

U.S. Census Bureau News

U.S. Department of Commerce • Washington, D.C. 20233

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2009, AT 8:30 A.M. EDT

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CB09-34

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES February 2009

Intention to Revise Retail Estimates: Monthly retail sales estimates will be revised based on the results of the 2007 Annual Retail Trade Survey. Revised not adjusted and corresponding adjusted data are scheduled for release on April 30, 2009.

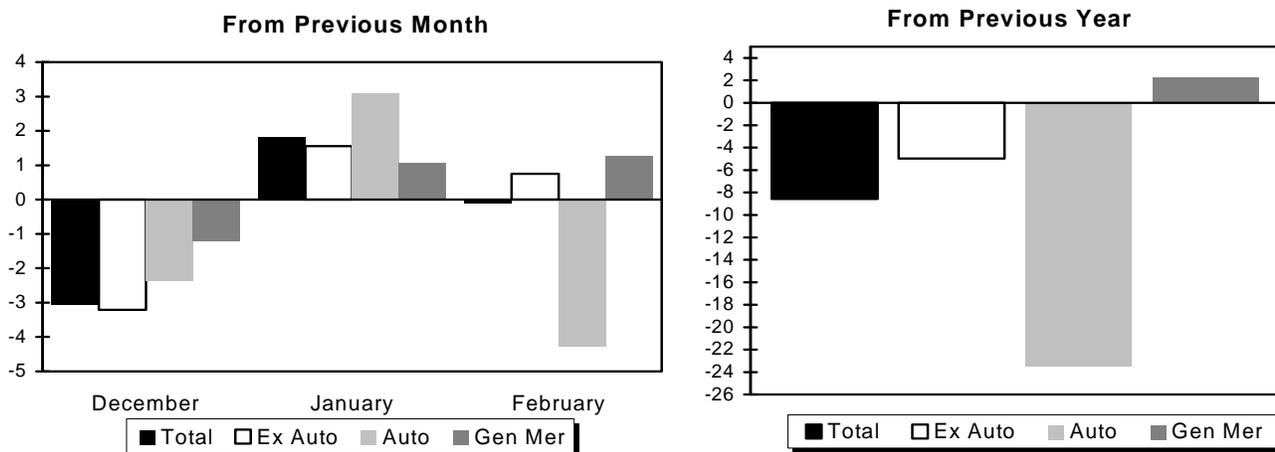
The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for February, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$346.8 billion, a decrease of 0.1 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$)* from the previous month and 8.6 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) below February 2008. Total sales for the December 2008 through February 2009 period were down 9.4 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from the same period a year ago. The December 2008 to January 2009 percent change was revised from +1.0 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) to +1.8 percent ($\pm 0.2\%$).

Retail trade sales were down 0.1 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$)* from January 2009 and 9.8 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) below last year. Gasoline stations sales were down 32.3 percent ($\pm 1.7\%$) from February 2008 and motor vehicle and parts dealers sales were down 23.5 percent ($\pm 2.1\%$) 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 March is scheduled to be released April 14, 2009 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 than 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				
		2 Month Total		2009		2008			2009		2008		
		2009	% Chg. 2008	Feb. ³ (a)	Jan. (p)	Dec. (r)	Feb.	Jan.	Feb. ³ (a)	Jan. (p)	Dec. (r)	Feb. (r)	Jan. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	624,162	-10.3	305,943	318,219	392,839	348,876	346,951	346,810	347,191	340,987	379,355	381,421
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	520,151	-6.9	254,423	265,728	338,355	278,636	280,111	290,023	287,872	283,444	305,148	306,045
	Retail	552,379	-11.7	270,915	281,464	354,475	313,244	312,020	308,148	308,461	302,852	341,729	343,739
	GAFO⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	84,040	137,393	87,385	84,711	(*)	95,743	93,448	97,659	98,191
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	104,011	-24.1	51,520	52,491	54,484	70,240	66,840	56,787	59,319	57,543	74,207	75,376
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	92,165	-26.5	45,597	46,568	48,150	64,304	61,063	50,162	52,738	50,952	67,831	69,076
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	36,334	38,920	51,188	49,443	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,923	6,334	5,936	5,777	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	15,241	-13.8	7,520	7,721	9,861	8,822	8,858	8,449	8,392	8,443	9,466	9,670
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,396	4,692	5,063	4,989	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,325	5,169	3,759	3,869	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	17,028	-3.7	8,425	8,603	13,828	8,857	8,832	9,217	9,110	8,473	9,346	9,409
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,955	11,060	7,146	7,092	(*)	7,344	6,695	7,522	7,593
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,648	2,768	1,711	1,740	(*)	1,766	1,778	1,824	1,816
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	37,576	-14.0	18,547	19,029	22,253	21,783	21,906	24,759	24,810	25,142	27,593	27,480
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	16,599	19,006	19,264	19,707	(*)	20,569	20,886	23,550	23,715
445	Food & beverage stores	92,752	0.5	44,034	48,718	52,476	45,351	46,981	48,851	49,213	48,273	48,395	48,210
4451	Grocery stores	83,808	0.0	39,582	44,226	45,498	40,970	42,843	43,545	44,006	43,167	43,400	43,276
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,094	4,766	2,976	2,830	(*)	3,589	3,528	3,413	3,397
446	Health & personal care stores	40,907	1.5	20,004	20,903	23,431	20,078	20,219	21,035	20,903	20,865	20,240	20,159
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	17,368	19,108	16,712	16,968	(*)	17,179	17,230	16,813	16,750
447	Gasoline stations	48,865	-34.6	23,934	24,931	25,022	36,789	37,914	28,092	27,158	26,422	41,523	41,894
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	28,953	-5.3	15,078	13,875	27,390	16,128	14,459	18,227	17,739	16,909	18,804	18,981
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	663	1,231	722	731	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,283	4,229	2,785	2,570	(*)	2,965	2,949	3,372	3,368
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,463	10,789	5,680	5,325	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,662	2,751	1,999	1,744	(*)	2,091	2,124	2,236	2,247
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	12,863	-1.6	5,733	7,130	11,994	6,024	7,049	7,369	7,351	7,178	7,328	7,436
452	General merchandise stores	87,006	0.9	43,622	43,384	69,657	44,205	42,052	50,315	49,686	49,162	49,207	49,071
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	25,929	-7.1	13,228	12,701	27,505	14,490	13,412	16,147	15,973	16,131	17,076	17,134
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁵	(*)	(*)	(*)	13,038	28,230	14,891	13,790	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	30,683	42,152	29,715	28,640	(*)	33,713	33,031	32,131	31,937
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	27,618	36,989	26,426	25,504	(*)	30,020	29,497	28,415	28,150
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,065	5,163	3,289	3,136	(*)	3,693	3,534	3,716	3,787
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	16,728	-8.5	8,253	8,475	11,160	9,025	9,253	9,424	9,221	9,298	9,831	10,028
454	Nonstore retailers	50,449	-5.9	24,245	26,204	32,919	25,942	27,657	25,623	25,559	25,144	25,789	26,025
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	17,435	24,448	16,401	17,507	(*)	18,257	18,123	17,579	17,864
722	Food services & drinking places ...	71,783	1.7	35,028	36,755	38,364	35,632	34,931	38,662	38,730	38,135	37,626	37,682

