

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. ET, Thursday, June 12, 2003

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES MAY 2003

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for May, adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$308.8 billion, an increase of 0.1 percent ($\pm 0.9\%$) from the previous month and up 5.1 percent ($\pm 1.0\%$) from May 2002. Total sales for the March through May 2003 period were up 4.2 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from the same period a year ago. The March to April 2003 percent change was revised from -0.1 percent ($\pm 0.9\%$) to -0.3 percent ($\pm 0.3\%$).

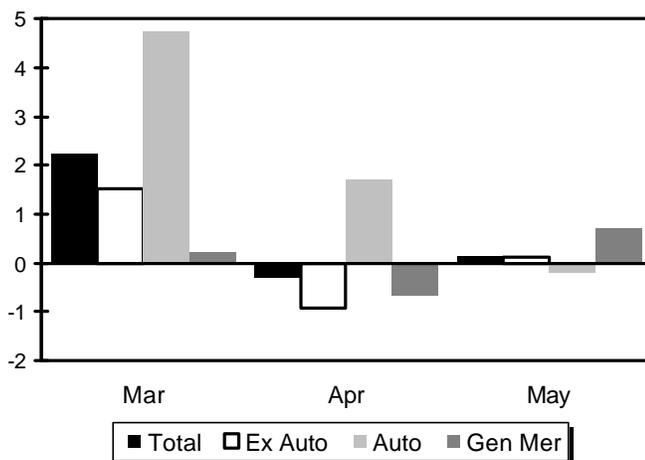
Retail trade sales were down 0.1 percent ($\pm 0.9\%$) from April, but were 4.9 percent ($\pm 1.1\%$) above last year. Motor vehicle and parts dealers were up 10.4 percent ($\pm 3.1\%$) from May 2002 and sales of food services and drinking places were up 6.7 percent ($\pm 0.9\%$) from last year.

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.

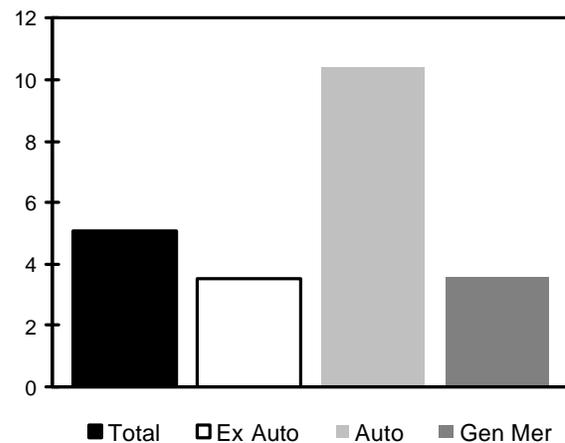
Percent Change in Retail and Food Services Sales

(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 June is scheduled to be released July 15, 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 ¹				
		5 Month Total		2003			2002		2003			2002	
		2003	% Chg. 2002	May ² (a)	Apr. (p)	Mar. (r)	May	Apr.	May ² (a)	Apr. (p)	Mar. (r)	May (r)	Apr. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	1,488,557	4.5	326,596	307,623	305,760	310,806	294,252	308,779	308,624	309,567	293,814	297,827
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	1,121,669	4.2	244,493	230,227	229,142	236,081	220,998	234,287	233,977	236,176	226,352	227,997
	Retail	1,346,085	4.5	295,110	278,790	276,095	281,699	266,586	279,270	279,529	280,369	266,146	270,022
	GAFO³	(*)	(*)	(*)	73,226	74,088	76,542	70,741	(*)	78,865	79,156	77,402	78,172
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	366,888	5.5	82,103	77,396	76,618	74,725	73,254	74,492	74,647	73,391	67,462	69,830
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	335,664	5.8	75,355	70,761	70,203	68,114	66,832	68,071	68,236	66,924	61,254	63,589
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	58,822	58,909	57,561	56,767	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,635	6,415	6,611	6,422	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	38,137	1.6	8,351	7,633	7,882	8,030	7,418	8,195	8,103	8,059	7,919	7,883
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,152	4,449	4,502	4,195	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,481	3,433	3,528	3,223	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	34,604	0.8	7,300	6,501	7,056	6,953	6,408	7,811	7,591	7,530	7,494	7,429
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,570	4,931	4,995	4,558	(*)	5,499	5,461	5,429	5,433
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,931	2,125	1,958	1,850	(*)	2,092	2,069	2,065	1,996
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	125,173	2.5	31,133	29,431	24,400	30,609	29,040	25,760	25,756	25,926	25,072	25,452
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	23,975	21,273	25,222	24,018	(*)	22,533	22,631	22,047	22,405
445	Food & beverage stores	205,093	3.0	43,736	41,098	41,309	42,554	38,593	41,800	41,994	42,018	40,843	40,713
4451	Grocery stores	186,325	3.0	39,537	37,159	37,554	38,419	34,959	37,762	37,879	37,933	36,870	36,760
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,489	2,420	2,682	2,398	(*)	2,679	2,642	2,604	2,612
446	Health & personal care stores	77,520	4.8	16,165	15,603	15,686	15,448	14,881	15,664	15,603	15,577	14,911	15,092
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	13,334	13,371	13,108	12,559	(*)	13,334	13,344	12,677	12,815
447	Gasoline stations	107,652	14.3	22,474	21,969	22,884	21,440	20,375	20,926	21,860	23,115	19,981	20,355
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	64,241	1.3	14,599	13,678	13,440	14,156	13,201	14,464	14,325	14,583	14,161	14,501
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	773	735	813	773	(*)	806	814	826	843
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,970	2,872	3,028	2,940	(*)	2,810	2,869	2,827	2,914
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,668	4,649	4,609	4,376	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,851	1,799	1,903	1,828	(*)	1,751	1,825	1,806	1,869
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	29,518	-1.4	6,117	5,838	5,888	6,168	5,829	6,715	6,726	6,646	6,800	6,739
452	General merchandise stores	177,710	3.6	39,394	36,589	36,826	38,080	34,934	39,026	38,758	39,017	37,676	38,311
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	80,112	-5.5	17,874	16,669	16,682	18,764	17,530	17,993	17,869	18,093	18,803	19,446
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	16,959	16,988	19,373	17,841	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	19,920	20,144	19,316	17,404	(*)	20,889	20,924	18,873	18,865
45291	Warehouse clubs & superstores	(*)	(*)	(*)	16,761	17,144	16,281	14,638	(*)	17,662	17,656	15,915	15,894
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,159	3,000	3,035	2,766	(*)	3,227	3,268	2,958	2,971
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	41,392	-0.3	9,216	8,170	7,991	9,107	8,238	8,804	8,645	8,600	8,672	8,725
454	Nonstore retailers	78,157	7.1	14,522	14,884	16,115	14,429	14,415	15,613	15,521	15,907	15,155	14,992
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	9,595	9,612	9,297	9,266	(*)	10,037	10,002	9,735	9,682
722	Food services & drinking places ...	142,472	5.1	31,486	28,833	29,665	29,107	27,666	29,509	29,095	29,198	27,668	27,805

