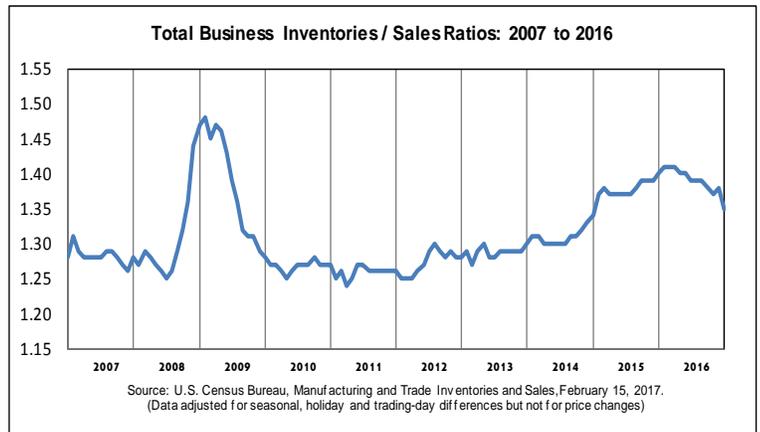


MANUFACTURING AND TRADE INVENTORIES AND SALES, DECEMBER 2016

Release Number: CB17-21

February 15, 2017 — The U.S. Census Bureau announced the following new manufacturing and trade statistics for December 2016:

BUSINESS INVENTORIES		
DECEMBER 2016	\$1,835.7 billion	+0.4%
NOVEMBER 2016 (revised)	\$1,829.0 billion	+0.8%
Next release: March 15, 2017		
* The 90 percent confidence interval includes zero. There is insufficient evidence to conclude that the actual change is different from zero. Data adjusted for seasonality but not price changes. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Manufacturing and Trade Inventories and Sales, February 15, 2017.		



Sales

The combined value of distributive trade sales and manufacturers' shipments for December, adjusted for seasonal and trading-day differences but not for price changes, was estimated at \$1,356.0 billion, up 2.0 percent (± 0.2 percent) from November 2016 and was up 5.2 percent (± 0.4 percent) from December 2015.

Inventories

Manufacturers' and trade inventories, adjusted for seasonal variations but not for price changes, were estimated at an end-of-month level of \$1,835.7 billion, up 0.4 percent (± 0.2 percent) from November 2016 and were up 2.0 percent (± 0.5 percent) from December 2015.

Inventories/Sales Ratio

The total business inventories/sales ratio based on seasonally adjusted data at the end of December was 1.35. The December 2015 ratio was 1.40.

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 2017 and April 2017, respectively. Revised historical data from the Manufacturers' Shipments, Inventories, and Orders (M3) will be issued on May 18, 2017. Estimates will be revised to reflect the results of the 2015 Annual Wholesale, Annual Retail Trade Surveys, and Annual Survey of Manufacturers. Revisions to the Wholesale estimates will be reflected in the February 2017 Manufacturing and Trade Inventories and Sales (MTIS) release scheduled for April 14, 2017. Revisions to the Retail estimates will be reflected in the March 2017 MTIS release scheduled for May 12, 2017. Revisions to the Manufacturing estimates will be reflected in the April 2017 MTIS release scheduled for June 14, 2017.

Data Inquiries

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General Information

The January 2017 Manufacturing and Trade Inventories and Sales Report is scheduled for release on March 15, 2017. View the full schedule in the Economic Briefing Room: <www.census.gov/economic-indicators/>.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Reliability of Estimates

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.

Description of the Survey

The Manufacturing and Trade Inventories 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. Data for the wholesale and manufacturing sectors are unrevised from the most recent Monthly Wholesale Trade Report and the Full Report on Manufacturers' Shipments, Inventories and orders. Data from the Retail sector is revised and presented in more detail from the most recent Advance Economic Indicators Report. For more information on these surveys see the links below:

<www.census.gov/retail/>, <www.census.gov/wholesale/>, and <www.census.gov/manufacturing/m3/>.

America's Economy Mobile App

The America's Economy app provides real-time updates for 19 key economic indicators from the Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Bureau of Economic Analysis. <www.census.gov/mobile/economy/>

API

The Census Bureau's application programming interface lets developers create custom apps to reach new users and makes key statistics more accessible than ever before. <www.census.gov/developers/>

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Table 1. Estimated Monthly Sales and Inventories for Manufacturers, Retailers, and Merchant Wholesalers

(In millions of dollars)

	Sales			Inventories			Inventories/Sales Ratios		
	Dec. 2016	Nov. 2016	Dec. 2015	Dec. 2016	Nov. 2016	Dec. 2015	Dec. 2016	Nov. 2016	Dec. 2015
	(p)	(r)	(r)	(p)	(r)	(r)	(p)	(r)	(r)
Adjusted¹									
Total business.....	1,355,990	1,328,817	1,288,683	1,835,742	1,828,971	1,800,368	1.35	1.38	1.40
Manufacturers ²	475,843	465,427	456,311	625,585	625,011	626,044	1.31	1.34	1.37
Retailers ³	415,242	410,174	396,893	609,010	608,687	588,432	1.47	1.48	1.48
Merchant wholesalers ⁴	464,905	453,216	435,479	601,147	595,273	585,892	1.29	1.31	1.35
Not Adjusted									
Total business.....	1,420,220	1,325,047	1,366,947	1,814,744	1,868,169	1,776,966	1.28	1.41	1.30
Manufacturers ²	466,743	454,305	451,055	609,286	625,743	608,314	1.31	1.38	1.35
Retailers ³	484,678	415,243	463,668	602,475	640,946	581,931	1.24	1.54	1.26
Merchant wholesalers ⁴	468,799	455,499	452,224	602,983	601,480	586,721	1.29	1.32	1.30

(p) Preliminary estimate.

