

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. ET, Friday, September 12, 2003

## ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES AUGUST 2003

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for August, adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$319.2 billion, an increase of 0.6 percent ( $\pm 0.9\%$ ) from the previous month and up 5.4 percent ( $\pm 1.0\%$ ) from August 2002. Total sales for the June through August 2003 period were up 5.3 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ ) from the same period a year ago. The June to July 2003 percent change was revised from +1.4 percent ( $\pm 0.9\%$ ) to +1.3 percent ( $\pm 0.3\%$ ).

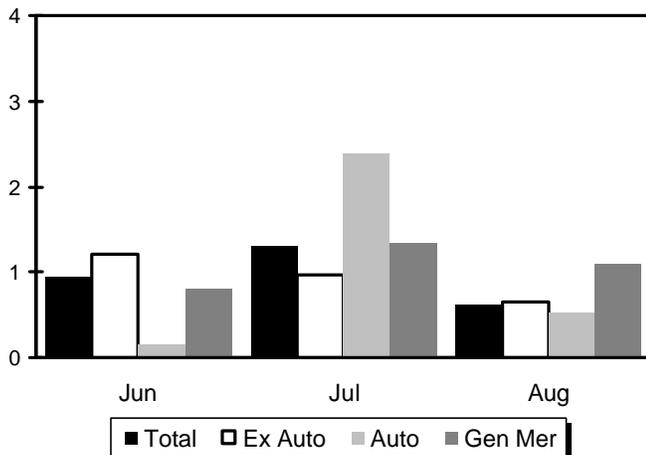
Retail trade sales were up 0.5 percent ( $\pm 1.0\%$ ) from July and were 5.1 percent ( $\pm 1.1\%$ ) above last year. Electronics and appliance stores were up 10.0 percent ( $\pm 1.8\%$ ) from August 2002 and sales of food services and drinking places were up 9.2 percent ( $\pm 2.6\%$ ) from last year.

*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.*

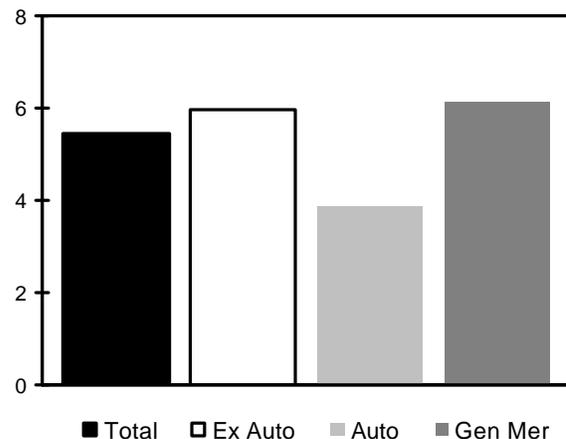
### Percent Change in Retail and Food Services Sales

(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 September is scheduled to be released October 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 <sup>1</sup>					
		8 Month Total		2003			2002		2003			2002	
		2003	% Chg. 2002	Aug. <sup>2</sup> (a)	July (p)	June (r)	Aug.	July	Aug. <sup>2</sup> (a)	July (p)	June (r)	Aug. (r)	July (r)
	<b>Retail &amp; food services, total</b> .....	2,458,931	4.7	329,759	325,127	315,502	318,526	306,129	319,192	317,232	313,142	302,706	300,842
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	1,844,186	4.6	246,677	240,625	235,366	235,568	226,611	241,449	239,885	237,592	227,851	227,433
	Retail .....	2,221,942	4.6	297,233	293,731	285,022	288,562	277,084	288,794	287,245	283,318	274,858	272,941
	<b>GAFO<sup>3</sup></b> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	76,569	75,753	79,999	72,133	(*)	81,621	80,790	77,839	77,521
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	614,745	5.3	83,082	84,502	80,136	82,958	79,518	77,743	77,347	75,550	74,855	73,409
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	562,613	5.5	76,124	77,358	73,353	76,061	72,737	71,210	70,841	69,071	68,585	67,101
44111	New car dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	65,097	61,389	66,132	62,833	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,144	6,783	6,897	6,781	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	63,373	3.8	8,736	8,408	8,064	8,270	7,724	8,482	8,425	8,383	7,899	7,747
4421	Furniture stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,464	4,315	4,498	4,264	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,944	3,749	3,772	3,460	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	57,485	3.0	8,194	7,502	7,284	7,489	6,963	8,113	8,004	7,875	7,373	7,450
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,412	5,211	5,338	5,049	(*)	5,813	5,720	5,311	5,412
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,090	2,073	2,151	1,914	(*)	2,191	2,155	2,062	2,038
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	213,552	4.7	27,623	30,009	30,601	26,412	27,416	27,055	27,112	26,697	25,123	24,888
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	26,271	25,501	23,881	24,158	(*)	23,689	23,331	22,010	21,843
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	334,540	3.2	43,622	44,103	41,664	42,196	42,015	42,759	42,607	42,269	40,936	40,970
4451	Grocery stores .....	302,843	3.1	39,279	39,756	37,556	38,064	37,897	38,509	38,412	38,128	36,919	36,973
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,797	2,598	2,726	2,694	(*)	2,695	2,656	2,621	2,613
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	124,557	5.2	15,785	15,912	15,423	15,111	14,925	16,074	16,024	15,851	15,111	15,030
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	13,533	13,117	12,723	12,587	(*)	13,684	13,551	12,839	12,740
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	176,034	10.6	23,684	23,017	21,973	22,111	21,966	22,073	21,491	21,108	20,341	20,529
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	106,849	2.3	15,228	13,765	13,476	15,002	12,803	14,763	14,969	14,793	14,192	14,106
44811	Men's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	754	806	851	725	(*)	847	841	820	824
44812	Women's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,643	2,762	2,806	2,496	(*)	2,950	2,898	2,803	2,801
44814	Family clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,040	4,738	5,387	4,644	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,802	1,707	2,285	1,751	(*)	1,809	1,778	1,791	1,776
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	48,853	-1.1	7,256	6,047	6,126	7,243	6,089	6,878	6,779	6,822	6,852	6,811
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	294,107	4.1	40,792	37,746	37,830	38,308	35,499	40,428	39,994	39,466	38,090	38,019
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	132,107	-4.5	18,447	16,637	16,909	18,759	16,845	18,508	18,441	18,221	18,815	18,847
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) <sup>4</sup> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	16,908	17,194	19,065	17,125	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	21,109	20,921	19,549	18,654	(*)	21,553	21,245	19,275	19,172
45291	Warehouse clubs & superstores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	17,913	17,757	16,572	15,822	(*)	18,241	17,973	16,247	16,178
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,196	3,164	2,977	2,832	(*)	3,312	3,272	3,028	2,994
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	67,344	-0.6	8,945	8,570	8,457	9,259	8,530	8,738	8,720	8,731	8,870	8,716
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	120,503	5.9	14,286	14,150	13,988	14,203	13,636	15,688	15,773	15,773	15,216	15,266
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	9,548	9,308	9,454	9,052	(*)	10,201	10,195	9,827	9,807
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ...	236,989	6.1	32,526	31,396	30,480	29,964	29,045	30,398	29,987	29,824	27,848	27,901

