

# U.S. Census Bureau News

U.S. Department of Commerce • Washington, D.C. 20233

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2009 AT 10:00 A.M. EDT

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CB09-35

## MANUFACTURING AND TRADE INVENTORIES AND SALES January 2009

**INTENTION TO REVISE:** Revisions to the Wholesale and Retail adjusted and not adjusted monthly estimates for sales and inventories are scheduled for release in March 2009 and April 2009, respectively. Estimates will be revised to reflect the results of the 2007 Annual Wholesale and Annual Retail Trade Surveys. Manufacturing estimates will be revised at a later date. Revisions to the Wholesale data will be reflected in the February 2009 Manufacturing and Trade Inventories and Sales (MTIS) release scheduled for April 14, 2009. Revisions to the Retail data will be reflected in the March 2009 MTIS release scheduled for May 13, 2009.

**Sales.** The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that the combined value of distributive trade sales and manufacturers' shipments for January, adjusted for seasonal and trading-day differences but not for price changes, was estimated at \$1,004.0 billion, down 1.0 percent ( $\pm 0.4\%$ ) from December 2008 and down 14.0 percent ( $\pm 0.4\%$ ) from January 2008.

**Inventories.** Manufacturers' and trade inventories, adjusted for seasonal variations but not for price changes, were estimated at an end-of-month level of \$1,440.1 billion, down 1.1 percent ( $\pm 0.1\%$ ) from December 2008 and down 1.5 percent ( $\pm 0.3\%$ ) from January 2008.

**Inventories/Sales Ratio.** The total business inventories/sales ratio based on seasonally adjusted data at the end of January was 1.43. The January 2008 ratio was 1.25.

### Total Business Inventories/Sales Ratios: 2000 to 2009

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



The Manufacturing and Trade Inventories and Sales Report for February is scheduled to be released April 14, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. EDT.

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 <sup>1</sup>			Inventories/Sales Ratios		
	Jan. 2009	Dec. 2008	Jan. 2008	Jan. 2009	Dec. 2008	Jan. 2008	Jan. 2009	Dec. 2008	Jan. 2008
	(p)	(r)	(r)	(p)	(r)	(r)	(p)	(r)	(r)
<b>Adjusted<sup>2</sup></b>									
Total business.....	1,004,014	1,014,558	1,166,795	1,440,075	1,455,834	1,461,901	1.43	1.43	1.25
Manufacturers <sup>3</sup> .....	369,404	375,980	437,643	537,568	541,986	537,497	1.46	1.44	1.23
Retailers.....	308,461	302,852	343,739	478,280	486,517	504,564	1.55	1.61	1.47
Merchant wholesalers <sup>4</sup> .....	326,149	335,726	385,413	424,227	427,331	419,840	1.30	1.27	1.09
<b>Not Adjusted</b>									
Total business.....	920,370	1,060,191	1,086,364	1,427,260	1,436,556	1,451,367	1.55	1.35	1.34
Manufacturers <sup>3</sup> .....	335,500	368,574	404,937	534,495	528,015	534,311	1.59	1.43	1.32
Retailers.....	281,464	354,475	312,020	467,613	480,352	494,118	1.66	1.36	1.58
Merchant wholesalers <sup>4</sup> .....	303,406	337,142	369,407	425,152	428,189	422,938	1.40	1.27	1.14

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		
	Jan. 09/ Dec. 08	Dec. 08/ Nov. 08	Jan. 09/ Jan. 08	Jan. 09/ Dec. 08	Dec. 08/ Nov. 08	Jan. 09/ Jan. 08	Jan. 09/ Dec. 08	Dec. 08/ Nov. 08	Jan. 09/ Jan. 08	Jan. 09/ Dec. 08	Dec. 08/ Nov. 08	Jan. 09/ Jan. 08
Total business.....	-1.0	-3.4	-14.0	-1.1	-1.6	-1.5	-13.2	5.8	-15.3	-0.6	-5.0	-1.7
Manufacturers <sup>3</sup> .....	-1.7	-3.3	-15.6	-0.8	-1.9	0.0	-9.0	-1.0	-17.1	1.2	-4.5	0.0
Retailers.....	1.9	-3.3	-10.3	-1.7	-1.5	-5.2	-20.6	15.7	-9.8	-2.7	-8.4	-5.4
Merchant wholesalers <sup>4</sup> .....	-2.9	-3.7	-15.4	-0.7	-1.5	1.0	-10.0	4.2	-17.9	-0.7	-1.6	0.5