(r) Revised estimate.

Data adjusted for seasonality but not price changes. Explanations of confidence intervals and sampling variability can be found on our website at <www.census.gov/mtis/how_surveys_are_collected.html>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Manufacturing and Trade Inventories and Sales, February 15, 2017.

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

	Adjusted						Not Adjusted					
	Sales			Inventories			Sales			Inventories		
	Dec. 16/ Nov. 16	Nov. 16/ Oct. 16	Dec. 16/ Dec. 15	Dec. 16/ Nov. 16	Nov. 16/ Oct. 16	Dec. 16/ Dec. 15	Dec. 16/ Nov. 16	Nov. 16/ Oct. 16	Dec. 16/ Dec. 15	Dec. 16/ Nov. 16	Nov. 16/ Oct. 16	Dec. 16/ Dec. 15
Total business.....	2.0	0.3	5.2	0.4	0.8	2.0	7.2	-0.1	3.9	-2.9	0.9	2.1
Manufacturers ²	2.2	0.3	4.3	0.1	0.5	-0.1	2.7	-3.3	3.5	-2.6	-0.1	0.2
Retailers ³	1.2	0.0	4.6	0.1	0.9	3.5	16.7	4.4	4.5	-6.0	1.7	3.5
Merchant wholesalers ⁴	2.6	0.5	6.8	1.0	1.0	2.6	2.9	-0.7	3.7	0.2	1.1	2.8

See footnotes and notes at the end of Table 3.

Data adjusted for seasonality but not for price changes. Explanations of confidence intervals and sampling variability can be found on our website at <www.census.gov/mtis/how_surveys_are_collected.html>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Manufacturing and Trade Inventories and Sales, February 15, 2017.

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 ³			Percent Change In Inventories			Inventories/Sales Ratios		
		Dec. 2016 (p)	Nov. 2016 (r)	Dec. 2015 (r)	Dec. 2016 (p)	Nov. 2016 (r)	Dec. 2015 (r)	Dec. 16/ Nov. 16	Nov. 16/ Oct. 16	Dec. 16/ Dec. 15	Dec. 16 (p)	Nov. 16 (r)	Dec. 15 (r)
	Adjusted ¹												
	Retail trade, total.....	415,242	410,174	396,893	609,010	608,687	588,432	0.1	0.9	3.5	1.47	1.48	1.48
	Total (excl. motor veh. & parts).....	315,891	313,906	304,346	395,719	394,198	390,279	0.4	0.5	1.4	1.25	1.26	1.28
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers.....	99,351	96,268	92,547	213,291	214,489	198,153	-0.6	1.6	7.6	2.15	2.23	2.14
442,3	Furniture,home furn., elect. & appl. stores.....	17,222	17,390	17,458	26,795	26,883	27,352	-0.3	0.1	-2.0	1.56	1.55	1.57
444	Building materials, garden equip & supplies.....	30,198	29,838	29,201	54,944	54,770	52,392	0.3	1.0	4.9	1.82	1.84	1.79
445	Food & beverage stores.....	59,249	59,379	57,848	46,225	45,866	44,920	0.8	0.4	2.9	0.78	0.77	0.78
448	Clothing & clothing access. stores.....	21,481	21,458	21,224	54,209	54,050	53,765	0.3	0.8	0.8	2.52	2.52	2.53
452	General merchandise stores.....	55,300	55,522	56,821	80,809	80,629	82,378	0.2	0.3	-1.9	1.46	1.45	1.45
4521	Dept. str. (excl. leased depts.).....	12,591	12,665	13,754	26,997	26,955	28,567	0.2	-0.1	-5.5	2.14	2.13	2.08
	Not Adjusted												
	Retail trade, total.....	484,678	415,243	463,668	602,475	640,946	581,931	-6.0	1.7	3.5	1.24	1.54	1.26
	Total (excl. motor veh. & parts).....	385,105	326,439	371,352	386,537	422,579	380,982	-8.5	1.0	1.5	1.00	1.29	1.03
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers.....	99,573	88,804	92,316	215,938	218,367	200,949	-1.1	3.1	7.5	2.17	2.46	2.18
442,3	Furniture,home furn., elect. & appl. stores.....	23,334	19,876	23,695	27,036	30,754	27,626	-12.1	5.6	-2.1	1.16	1.55	1.17
444	Building materials, garden equip & supplies.....	27,522	29,053	27,044	52,032	53,072	49,615	-2.0	-0.8	4.9	1.89	1.83	1.83
445	Food & beverage stores.....	65,048	59,290	62,673	46,867	48,071	45,558	-2.5	1.8	2.9	0.72	0.81	0.73
448	Clothing & clothing access. stores.....	34,333	23,438	33,123	51,119	58,320	50,647	-12.3	0.5	0.9	1.49	2.49	1.53
452	General merchandise stores.....	75,135	60,535	76,391	77,439	91,171	78,928	-15.1	0.3	-1.9	1.03	1.51	1.03
4521	Dept. str. (excl. leased depts.).....	21,687	15,210	23,425	25,188	31,915	26,624	-21.1	-1.7	-5.4	1.16	2.10	1.14

(p) Preliminary estimate.

(r) Revised estimate.

¹ 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-13ARIMA-SEATS 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.

² 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.

³ Adjusted and not adjusted inventories for aggregate levels retail trade total, total excluding motor vehicles and parts, and motor vehicle and parts dealers are revised from the Advance Economic Indicators Report.

⁴ The 2007 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.

Data adjusted for seasonality but not price changes. Explanations of confidence intervals and sampling variability can be found on our website at <www.census.gov/mtis/how_surveys_are_collected.html>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Manufacturing and Trade Inventories and Sales, February 15, 2017.