

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. ET, Friday, November 12, 2004

## ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES October 2004

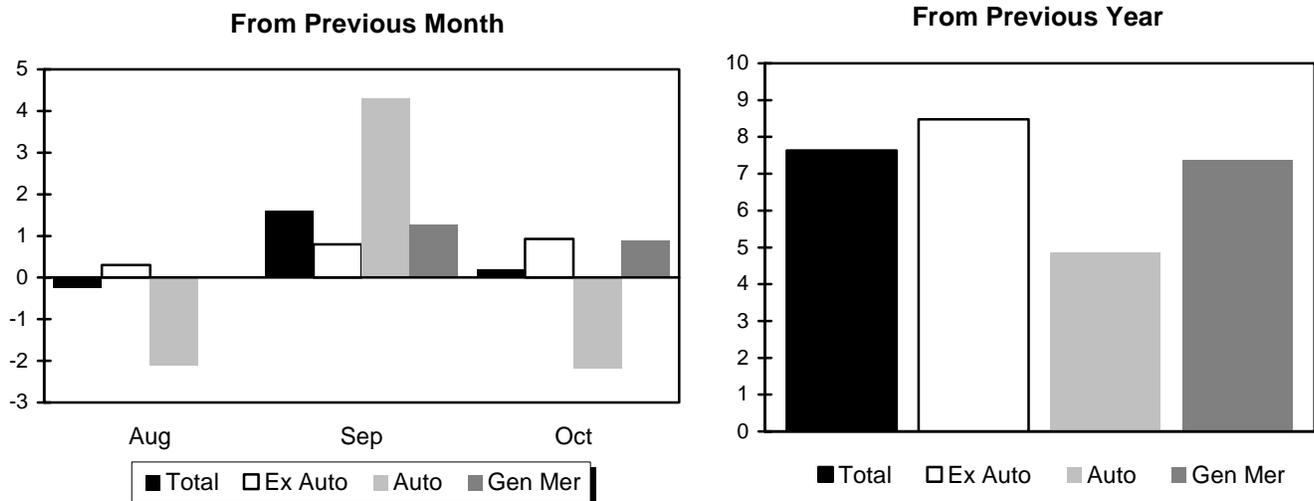
The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for October, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$342.1 billion, an increase of 0.2 percent ( $\pm 0.8\%$ ) from the previous month and up 7.6 percent ( $\pm 1.0\%$ ) from October 2003. Total sales for the August through October 2004 period were up 6.7 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) from the same period a year ago. The August to September 2004 percent change was revised from +1.5 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) to +1.6 percent ( $\pm 0.3\%$ ).

Retail trade sales were up 0.1 percent ( $\pm 0.8\%$ ) from September 2004 and were 7.6 percent ( $\pm 1.0\%$ ) above last year. Gasoline station sales were up 23.8 percent ( $\pm 1.2\%$ ) from October 2003 and sales of nonstore retailers were up 14.1 percent ( $\pm 2.2\%$ ) from last year.

*The advance estimates are based on a subsample of the Census 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

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



The Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services for November is scheduled to be released December 13, 2004 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 Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services, by Kind of Business

(Total sales estimates are shown in millions of dollars and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, Monthly Retail Trade Survey, and administrative records.)

