

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. ET, Tuesday, January 14, 2003

**ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES  
DECEMBER 2002**

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for December, adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$308.0 billion, up 1.2 percent ( $\pm 1.0\%$ ) from the previous month and up 4.6 percent ( $\pm 1.1\%$ ) from December 2001. Total sales for the October through December 2002 period were up 2.1 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ ) from the same period a year ago. Total sales for the 12 months of 2002 were up 3.4 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) from 2001. The October to November 2002 percent change was revised from +0.4 percent ( $\pm 1.0\%$ ) to +0.9 percent ( $\pm 0.2\%$ ).

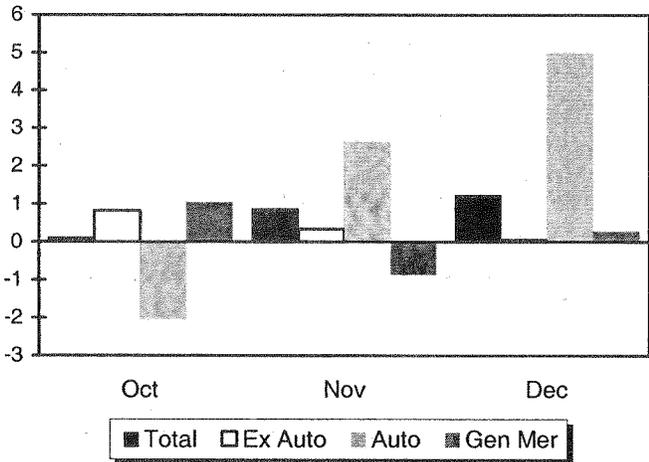
Retail trade sales were up 1.3 percent ( $\pm 1.1\%$ ) from November and were 4.7 percent ( $\pm 1.1\%$ ) above last year. Gasoline stations sales were up 16.6 percent ( $\pm 2.1\%$ ) from last year and sales of nonstore retailers were up 13.8 percent ( $\pm 6.7\%$ ) from December 2001.

The scheduled release dates for 2003 are as follows: January 14, February 13, March 13, April 11, May 14, June 12, July 15, August 13, September 12, October 15, November 14, December 11.

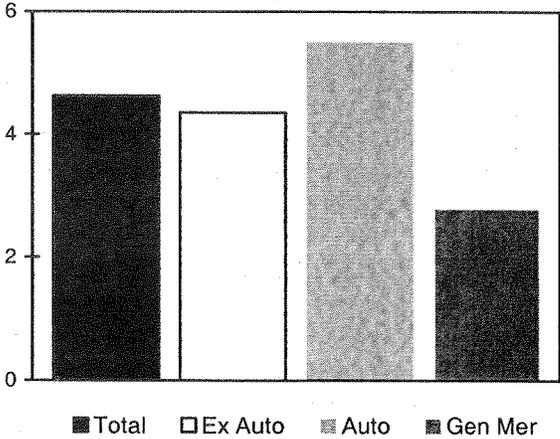
*The advance estimates are based on a subsample of the Bureau's full retail and food services sample. A stratified random sampling method is used to select approximately 5,000 retail and food services firms whose sales are then weighted and benchmarked to represent the complete universe of over three 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**  
(Data adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)

**From Previous Month**



**From Previous Year**



The Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services for January is scheduled to be released February 13, 2003 at 8:30 a.m.

Address inquiries concerning this report to Scott Scheleur, Service Sector Statistics Division, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC 20233. Telephone: 301-763-2713.

This report is available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's online Economic Bulletin Board. For information call 202-482-1986. The data are also available on the Internet - <http://www.census.gov/retail>.

**Table 1. Estimated Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services, by Kind of Business**

(In Millions of Dollars and Annual Percent Change)