(\*) 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>					
		Aug. 2003 Advance from --		July 2003 Preliminary from --		Jun. 2003 through Aug. 2003 from --	
		Jul. 2003 (p)	Aug. 2002 (r)	Jun 2003 (r)	Jul. 2002 (r)	Mar. 2003 through May 2003	Jun. 2002 through Aug. 2002
	<b>Retail &amp; food services, total .....</b>	0.6	5.4	1.3	5.4	2.3	5.3
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	0.7	6.0	1.0	5.5	2.0	5.3
	Retail .....	0.5	5.1	1.4	5.2	2.2	5.1
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers .....</b>	0.5	3.9	2.4	5.4	3.2	5.3
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	0.5	3.8	2.6	5.6	3.4	5.5
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores .....</b>	0.7	7.4	0.5	8.8	3.5	7.7
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores .....</b>	1.4	10.0	1.6	7.4	5.0	7.3
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers.....</b>	-0.2	7.7	1.6	8.9	3.8	7.6
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores.....</b>	0.4	4.5	0.8	4.0	1.4	4.0
4451	Grocery stores .....	0.3	4.3	0.7	3.9	1.4	3.9
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores .....</b>	0.3	6.4	1.1	6.6	2.4	6.3
447	<b>Gasoline stations .....</b>	2.7	8.5	1.8	4.7	-1.6	6.3
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores .....</b>	-1.4	4.0	1.2	6.1	2.2	4.4
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores.....</b>	1.5	0.4	-0.6	-0.5	2.1	0.4
452	<b>General merchandise stores.....</b>	1.1	6.1	1.3	5.2	2.6	4.8
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.4	-1.6	1.2	-2.2	2.0	-2.7
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers .....</b>	0.2	-1.5	-0.1	0.0	0.6	-0.7
454	<b>Nonstore retailers .....</b>	-0.5	3.1	0.0	3.3	0.5	3.9
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places ....</b>	1.4	9.2	0.5	7.5	2.6	7.8

(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 <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	0.3	0.6	0.2	0.3
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.1
	<b>Retail .....</b>	0.8	0.6	0.3	0.6	0.2	0.3
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers .....</b>	2.0	1.6	0.7	1.9	0.7	1.2
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	2.2	1.7	0.8	2.1	0.7	1.3
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores.....</b>	3.7	1.9	1.1	2.5	0.2	0.9
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores .....</b>	1.6	0.6	0.4	1.1	0.2	0.6
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp;...</b>						
	supplies dealers.....	1.8	1.1	0.7	1.3	-0.1	0.6
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores.....</b>	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.2
4451	Grocery stores .....	0.9	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.2
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores .....</b>	2.8	0.6	0.4	1.2	0.0	0.2
447	<b>Gasoline stations .....</b>	1.9	0.7	0.6	1.4	0.4	0.5
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories</b>						
	stores .....	1.5	0.7	0.5	1.1	0.6	0.8
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp;</b>						
	music stores.....	2.4	1.8	1.4	2.1	-0.3	0.6
452	<b>General merchandise stores.....</b>	0.2	0.0	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	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers .....</b>	3.4	3.1	1.7	3.3	0.2	0.6
454	<b>Nonstore retailers .....</b>	5.1	2.4	1.0	2.8	-0.3	0.8
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places ..</b>	2.1	0.8	0.8	1.6	0.3	0.6



(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.