NAICS <sup>1</sup> code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted							Adjusted <sup>2</sup>				
		10 Month Total		2004			2003		2004			2003	
		2004	% Chg. 2003	Oct. <sup>3</sup> (a)	Sept. (p)	Aug. (r)	Oct.	Sept.	Oct. <sup>3</sup> (a)	Sept. (p)	Aug. (r)	Oct. (r)	Sept. (r)
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>												
	<b>total</b> .....	3,304,700	7.6	335,760	332,154	345,361	317,990	306,836	342,115	341,428	336,059	317,850	317,017
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	2,516,499	8.8	262,747	251,995	262,337	244,789	231,710	264,093	261,665	259,583	243,449	242,191
	Retail .....	2,979,109	7.4	301,996	300,120	311,388	286,913	277,707	308,981	308,606	303,549	287,081	287,172
	<b>GAFO<sup>4</sup></b> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	78,492	84,558	78,786	74,079	(*)	85,494	84,726	81,430	81,614
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	788,201	4.1	73,013	80,159	83,024	73,201	75,126	78,022	79,763	76,476	74,401	74,826
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	717,245	4.1	65,907	73,067	75,545	65,945	68,160	70,944	72,776	69,499	67,497	67,888
44111	New car dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	61,962	63,265	55,646	57,831	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,092	7,479	7,256	6,966	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	84,129	6.9	8,679	8,492	8,917	8,534	8,186	8,749	8,719	8,734	8,441	8,396
4421	Furniture stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,592	4,853	4,463	4,305	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,900	4,064	4,071	3,881	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	78,452	8.7	7,900	7,938	8,404	7,634	7,498	8,539	8,545	8,453	8,162	8,102
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,499	6,003	5,293	5,142	(*)	6,137	6,076	5,816	5,739
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,439	2,401	2,341	2,356	(*)	2,408	2,377	2,346	2,363
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	308,921	14.4	31,023	31,703	32,357	29,717	28,039	30,846	31,199	30,874	28,166	27,516
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	28,986	29,566	27,003	25,645	(*)	27,711	27,503	25,003	24,354
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	435,405	4.4	44,543	43,601	43,966	42,657	41,093	44,594	44,411	44,126	42,607	42,614
4451	Grocery stores .....	391,760	3.9	39,931	39,225	39,471	38,321	37,038	39,931	39,822	39,550	38,206	38,262
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,741	2,745	2,785	2,597	(*)	2,823	2,810	2,768	2,757
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	167,053	6.1	16,868	16,377	16,788	16,549	15,721	17,142	17,059	17,026	16,418	16,359
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	14,022	14,169	14,203	13,497	(*)	14,531	14,517	14,035	14,001
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	259,977	15.4	28,267	26,567	27,836	23,071	22,879	27,524	26,382	26,260	22,226	22,743
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	144,481	7.0	15,657	14,187	15,531	14,577	13,544	16,157	15,686	15,531	15,140	15,143
44811	Men's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	863	977	898	797	(*)	958	962	883	895
44812	Women's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,862	2,729	2,889	2,720	(*)	3,038	2,944	2,858	2,900
44814	Family clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,134	5,704	5,340	4,846	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,757	2,230	1,815	1,754	(*)	1,914	1,852	1,929	1,930
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	61,889	3.2	6,119	6,397	7,272	5,908	6,226	6,868	6,871	6,906	6,623	6,666
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	391,968	7.3	41,873	38,230	40,871	38,876	35,454	42,712	42,340	41,813	39,781	40,025
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	162,309	-0.2	17,326	15,918	17,093	17,241	15,619	17,860	17,771	17,603	17,765	17,973
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) <sup>5</sup> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	16,093	17,270	17,445	15,812	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	22,312	23,778	21,635	19,835	(*)	24,569	24,210	22,016	22,052
45291	Warehouse clubs & superstores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	19,145	20,517	18,283	16,843	(*)	21,062	20,766	18,637	18,694
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,167	3,261	3,352	2,992	(*)	3,507	3,444	3,379	3,358
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	89,538	5.4	9,163	9,049	9,393	8,990	8,517	9,290	9,245	9,124	8,868	8,729
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	169,095	12.0	18,891	17,420	17,029	17,199	15,424	18,538	18,386	18,226	16,248	16,053
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses ....	(*)	(*)	(*)	10,994	11,115	10,860	10,111	(*)	11,428	11,447	10,392	10,328
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ...	325,591	9.9	33,764	32,034	33,973	31,077	29,129	33,134	32,822	32,510	30,769	29,845

(\*) Advance estimates are not available for this kind of business.

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

(1) For a full description of the NAICS codes used in this table, see <http://www.census.gov/epcd/www/naics.html>

(2) Estimates are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variation and for 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. The factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted estimates shown in this table. Year-to-date seasonally adjusted sales estimates are not tabulated. Adjustment factors and explanatory material can be found on the Internet at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>

(3) Advance estimates are based on early reports obtained from a small sample of firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey (MRTS) sample. All other estimates are from the MRTS sample.

(4) GAFO represents firms which specialize in department store types of merchandise and is comprised of furniture & home furnishings (442), electronics & appliances (443), clothing & accessories (448), sporting goods, hobby, book, and music (451), general merchandise (452), office supply, stationery, and gift stores (4532).

(5) Estimates include data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line are not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

Note: Table 3 provides estimated measures of sampling variability. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <http://www.census.gov/econ/www/retmenu.html>

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

(Estimates are shown as percents and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, Monthly Retail Trade Survey, and administrative records.)

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Percent Change <sup>1</sup>					
		Oct. 2004 Advance from --		Sep. 2004 Preliminary from --		Aug. 2004 through Oct. 2004 from --	
		Sep. 2004 (p)	Oct. 2003 (r)	Aug. 2004 (r)	Sep. 2003 (r)	May 2004 through Jul. 2004	Aug. 2003 through Oct. 2003
	<b>Retail &amp; food services, total .....</b>	0.2	7.6	1.6	7.7	1.3	6.7
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ....	0.9	8.5	0.8	8.0	1.5	7.9
	Retail .....	0.1	7.6	1.7	7.5	1.3	6.5
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers .....</b>	-2.2	4.9	4.3	6.6	0.6	2.9
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	-2.5	5.1	4.7	7.2	0.7	3.0
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores .....</b>	0.3	3.6	-0.2	3.8	0.7	4.2
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores .....</b>	-0.1	4.6	1.1	5.5	0.4	4.9
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers.....</b>	-1.1	9.5	1.1	13.4	0.9	11.8
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores.....</b>	0.4	4.7	0.6	4.2	1.3	4.2
4451	Grocery stores .....	0.3	4.5	0.7	4.1	1.4	4.0
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores .....</b>	0.5	4.4	0.2	4.3	0.9	4.4
447	<b>Gasoline stations .....</b>	4.3	23.8	0.5	16.0	2.4	18.7
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores .....</b>	3.0	6.7	1.0	3.6	0.7	4.4
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores.....</b>	0.0	3.7	-0.5	3.1	1.3	2.4
452	<b>General merchandise stores.....</b>	0.9	7.4	1.3	5.8	1.5	5.8
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.5	0.5	1.0	-1.1	0.3	-1.2
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers .....</b>	0.5	4.8	1.3	5.9	0.0	4.6
454	<b>Nonstore retailers .....</b>	0.8	14.1	0.9	14.5	5.2	14.8
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places ....</b>	1.0	7.7	1.0	10.0	1.4	8.0

(p) Preliminary estimates. (r) Revised estimates.

