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MANUFACTURING AND TRADE INVENTORIES AND SALES August 2008

Sales. The U.S. Census Bureau 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, was estimated at \$1,192.3 billion, down 1.8 percent ($\pm 0.2\%$) from July 2008, but up 6.7 percent ($\pm 0.3\%$) from August 2007.

Inventories. Manufacturers' and trade inventories, adjusted for seasonal variations but not for price changes, were estimated at an end-of-month level of \$1,511.8 billion, up 0.3 percent ($\pm 0.1\%$) from July 2008 and up 6.4 percent ($\pm 0.4\%$) from August 2007.

Inventories/Sales Ratio. The total business inventories/sales ratio based on seasonally adjusted data at the end of August was 1.27. The August 2007 ratio was 1.27.

Total Business Inventories/Sales Ratios: 1999 to 2008

(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 to be released November 14, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. EST.

For information, visit the Census Bureau's Web site at <<http://www.census.gov/bussales>>. 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 from zero.

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

	Sales			Inventories			Inventories/Sales Ratios		
	Aug. 2008	Jul. 2008	Aug. 2007	Aug. 2008	Jul. 2008	Aug. 2007	Aug. 2008	Jul. 2008	Aug. 2007
	(p)	(r)	(r)	(p)	(r)	(r)	(p)	(r)	(r)
Adjusted²									
Total business.....	1,192,300	1,214,338	1,117,717	1,511,781	1,507,756	1,420,769	1.27	1.24	1.27
Manufacturers ³	446,020	462,379	423,435	562,453	559,070	518,057	1.26	1.21	1.22
Retailers.....	341,418	343,097	337,195	503,934	506,863	501,726	1.48	1.48	1.49
Merchant wholesalers ⁴	404,862	408,862	357,087	445,394	441,823	400,986	1.10	1.08	1.12
Not Adjusted									
Total business.....	1,208,694	1,218,642	1,171,921	1,494,897	1,494,223	1,404,405	1.24	1.23	1.20
Manufacturers ³	457,307	448,540	444,427	566,910	563,051	521,865	1.24	1.26	1.17
Retailers.....	349,644	351,701	353,308	488,655	492,166	486,280	1.40	1.40	1.38
Merchant wholesalers ⁴	401,743	418,401	374,186	439,332	439,006	396,260	1.09	1.05	1.06

See footnotes and notes at the end of Table 3.

(p) Preliminary estimate.
(r) Revised estimate.

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

	Adjusted						Not Adjusted					
	Sales			Inventories			Sales			Inventories		
	Aug. 08/ Jul. 08	Jul. 08/ Jun. 08	Aug. 08/ Aug. 07	Aug. 08/ Jul. 08	Jul. 08/ Jun. 08	Aug. 08/ Aug. 07	Aug. 08/ Jul. 08	Jul. 08/ Jun. 08	Aug. 08/ Aug. 07	Aug. 08/ Jul. 08	Jul. 08/ Jun. 08	Aug. 08/ Aug. 07
Total business.....	-1.8	0.1	6.7	0.3	1.1	6.4	-0.8	-2.2	3.1	0.0	1.0	6.4
Manufacturers ³	-3.5	1.4	5.3	0.6	0.6	8.6	2.0	-6.4	2.9	0.7	1.8	8.6
Retailers.....	-0.5	-0.7	1.3	-0.6	1.4	0.4	-0.6	1.4	-1.0	-0.7	-0.4	0.5
Merchant wholesalers ⁴	-1.0	-0.8	13.4	0.8	1.5	11.1	-4.0	-0.4	7.4	0.1	1.7	10.9

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. 2008 (p)	Jul. 2008 (r)	Aug. 2007 (r)	Aug. 2008 (p)	Jul. 2008 (r)	Aug. 2007 (r)	Aug. 08/ Jul. 08	Jul. 08/ Jun. 08	Aug. 08/ Aug. 07	Aug. 08 (p)	Jul. 08 (r)	Aug. 07 (r)
	Adjusted ²												
	Retail trade, total.....	341,418	343,097	337,195	503,934	506,863	501,726	-0.6	1.4	0.4	1.48	1.48	1.49
	Total (excl. motor veh. & parts).....	273,955	276,794	259,951	346,601	347,038	340,441	-0.1	0.6	1.8	1.27	1.25	1.31
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers.....	67,463	66,303	77,244	157,333	159,825	161,285	-1.6	3.1	-2.5	2.33	2.41	2.09
442,3	Furniture, home furn., elect. & appl. stores.....	18,357	18,750	19,243	33,486	33,444	32,553	0.1	1.3	2.9	1.82	1.78	1.69
444	Building materials, garden equip & supplies.....	27,366	27,938	27,966	51,108	50,479	49,106	1.2	1.0	4.1	1.87	1.81	1.76
445	Food & beverage stores.....	49,844	49,527	46,687	37,707	37,591	35,824	0.3	0.2	5.3	0.76	0.76	0.77
448	Clothing & clothing access. stores.....	19,244	19,151	18,791	46,461	46,519	47,344	-0.1	0.6	-1.9	2.41	2.43	2.52
452	General merchandise stores.....	50,306	50,503	48,346	75,162	75,886	76,431	-1.0	-0.1	-1.7	1.49	1.50	1.58
4521	Dept. str. (excl. leased depts.).....	16,766	17,031	17,528	35,307	35,696	37,415	-1.1	-0.7	-5.6	2.11	2.10	2.13
	Not Adjusted												
	Retail trade, total.....	349,644	351,701	353,308	488,655	492,166	486,280	-0.7	-0.4	0.5	1.40	1.40	1.38
	Total (excl. motor veh. & parts).....	277,783	279,794	267,675	342,396	339,797	336,494	0.8	0.9	1.8	1.23	1.21	1.26
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers.....	71,861	71,907	85,633	146,259	152,369	149,786	-4.0	-3.3	-2.4	2.04	2.12	1.75
442,3	Furniture, home furn., elect. & appl. stores.....	18,624	18,377	19,848	32,749	32,875	31,869	-0.4	2.0	2.8	1.76	1.79	1.61
444	Building materials, garden equip & supplies.....	27,399	30,879	29,663	50,290	49,873	48,320	0.8	-1.5	4.1	1.84	1.62	1.63
445	Food & beverage stores.....	50,918	51,077	47,856	37,077	36,919	35,223	0.4	-0.9	5.3	0.73	0.72	0.74
448	Clothing & clothing access. stores.....	19,518	17,722	19,091	47,065	45,914	48,007	2.5	2.4	-2.0	2.41	2.59	2.51
452	General merchandise stores.....	50,337	48,567	48,156	73,040	72,297	74,415	1.0	0.5	-1.8	1.45	1.49	1.55
4521	Dept. str. (excl. leased depts.).....	16,550	15,518	17,304	34,142	33,554	36,218	1.8	0.7	-5.7	2.06	2.16	2.09

(p) Preliminary estimate.

(r) Revised estimate.

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.

⁴ The 2002 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) defines merchant wholesalers as including manufacturers' sales branches and offices. However, the estimates included in this release exclude manufacturers' sales branches and offices. Note that this is not a change in coverage from prior releases and is consistent with the description used in the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey data products.

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.