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted							Adjusted <sup>1</sup>				
		12 Month Total		2002			2001		2002			2001	
		2002	% Chg. 2001	Dec. <sup>2</sup> (a)	Nov. (p)	Oct. (r)	Dec.	Nov.	Dec. <sup>2</sup> (a)	Nov. (p)	Oct. (r)	Dec. (r)	Nov. (r)
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>												
	<b>total</b> .....	3,605,909	3.4	352,136	303,414	300,597	337,272	297,547	307,970	304,198	301,551	294,328	296,278
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	2,731,354	3.8	282,687	238,004	229,400	272,732	228,585	231,207	231,096	230,333	221,574	220,423
	Retail .....	3,267,458	3.1	323,268	275,468	272,084	309,239	271,630	279,015	275,565	273,236	266,434	269,532
	GAFO <sup>3</sup> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	89,537	77,046	123,762	87,162	(*)	80,184	80,616	78,705	77,549
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	874,555	2.0	69,449	65,410	71,197	64,540	68,962	76,763	73,102	71,218	72,754	75,855
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .....	800,707	2.0	63,865	59,544	64,684	59,055	63,120	70,647	66,979	65,074	66,653	69,900
44111	New car dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	50,508	55,090	51,142	54,736	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,866	6,513	5,485	5,842	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	95,313	4.2	9,631	8,934	7,992	9,319	8,522	8,093	8,092	7,968	7,838	7,754
4421	Furniture stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,812	4,303	4,811	4,639	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,122	3,689	4,508	3,883	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	93,225	6.3	12,607	8,563	7,270	12,387	8,405	7,900	7,852	7,843	7,810	7,763
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,386	5,057	9,406	6,149	(*)	5,621	5,619	5,526	5,456
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,177	2,213	2,981	2,256	(*)	2,231	2,224	2,284	2,307
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	313,838	5.4	22,596	24,744	27,785	21,384	23,720	26,039	26,517	26,314	24,866	24,937
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	22,060	24,713	19,034	21,186	(*)	23,027	22,882	21,753	21,729
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	481,038	1.8	43,928	41,075	39,928	44,358	40,185	40,174	40,580	40,170	40,094	39,932
4451	Grocery stores .....	431,903	1.5	38,047	36,832	36,006	38,624	36,070	35,961	36,467	36,078	35,996	35,926
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,769	2,560	3,689	2,745	(*)	2,617	2,623	2,669	2,609
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	183,997	8.0	17,707	15,186	15,576	16,606	14,360	15,628	15,607	15,576	14,631	14,668
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	12,927	13,175	13,797	12,124	(*)	13,231	13,175	11,966	12,334
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	232,849	-2.0	19,359	19,340	20,596	16,701	17,315	20,399	20,251	20,074	17,488	18,018
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	174,270	3.0	25,658	16,084	14,152	24,908	15,501	14,797	14,680	14,805	14,377	13,976
44811	Men's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	969	852	1,473	994	(*)	847	849	877	870
44812	Women's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,993	2,766	4,077	2,921	(*)	2,834	2,800	2,814	2,758
44814	Family clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,078	5,250	8,393	5,642	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,770	1,668	2,360	1,745	(*)	1,812	1,811	1,820	1,790
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	88,914	4.9	13,249	8,597	6,676	13,122	8,383	7,464	7,528	7,493	7,343	7,458
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	456,128	6.0	58,883	43,505	37,170	58,174	42,479	38,453	38,344	38,684	37,413	36,969
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	225,757	-1.9	31,738	21,590	17,956	33,323	23,194	18,258	18,304	18,957	19,285	19,265
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) <sup>4</sup> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	21,993	18,280	33,901	23,637	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	21,915	19,214	24,851	19,285	(*)	20,040	19,727	18,128	17,704
45291	Warehouse clubs & superstores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	18,236	15,971	20,002	15,763	(*)	16,776	16,448	14,938	14,609
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,679	3,243	4,849	3,522	(*)	3,264	3,279	3,190	3,095
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	112,287	0.2	11,393	9,250	9,572	11,809	9,604	9,124	9,249	9,472	9,356	9,387
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	161,044	3.0	18,808	14,780	14,170	15,931	14,194	14,181	13,763	13,619	12,464	12,815
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses ...	(*)	(*)	(*)	10,351	9,812	11,709	10,122	(*)	9,488	9,426	8,686	8,950
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ...	338,451	5.5	28,868	27,946	28,513	28,033	25,917	28,955	28,633	28,315	27,894	26,746

(\*) Advance estimates are not available from the subsample panel for these business classifications.

(NA) Not available. (a) Advance estimates. (p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

Note: Totals include data for business classifications not shown separately.

- (1) Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, 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 and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publication. Factors and explanatory material are released on the Internet at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>.
- (2) Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.
- (3) GAFO represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise (furniture & home furnishings (442), electronics & appliances(443), clothing & accessories(448), sporting goods, hobby, book, music (451), general merchandise(452), office supplies, stationery, and gift stores(453)).
- (4) Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

**Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services, by Kind of Business**

(Adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Percent Change <sup>1</sup>					
		Dec. 2002 Advance from --		Nov. 2002 Preliminary from --		Oct. 2002 through Dec. 2002 from --	
		Nov. 2002 (p)	Dec. 2001 (r)	Oct. 2002 (r)	Nov. 2001 (r)	Jul. 2002 through Sept. 2002	Oct. 2001 through Dec. 2001
	<b>Retail &amp; food services, total .....</b>	1.2	4.6	0.9	2.7	0.3	2.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ....	0.0	4.3	0.3	4.8	1.1	4.6
	Retail .....	1.3	4.7	0.9	2.2	0.1	1.8
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers .....</b>	5.0	5.5	2.6	-3.6	-2.1	-4.9
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	5.5	6.0	2.9	-4.2	-2.1	-5.4
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores .....</b>	0.0	3.3	1.6	4.4	1.5	4.2
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores .....</b>	0.6	1.2	0.1	1.1	1.1	2.9
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers.....</b>	-1.8	4.7	0.8	6.3	-0.4	5.3
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores.....</b>	-1.0	0.2	1.0	1.6	0.5	0.9
4451	Grocery stores .....	-1.4	-0.1	1.1	1.5	0.5	0.6
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores .....</b>	0.1	6.8	0.2	6.4	0.5	6.3
447	<b>Gasoline stations .....</b>	0.7	16.6	0.9	12.4	3.0	11.8
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores .....</b>	0.8	2.9	-0.8	5.0	3.5	4.4
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores.....</b>	-0.9	1.6	0.5	0.9	0.7	2.0
452	<b>General merchandise stores.....</b>	0.3	2.8	-0.9	3.7	0.6	4.0
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	-0.3	-5.3	-3.4	-5.0	-1.8	-3.8
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers .....</b>	-1.4	-2.5	-2.4	-1.5	-2.8	-1.2
454	<b>Nonstore retailers .....</b>	3.0	13.8	1.1	7.4	3.6	9.1
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places ....</b>	1.1	3.8	1.1	7.1	1.9	5.7

(p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

(1) Percent change rounded to nearest tenth.

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

### Source of Data and Reliability of Estimates

**Source of Data:** The Census Bureau conducts the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey each month to provide an early indication of sales of retail and food service companies. The Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey is a voluntary survey of a sub-sample of about 5,000 firms selected from the Monthly Retail Trade Survey. Firms responding to this survey account for approximately 65% of the dollar volume estimate.

**Reliability of Estimates:** The reliability of the estimates is a function of sampling and nonsampling errors. The margin of sampling error, as included on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is a 90% confidence

interval. If for example, the trend estimated is +1.2% and the standard error is 0.9%, then the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 1.65 \times 0.9\%$  or  $\pm 1.5\%$ , and the 90% confidence interval is -0.3% to +2.7%. If the interval contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. For monthly level, the coefficient of variation (CV) is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated value  $\pm 1.65 \times CV \times$  (the estimated value). Estimates of sampling variability are given in Table 3. Nonsampling error, on the other hand, can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, and response errors. Although not directly measured, precautionary steps are taken to minimize nonsampling error. Additional survey information is available at [www.census.gov/svsd/www/advtable.html](http://www.census.gov/svsd/www/advtable.html).

**Table 3. Measures of Variability of and Revision to Advance Estimates for Level and Trend**

NAICS Code	Kind of Business	Level of sales: Median CV <sup>(2)</sup> for Current Mo. (%)	Trend (percent change): Median standard error <sup>(2)</sup> for			Revision for month- to-month change <sup>(1)</sup>	
			Current Mo. to Previous Mo.	Current Qtr. to Previous Qtr.	Current Mo. to Current Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>						
	total .....	0.7	0.6	0.2	0.6	0.0	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.1
	<b>Retail .....</b>	0.8	0.7	0.2	0.7	0.0	0.2
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers .....</b>	1.9	1.7	0.7	1.8	0.0	0.6
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	2.1	1.9	0.7	2.0	0.0	0.7
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores.....</b>	4.0	1.9	1.0	2.6	-0.1	0.6
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores .....</b>	1.5	0.6	0.5	1.4	0.0	0.4
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; ..</b>						
	<b>supplies dealers.....</b>	1.7	1.0	0.6	1.6	-0.1	0.5
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores.....</b>	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
4451	Grocery stores .....	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores .....</b>	2.6	0.6	0.6	1.4	-0.1	0.4
447	<b>Gasoline stations .....</b>	1.8	0.7	0.6	1.3	0.4	0.7
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories</b>						
	<b>stores .....</b>	1.5	0.7	0.5	1.0	0.2	0.6
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp;</b>						
	<b>music stores.....</b>	2.6	2.3	1.5	2.5	0.0	0.9
452	<b>General merchandise stores.....</b>	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	-0.1	0.2
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.2	0.4
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers .....</b>	3.2	3.2	1.5	3.5	0.1	0.8
454	<b>Nonstore retailers .....</b>	7.2	3.8	1.3	4.1	-0.1	1.0
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places ..</b>	2.1	1.0	0.7	1.7	0.2	0.8



(1) These columns measure the difference between the estimates of trend for the same pair of data months, i.e. the difference between the Advance/Preliminary ratio and the Preliminary/Final ratio estimates. Revisions are based on estimates from the 12 most recent months.  
 (2) Medians are based on estimates from the 12 most recent months.