(1) Estimates shown in this table are derived from adjusted estimates provided in Table 1 of this report.

Note: Table 3 provides estimated measures of sampling variability. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <http://www.census.gov/econ/www/retmenu.html>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Survey Description

The U.S. Census Bureau conducts the Advance Monthly Retail Trade and Food Services Survey (MARTS) to provide an early estimate of monthly sales by kind of business for retail and food service firms located in the United States. Each month, questionnaires are mailed to a probability sample of approximately 5,000 employer firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey (MRTS). Firms responding to MARTS account for approximately 65% of the total national sales estimate. Advance sales estimates are computed using a link relative estimator. The change in sales from the previous month is estimated using only units that have reported data for both the current and

previous month. There is no imputation or adjustment for nonrespondents in MARTS. The total sales estimate is derived by multiplying this ratio by the preliminary sales estimate for the previous month (derived from the larger MRTS sample). Detailed industry estimates are summed to derive total estimates at broad industry levels. The monthly estimates are adjusted using annual survey estimates and for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences. Additional information on MARTS and MRTS can be found on the Census Bureau website at: <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>.

Official Business

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## Reliability of Estimates

Because the estimates presented in this report are based on a sample survey, they contain sampling error and nonsampling error.

Sampling error is the difference between the estimate and the result that would be obtained from a complete enumeration of the sampling frame conducted under the same survey conditions. This error occurs because only a subset of the entire sampling frame is measured in a sample survey. Standard errors and coefficients of variation (CV), as given in Table 3 of this report, are estimated measures of sampling variation.

The margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is 90-percent confidence interval. If, for example, the percent change estimate is +1.2 percent and its estimated standard error is 0.9 percent, then the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 1.65 \times 0.9$  percent or  $\pm 1.5$  percent, and the 90 percent confidence interval is -0.3 percent to +2.7 percent. If the interval contains 0, then

one does not have sufficient evidence to conclude at the 90 percent confidence level that the estimated change is different from zero. For a monthly total, the median estimated coefficient of variation is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated value  $\pm 1.65 \times CV \times$  (the estimated monthly total). The Census Bureau recommends that individuals using estimates in this report incorporate this information into their analyses, as sampling error could affect the conclusions drawn from the estimates.

Nonsampling error encompasses all other factors that contribute to the total error of a sample survey estimate. This type of error can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, mistakes in the recording and coding of data, and other errors of collection, response, coverage, or processing. Although nonsampling error is not measured directly, the Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the process to minimize this type of error.

**Table 3. Estimated Measures of Sampling Variability and Revision to Advance Estimates**

(Estimates are shown as percents and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey and Monthly Retail Trade Survey)

NAICS Code	Kind of Business	Median CV <sup>(1)</sup> for Current Mo. (%)	Median standard error <sup>(1)</sup> for Percent change			Revision for month-to-month change <sup>(2)</sup>	
			Previous Mo. to Current Mo.	Previous Qtr. to Current Qtr.	Current Mo. to same Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>						
	total .....	0.7	0.5	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.7	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.2
	<b>Retail</b> .....	0.7	0.5	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.2
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	1.7	1.4	0.7	1.8	0.2	0.4
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	1.9	1.5	0.7	1.9	0.2	0.4
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	3.8	1.3	1.1	2.0	0.1	0.7
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> ....	1.9	0.6	0.5	1.6	0.1	0.2
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; ....</b>						
	<b>supplies dealers</b> .....	2.0	1.0	0.7	1.4	0.3	0.4
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.3
4451	Grocery stores .....	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.2
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	3.1	0.4	0.4	1.2	0.1	0.3
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	1.6	0.7	0.5	1.3	0.5	0.4
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories</b>						
	<b>stores</b> .....	1.4	0.7	0.5	1.0	0.0	0.3
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	2.8	1.8	1.3	2.0	0.1	0.3
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	3.7	3.3	1.8	3.9	0.3	0.9
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	4.0	1.8	0.9	2.2	0.4	0.6
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ..	2.4	0.7	0.7	1.4	0.3	0.3

(1) Estimated measures of sampling variability are based on estimates not adjusted for seasonal variation or holiday or trading-day differences. Medians are based on estimates for the most recent 12 months.

(2) These columns provide measures of the difference between the advance-to-preliminary and preliminary-to-final estimates of month-to-month change for the same pair of months as measured by the Advance sample and MRTS sample. The average and median differences are based on estimates for the most recent 12 months.

Note: Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>