(*) 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 ¹					
		May 2003 Advance from --		Apr. 2003 Preliminary from --		Mar. 2003 through May 2003 from --	
		Apr. 2003 (p)	May 2002 (r)	Mar. 2003 (r)	Apr. 2002 (r)	Dec. 2002 through Feb. 2003	Mar. 2002 through May 2002
	Retail & food services, total	0.1	5.1	-0.3	3.6	1.2	4.7
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.1	3.5	-0.9	2.6	1.0	3.8
	Retail	-0.1	4.9	-0.3	3.5	1.2	4.6
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	-0.2	10.4	1.7	6.9	2.1	7.7
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	-0.2	11.1	2.0	7.3	2.2	8.1
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	1.1	3.5	0.5	2.8	3.4	2.9
443	Electronics & appliance stores	2.9	4.2	0.8	2.2	2.3	2.4
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	0.0	2.7	-0.7	1.2	2.8	3.1
445	Food & beverage stores.....	-0.5	2.3	-0.1	3.1	1.0	2.8
4451	Grocery stores	-0.3	2.4	-0.1	3.0	0.9	2.8
446	Health & personal care stores	0.4	5.0	0.2	3.4	1.7	4.8
447	Gasoline stations	-4.3	4.7	-5.4	7.4	-0.5	10.8
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	1.0	2.1	-1.8	-1.2	-0.3	0.8
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	-0.2	-1.3	1.2	-0.2	-1.5	-1.6
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.7	3.6	-0.7	1.2	0.7	2.9
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.7	-4.3	-1.2	-8.1	-1.3	-5.9
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	1.8	1.5	0.5	-0.9	0.6	0.3
454	Nonstore retailers	0.6	3.0	-2.4	3.5	-1.1	4.9
722	Food services & drinking places	1.4	6.7	-0.4	4.6	2.0	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 estimate 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 <http://www.census.gov/retail>.

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 ⁽²⁾ for Current Mo. (%)	Trend (percent change): Median standard error ⁽²⁾ for			Revision for month- to-month change ⁽¹⁾	
			Current Mo. to Previous Mo.	Current Qtr. to Previous Qtr.	Current Mo. to Current Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	Retail & food services,						
	total	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.2	0.3
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.1
	Retail	0.8	0.6	0.3	0.6	0.2	0.4
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	2.0	1.6	0.7	1.9	0.7	1.2
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	2.1	1.7	0.7	2.0	0.7	1.3
442	Furniture & home furn. stores.....	3.8	1.9	1.1	2.6	0.2	1.0
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.6	0.6	0.4	1.3	0.1	0.5
444	Building material & garden eq. &...						
	supplies dealers.....	1.8	1.1	0.7	1.4	0.0	0.7
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
4451	Grocery stores	0.9	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.2
446	Health & personal care stores	2.7	0.6	0.4	1.3	-0.1	0.3
447	Gasoline stations	1.9	0.7	0.6	1.4	0.5	0.5
448	Clothing & clothing accessories						
	stores	1.6	0.7	0.5	1.1	0.7	0.8
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book &						
	music stores.....	2.4	1.8	1.5	2.1	-0.1	0.5
452	General merchandise stores.....	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	0.3
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	2.9	2.7	1.5	3.2	0.4	0.7
454	Nonstore retailers	6.5	3.1	1.2	3.9	-0.4	0.8
722	Food services & drinking places ..	2.2	1.0	0.9	1.9	0.1	0.7



(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.