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

(NA) Not available. (S) Suppressed. (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					
		Feb. 2009 Advance from --		Jan. 2009 Preliminary from --		Dec. 2008 through Feb. 2009 from --	
		Jan. 2009 (p)	Feb. 2008 (r)	Dec. 2008 (r)	Jan. 2008 (r)	Sep. 2008 through Nov. 2008	Dec. 2007 through Feb. 2008
	Retail & food services, total	-0.1	-8.6	1.8	-9.0	-4.6	-9.4
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	0.7	-5.0	1.6	-5.9	-4.6	-5.9
	Retail	-0.1	-9.8	1.9	-10.3	-5.2	-10.6
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	-4.3	-23.5	3.1	-21.3	-4.5	-23.2
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	-4.9	-26.0	3.5	-23.7	-5.2	-25.7
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	0.7	-10.7	-0.6	-13.2	-2.7	-12.3
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.2	-1.4	7.5	-3.2	-1.2	-4.9
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	-0.2	-10.3	-1.3	-9.7	-5.9	-9.5
445	Food & beverage stores.....	-0.7	0.9	1.9	2.1	-1.5	1.2
4451	Grocery stores	-1.0	0.3	1.9	1.7	-1.5	0.9
446	Health & personal care stores	0.6	3.9	0.2	3.7	0.8	4.2
447	Gasoline stations	3.4	-32.3	2.8	-35.2	-27.9	-34.2
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	2.8	-3.1	4.9	-6.5	-1.4	-6.5
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	0.2	0.6	2.4	-1.1	1.3	-0.8
452	General merchandise stores.....	1.3	2.3	1.1	1.3	0.2	1.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	1.1	-5.4	-1.0	-6.8	-1.7	-6.4
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	2.2	-4.1	-0.8	-8.0	-4.9	-6.3
454	Nonstore retailers	0.3	-0.6	1.7	-1.8	-1.6	-2.1
722	Food services & drinking places	-0.2	2.8	1.6	2.8	0.0	2.1

(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 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	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.2
	Retail	0.7	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.3
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	2.1	1.3	0.6	1.3	0.0	1.0
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	2.1	1.4	0.7	1.4	0.1	1.0
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	2.8	1.8	0.8	2.1	-0.2	0.6
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.5	0.7	0.6	1.1	-0.1	0.7
444	Building material & garden eq. &... supplies dealers	2.4	1.4	0.8	1.6	0.2	0.5
445	Food & beverage stores	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.6	-0.1	0.3
4451	Grocery stores	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.6	-0.1	0.3
446	Health & personal care stores	1.7	0.4	0.4	1.0	-0.1	0.1
447	Gasoline stations	2.2	0.6	0.4	1.0	-0.3	0.5
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	2.0	0.7	0.6	1.0	-0.1	0.8
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	2.4	1.4	1.2	1.6	-0.2	0.5
452	General merchandise stores	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.1	0.3
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	3.8	3.1	1.6	3.3	-0.1	0.7
454	Nonstore retailers	1.6	1.0	0.6	1.3	0.2	0.6
722	Food services & drinking places ..	1.9	0.8	0.6	1.3	0.3	0.5



- (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 revisions 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>