) 482-1986.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Sales and Inventories for Manufacturers, Retailers, and Merchant Wholesalers
(In millions of dollars)

	Sales			Inventories ¹			Inventories/Sales Ratios		
	Aug. 2004	Jul. 2004	Aug. 2003	Aug. 2004	Jul. 2004	Aug. 2003	Aug. 2004	Jul. 2004	Aug. 2003
	(p)	(r)	(s)	(p)	(r)	(s)			
Adjusted²									
Total business.....	955,884	948,939	861,750	1,256,439	1,248,260	1,166,882	1.31	1.32	1.35
Manufacturers ³	376,139	372,105	331,676	460,877	458,681	439,632	1.23	1.23	1.33
Retailers.....	303,933	304,355	290,318	478,351	475,225	438,402	1.57	1.56	1.51
Merchant wholesalers.....	275,812	272,479	239,756	317,211	314,354	288,848	1.15	1.15	1.20
Not Adjusted									
Total business.....	975,254	925,817	871,375	1,239,883	1,233,888	1,151,865	1.27	1.33	1.32
Manufacturers ³	381,799	344,364	335,985	465,072	461,464	443,020	1.22	1.34	1.32
Retailers.....	311,191	311,900	297,743	460,934	459,199	423,602	1.48	1.47	1.42
Merchant wholesalers.....	282,264	269,553	237,647	313,877	313,225	285,243	1.11	1.16	1.20

See footnotes and notes at the end of Table 3.

(p) Preliminary.

(r) Revised.

(s) Adjusted data were revised due to concurrent seasonal adjustment. No revisions were made to Not Adjusted data.

Table 2. Percent Changes for Sales and Inventories — Manufacturers, Retailers, and Merchant Wholesalers

	Adjusted						Not Adjusted					
	Sales			Inventories			Sales			Inventories		
	Aug. 04/ Jul. 04	Jul. 04/ Jun. 04	Aug. 04/ Aug. 03	Aug. 04/ Jul. 04	Jul. 04/ Jun. 04	Aug. 04/ Aug. 03	Aug. 04/ Jul. 04	Jul. 04/ Jun. 04	Aug. 04/ Aug. 03	Aug. 04/ Jul. 04	Jul. 04/ Jun. 04	Aug. 04/ Aug. 03
Total business.....	0.7	0.9	10.9	0.7	1.0	7.7	5.3	-5.8	11.9	0.5	0.6	7.6
Manufacturers.....	1.1	0.9	13.4	0.5	1.0	4.8	10.9	-12.6	13.6	0.8	2.0	5.0
Retailers.....	-0.1	1.0	4.7	0.7	0.7	9.1	-0.2	1.8	4.5	0.4	-1.7	8.8
Merchant wholesalers..	1.2	0.8	15.0	0.9	1.5	9.8	4.7	-4.7	18.8	0.2	2.1	10.0

Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, Inventories, and Inventories/Sales Ratios, By Kind of Business
(In millions of dollars)

