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ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES April 2006

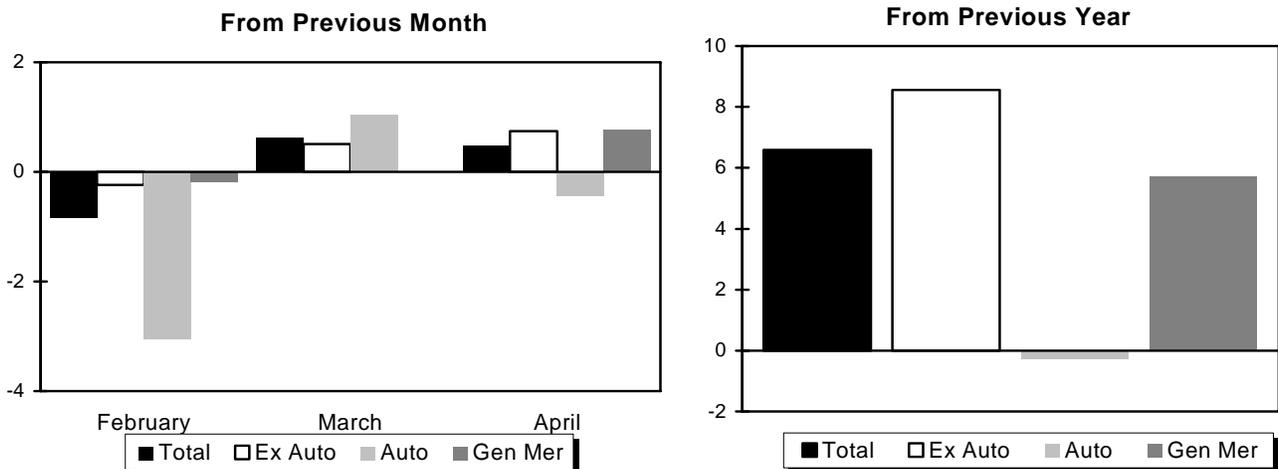
The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for April, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$362.7 billion, an increase of 0.5 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$)* from the previous month and up 6.6 percent ($\pm 0.8\%$) from April 2005. Total sales for the February through April 2006 period were up 7.3 percent ($\pm 0.3\%$) from the same period a year ago. The February to March 2006 percent change was unrevised from 0.6 percent ($\pm 0.2\%$).

Retail trade sales were up 0.5 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$)* from March and were 6.6 percent ($\pm 0.8\%$) above last year. Gasoline stations were up 17.4 percent ($\pm 2.1\%$) from April 2005 and sales of nonstore retailers were up 13.3 percent ($\pm 4.3\%$) 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 May is scheduled to be released June 13, 2006 at 8:30 a.m. EDT.

For information, visit the Census Bureau's Web site at <<http://www.census.gov/retail>>. This report is also available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's STAT-USA (202-482-1986).

* The 90 percent confidence interval includes zero. The Census Bureau does not have sufficient statistical evidence to conclude that the actual change is different from zero.

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 ¹ code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted						Adjusted ²					
		4 Month Total		2006			2005		2006			2005	
		2006	% Chg. 2005	Apr. ³ (a)	Mar. (p)	Feb. (r)	Apr.	Mar.	Apr. ³ (a)	Mar. (p)	Feb. (r)	Apr. (r)	Mar. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	1,362,283	7.4	355,261	366,616	318,184	337,663	340,568	362,676	360,915	358,675	340,260	334,358
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	1,068,981	9.1	279,624	283,151	250,199	259,145	259,413	287,115	285,020	283,567	264,482	260,288
	Retail	1,226,384	7.3	319,919	330,589	286,273	304,176	307,927	327,475	325,869	323,838	307,300	302,294
	GAFO⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	87,726	79,726	81,163	82,785	(*)	92,342	92,181	87,714	86,545
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	293,302	1.5	75,637	83,465	67,985	78,518	81,155	75,561	75,895	75,108	75,778	74,070
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	268,938	1.2	69,447	76,795	62,261	72,350	74,914	69,308	69,561	68,797	69,701	68,166
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	61,718	50,426	57,550	60,468	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,670	5,724	6,168	6,241	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	36,587	9.0	8,972	9,848	8,838	8,544	8,910	9,838	9,848	9,809	9,099	8,982
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,265	4,879	4,609	4,856	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,583	3,959	3,935	4,054	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	32,017	6.6	7,433	8,302	7,882	7,145	7,827	8,769	8,731	8,725	8,302	8,280
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,652	6,455	5,649	6,102	(*)	7,137	7,125	6,638	6,625
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,650	1,427	1,496	1,725	(*)	1,594	1,600	1,664	1,655
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	112,033	15.7	32,687	31,017	23,948	29,950	26,326	30,502	30,998	30,510	26,996	26,294
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	27,388	21,865	24,918	23,221	(*)	27,498	27,061	23,937	23,314
445	Food & beverage stores	171,142	4.3	43,996	44,321	40,502	41,668	42,860	44,807	44,610	44,686	42,856	42,501
4451	Grocery stores	153,269	3.5	39,245	39,681	36,190	37,357	38,620	39,843	39,641	39,682	38,315	38,049
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,918	2,667	2,732	2,613	(*)	3,121	3,130	2,852	2,828
446	Health & personal care stores	72,204	6.5	18,009	19,098	17,226	16,932	17,876	18,339	18,276	18,095	17,120	16,944
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	15,854	14,371	14,168	14,985	(*)	15,200	15,032	14,355	14,244
447	Gasoline stations	131,071	16.6	35,816	34,176	29,694	31,247	29,949	36,141	34,556	34,568	30,785	30,467
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	60,854	5.9	16,869	16,471	14,544	15,741	15,763	17,506	17,448	17,384	16,757	16,255
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	718	606	724	752	(*)	775	779	785	798
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,227	2,541	3,136	3,065	(*)	3,192	3,153	3,027	2,944
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,267	5,051	5,963	6,081	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,105	1,874	2,069	2,031	(*)	2,118	2,152	2,032	1,929
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	25,634	7.5	6,369	6,635	5,742	6,001	6,130	7,279	7,220	7,160	6,750	6,759
452	General merchandise stores	165,244	6.7	44,116	43,163	39,424	40,805	41,027	45,929	45,579	45,576	43,448	42,903
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	61,992	-0.4	16,760	16,455	14,771	16,624	16,561	17,796	17,813	17,887	18,050	17,861
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁵	(*)	(*)	(*)	16,860	15,136	17,071	16,995	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	26,708	24,653	24,181	24,466	(*)	27,766	27,689	25,398	25,042
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	23,401	21,699	21,024	21,246	(*)	24,300	24,218	22,061	21,746
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,307	2,954	3,157	3,220	(*)	3,466	3,471	3,337	3,296
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	36,497	8.5	8,993	9,510	8,993	8,595	8,754	9,835	9,861	9,849	9,137	9,046
454	Nonstore retailers	89,799	12.7	21,022	24,583	21,495	19,030	21,350	22,969	22,847	22,368	20,272	19,793
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	15,479	13,174	12,350	13,142	(*)	15,072	14,736	12,986	12,796
722	Food services & drinking places ...	135,899	8.4	35,342	36,027	31,911	33,487	32,641	35,201	35,046	34,837	32,960	32,064