**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 <sup>1</sup>			Percent Change In Inventories			Inventories/Sales Ratios		
		Jan. 2009	Dec. 2008	Jan. 2008	Jan. 2009	Dec. 2008	Jan. 2008	Jan. 09/ Dec. 08	Dec. 08/ Nov. 08	Jan. 09/ Jan. 08	Jan. 09 (p)	Dec. 08 (r)	Jan. 08 (r)
		(p)	(r)	(r)	(p)	(r)	(r)						
	Adjusted <sup>2</sup>												
	Retail trade, total.....	308,461	302,852	343,739	478,280	486,517	504,564	-1.7	-1.5	-5.2	1.55	1.61	1.47
	Total (excl. motor veh. & parts).....	249,142	245,309	268,363	336,534	338,216	345,830	-0.5	-1.2	-2.7	1.35	1.38	1.29
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers.....	59,319	57,543	75,376	141,746	148,301	158,734	-4.4	-2.1	-10.7	2.39	2.58	2.11
442,3	Furniture, home furn., elect. & appl. stores.....	17,502	16,916	19,079	30,940	31,223	33,101	-0.9	-1.3	-6.5	1.77	1.85	1.73
444	Building materials, garden equip & supplies.....	24,810	25,142	27,480	49,807	50,053	50,146	-0.5	-1.9	-0.7	2.01	1.99	1.82
445	Food & beverage stores.....	49,213	48,273	48,210	38,341	37,889	36,652	1.2	-0.6	4.6	0.78	0.78	0.76
448	Clothing & clothing access. stores.....	17,739	16,909	18,981	45,743	45,982	47,237	-0.5	-0.9	-3.2	2.58	2.72	2.49
452	General merchandise stores.....	49,686	49,162	49,071	73,259	74,126	76,951	-1.2	-1.3	-4.8	1.47	1.51	1.57
4521	Dept. str. (excl. leased depts.).....	15,973	16,131	17,134	33,142	33,776	37,068	-1.9	-2.0	-10.6	2.07	2.09	2.16
	Not Adjusted												
	Retail trade, total.....	281,464	354,475	312,020	467,613	480,352	494,118	-2.7	-8.4	-5.4	1.66	1.36	1.58
	Total (excl. motor veh. & parts).....	228,973	299,991	245,180	324,401	329,403	333,424	-1.5	-11.3	-2.7	1.42	1.10	1.36
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers.....	52,491	54,484	66,840	143,212	150,949	160,694	-5.1	-1.4	-10.9	2.73	2.77	2.40
442,3	Furniture, home furn., elect. & appl. stores.....	16,324	23,689	17,690	30,228	31,004	32,340	-2.5	-13.4	-6.5	1.85	1.31	1.83
444	Building materials, garden equip & supplies.....	19,029	22,253	21,906	48,612	47,951	48,993	1.4	-3.2	-0.8	2.55	2.15	2.24
445	Food & beverage stores.....	48,718	52,476	46,981	38,309	38,714	36,624	-1.0	-3.9	4.6	0.79	0.74	0.78
448	Clothing & clothing access. stores.....	13,875	27,390	14,459	42,312	42,901	43,647	-1.4	-16.3	-3.1	3.05	1.57	3.02
452	General merchandise stores.....	43,384	69,657	42,052	68,501	70,296	72,091	-2.6	-20.3	-5.0	1.58	1.01	1.71
4521	Dept. str. (excl. leased depts.).....	12,701	27,505	13,412	30,590	31,479	34,362	-2.8	-24.8	-11.0	2.41	1.14	2.56

(p) Preliminary estimate.

(r) Revised estimate.

<sup>1</sup> Inventories are on a non-LIFO basis as of the end of the month.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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  $\pm 1.2$  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.