NAICS Code	Kind of Business	Sales			Inventories ¹			Percent Change In Inventories			Inventories/Sales Ratios		
		Aug. 2004 (p)	Jul. 2004 (r)	Aug. 2003 (s)	Aug. 2004 (p)	Jul. 2004 (r)	Aug. 2003 (s)	Aug. 04/ Jul. 04	Jul. 04/ Jun. 04	Aug. 04/ Aug. 03	Aug. 04	Jul. 04	Aug. 03
	Adjusted ²												
	Retail trade, total.....	303,933	304,355	290,318	478,351	475,225	438,402	0.7	0.7	9.1	1.57	1.56	1.51
	Total (excl. motor veh. & parts).....	226,817	226,222	211,903	309,343	307,794	293,217	0.5	0.1	5.5	1.36	1.36	1.38
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers.....	77,116	78,133	78,415	169,008	167,431	145,185	0.9	1.8	16.4	2.19	2.14	1.85
442,3	Furniture,home fum., elect. & appl. stores...	17,195	17,389	16,383	28,372	28,058	26,171	1.1	0.4	8.4	1.65	1.61	1.60
444	Building materials, garden equip & supplies...	31,032	30,814	27,405	52,643	52,252	45,353	0.7	1.5	16.1	1.70	1.70	1.65
445	Food & beverage stores.....	44,136	43,731	42,535	35,551	35,564	34,799	0.0	-0.1	2.2	0.81	0.81	0.82
448	Clothing & clothing access. stores.....	15,559	15,665	15,092	37,548	37,280	37,326	0.7	-1.0	0.6	2.41	2.38	2.47
452	General merchandise stores.....	41,669	41,810	40,153	69,512	69,141	66,041	0.5	-0.4	5.3	1.67	1.65	1.64
4521	Dept. strns. (excl. leased depts.).....	17,550	17,672	18,125	37,117	37,085	37,487	0.1	-0.2	-1.0	2.11	2.10	2.07
	Not Adjusted												
	Retail trade, total.....	311,191	311,900	297,743	460,934	459,199	423,602	0.4	-1.7	8.8	1.48	1.47	1.42
	Total (excl. motor veh. & parts).....	228,242	226,371	214,858	305,921	300,966	290,177	1.6	0.4	5.4	1.34	1.33	1.35
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers.....	82,949	85,529	82,885	155,013	158,233	133,425	-2.0	-5.5	16.2	1.87	1.85	1.61
442,3	Furniture,home fum., elect. & appl. stores...	17,338	16,959	16,622	27,606	27,188	25,464	1.5	0.7	8.4	1.59	1.60	1.53
444	Building materials, garden equip & supplies...	32,346	32,800	27,820	51,590	51,520	44,401	0.1	-1.2	16.2	1.59	1.57	1.60
445	Food & beverage stores.....	43,974	45,957	43,468	34,830	34,858	34,089	-0.1	-0.8	2.2	0.79	0.76	0.78
448	Clothing & clothing access. stores.....	15,553	14,611	15,466	38,487	37,205	38,259	3.4	2.0	0.6	2.47	2.55	2.47
452	General merchandise stores.....	40,872	40,266	40,347	68,094	66,165	64,795	2.9	0.6	5.1	1.67	1.64	1.61
4521	Dept. strns. (excl. leased depts.).....	17,093	16,339	18,125	36,412	35,231	36,812	3.4	1.1	-1.1	2.13	2.16	2.03

(p) Preliminary (r) Revised (s) Adjusted data were revised due to concurrent seasonal adjustment. No revisions were made to Not Adjusted data.

¹ Inventories are on a non-LIFO basis as of the end of the month.

² Adjusted for seasonal variations and, in the case of sales, for trading-day differences and holiday variations. Concurrent seasonal adjustment is being used to adjust all sales, shipment and inventory estimates. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-12-ARIMA program. The factors derived from the program are applied to the current and previous month estimates and for retail and wholesale estimates a year ago as well. For retail sales, concurrent seasonal adjustment is also used to adjust the advance estimates (published one month before the preliminary estimates) and the estimates one year before the advance month. This explains the revision to retail estimates from a year ago.

³ Manufacturers sales refer to the value of shipments by manufacturers. The shipments data from individual manufacturers are adjusted prior to tabulation for the number of trading days as well as for any variations in the length of the reporting period.

Note: U.S. and group totals include kinds of business not shown. The Manufacturing and Trade Inventory and Sales estimates are based on data from three surveys: the Monthly Retail Trade Survey, the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey, and the Manufacturers' Shipments, Inventories, and Orders Survey. The sampling variability for retailers and merchant wholesalers can be used to construct a 90 percent confidence interval for the estimates. Over all possible samples, 90 percent of such intervals will cover the true estimate. These intervals are given in parentheses for the estimates on the front page. If, for example, the estimate is up 0.8 percent and the margin of sampling error is ± 1.2 percent, the 90 percent confidence interval is -0.4 percent to +2.0 percent. If the range contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. Measures of reliability for Retail and Wholesale sales and inventory levels and changes are included in the detailed monthly press releases for those industries. Manufacturers do not contribute to estimates of sampling variability because the manufacturer's mail panel is not a probability sample from a known frame and standard errors of the industry estimates cannot be calculated. Estimates from all three surveys are also subject to nonsampling errors, which can arise in any stage of the survey. Such errors include coverage error (failure to accurately represent all population units in the sample) response errors, coding errors, and nonresponse. Although no direct measurement of these errors has been obtained, precautionary steps were taken in all phases of the collection, processing, and tabulation of the data to minimize their influence.