(*) 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/mrts/www/mrts.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 ¹					
		Apr. 2006 Advance from --		Mar. 2006 Preliminary from --		Feb. 2006 through Apr. 2006 from --	
		Mar. 2006 (p)	Apr. 2005 (r)	Feb. 2006 (r)	Mar. 2005 (r)	Nov. 2005 through Jan. 2006	Feb. 2006 through Apr. 2006
	Retail & food services,						
	total	0.5	6.6	0.6	7.9	1.9	7.3
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	0.7	8.6	0.5	9.5	2.2	9.1
	Retail	0.5	6.6	0.6	7.8	1.9	7.2
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	-0.4	-0.3	1.0	2.5	0.6	1.0
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	-0.4	-0.6	1.1	2.0	0.7	0.7
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	-0.1	8.1	0.4	9.6	1.7	8.9
443	Electronics & appliance stores	0.4	5.6	0.1	5.4	0.8	5.2
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	-1.6	13.0	1.6	17.9	4.5	16.0
445	Food & beverage stores	0.4	4.6	-0.2	5.0	1.2	5.0
4451	Grocery stores	0.5	4.0	-0.1	4.2	1.1	4.2
446	Health & personal care stores	0.3	7.1	1.0	7.9	1.8	7.0
447	Gasoline stations	4.6	17.4	0.0	13.4	3.1	16.3
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	0.3	4.5	0.4	7.3	0.9	5.3
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	0.8	7.8	0.8	6.8	3.6	7.1
452	General merchandise stores	0.8	5.7	0.0	6.2	1.3	6.0
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	-0.1	-1.4	-0.4	-0.3	-0.7	-0.9
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	-0.3	7.6	0.1	9.0	3.0	8.5
454	Nonstore retailers	0.5	13.3	2.1	15.4	4.2	14.1
722	Food services & drinking places	0.4	6.8	0.6	9.3	1.4	7.9

(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/mrts/www/mrts.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 a 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 ± 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 statistical evidence to conclude at the 90

percent confidence level that the change is different from zero and therefore the change is not statistically significant. Estimated changes shown in the text are statistically significant unless otherwise noted. 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 ⁽¹⁾ for Current Mo. (%)	Median standard error ⁽¹⁾ for Percent change			Revision for month-to-month change ⁽²⁾	
			Previous Mo. to Current Mo.	Previous Qtr. to Current Qtr.	Current Mo. to same Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	Retail & food services,						
	total	0.8	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.7	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2
	Retail	0.8	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.2
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	2.1	1.5	0.6	1.4	0.5	0.8
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	2.2	1.6	0.7	1.5	0.5	0.9
442	Furniture & home furn. stores.....	4.3	1.5	1.0	2.0	0.5	0.8
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.9	0.5	0.4	1.0	0.4	0.5
444	Building material & garden eq. &....						
	supplies dealers.....	2.5	0.8	0.6	1.3	0.4	0.4
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.9	0.2	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	3.2	0.5	0.4	0.9	-0.1	0.1
447	Gasoline stations	1.8	0.7	0.5	1.3	0.1	0.3
448	Clothing & clothing accessories						
	stores	1.5	0.7	0.5	0.8	0.0	0.3
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book &						
	music stores.....	3.0	1.7	1.2	2.1	0.1	0.2
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.3	0.0	0.0	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	Miscellaneous store retailers	3.5	3.3	1.5	3.6	0.4	0.9
454	Nonstore retailers	4.6	2.2	0.9	2.6	0.4	0.4
722	Food services & drinking places ..	3.0	0.6	0.6	1.5	0.3	0.1

(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>

