

U.S. Census Bureau News

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2009, AT 8:30 A.M. EDT

Timothy Winters / Ian Thomas
Service Sector Statistics Division
(301) 763-2713

CB09-154

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES September 2009

Special Notice – Beginning with the December 11, 2009 release for November 2009, estimates in this release will be based on a new sample. A new sample for the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey is selected about once every two and a half years. For further information on the sample revision, see our website at <http://www.census.gov/retail>.

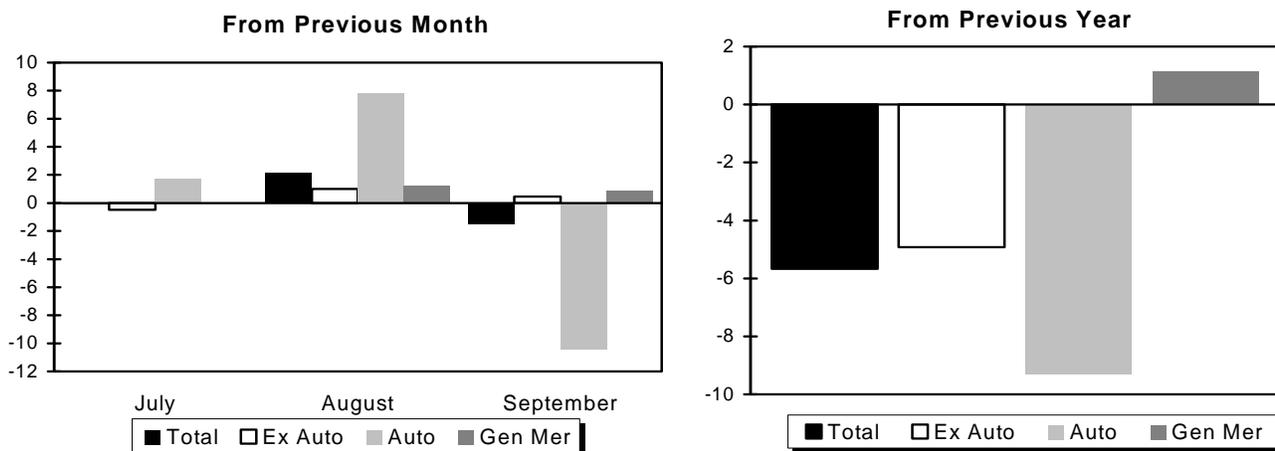
The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for September, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$344.7 billion, a decrease of 1.5 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from the previous month and 5.7 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) below September 2008. Total sales for the July through September 2009 period were down 6.6 percent ($\pm 0.3\%$) from the same period a year ago. The July to August 2009 percent change was revised from +2.7 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) to +2.2 percent ($\pm 0.2\%$).

Retail trade sales were down 1.7 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) from August 2009 and 6.4 percent ($\pm 0.7\%$) below last year. Gasoline stations sales were down 25.3 percent ($\pm 1.3\%$) from September 2008 and building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers were down 13.0 percent ($\pm 2.0\%$) 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 October is scheduled to be released November 16, 2009 at 8:30 a.m. EST.

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				
		9 Month Total		2009			2008		2009			2008	
		2009	% Chg. 2008	Sep. ³ (a)	Aug. (p)	Jul. (r)	Sep.	Aug.	Sep. ³ (a)	Aug. (p)	Jul. (r)	Sep. (r)	Aug. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	3,041,924	-8.8	333,360	360,209	354,316	352,554	384,798	344,688	349,885	342,489	365,399	371,311
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	2,510,162	-7.0	277,506	291,655	289,465	291,226	314,306	288,452	287,120	284,270	303,389	306,500
	Retail	2,697,517	-9.9	295,813	320,519	314,603	315,534	344,528	306,336	311,611	304,450	327,273	333,356
	GAFO⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	95,211	89,222	86,587	99,918	(*)	93,458	92,532	95,095	97,192
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	531,762	-16.2	55,854	68,554	64,851	61,328	70,492	56,236	62,765	58,219	62,010	64,811
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	472,895	-17.8	49,249	61,896	57,998	54,744	63,687	49,696	56,320	51,784	55,465	58,268
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	50,099	45,640	44,022	50,978	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,658	6,853	6,584	6,805	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	68,818	-12.7	7,830	8,014	8,016	8,338	9,143	7,830	7,721	7,783	8,371	8,724
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,394	4,250	4,459	5,007	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,620	3,766	3,879	4,136	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	71,048	-9.9	7,413	8,128	7,740	8,226	9,199	8,283	8,283	8,240	9,176	9,323
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,425	6,079	6,522	7,354	(*)	6,516	6,460	7,320	7,421
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,703	1,661	1,704	1,845	(*)	1,767	1,780	1,856	1,902
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	219,849	-12.2	23,281	23,407	26,261	26,895	27,185	23,342	23,399	23,679	26,845	27,113
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	20,256	21,990	23,445	23,786	(*)	19,514	19,687	22,565	22,827
445	Food & beverage stores	436,913	0.0	48,213	49,884	50,823	47,664	50,775	49,662	49,324	48,949	49,441	49,749
4451	Grocery stores	391,385	-0.4	43,081	44,505	45,299	42,741	45,440	44,322	43,934	43,683	44,245	44,549
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,525	3,692	3,303	3,647	(*)	3,504	3,447	3,484	3,500
446	Health & personal care stores	187,432	3.0	20,569	20,672	20,823	19,907	20,165	21,293	21,115	21,012	20,565	20,556
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	17,112	17,386	16,567	16,588	(*)	17,569	17,509	17,115	16,979
447	Gasoline stations	265,172	-31.7	31,905	34,123	33,466	42,785	46,640	31,433	31,077	29,668	42,070	42,477
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	144,310	-5.9	15,868	17,937	16,324	15,929	19,049	17,477	17,392	17,208	17,713	18,443
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	663	695	729	749	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,771	2,627	2,984	3,069	(*)	2,889	2,868	3,105	3,180
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,262	6,625	6,102	7,562	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,755	2,084	1,948	2,878	(*)	2,218	2,146	2,162	2,314
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	60,960	-1.9	6,904	8,275	6,755	6,710	8,498	7,298	7,291	7,163	7,154	7,370
452	General merchandise stores	420,608	-0.8	45,303	49,437	47,336	44,179	50,374	50,013	49,573	48,966	49,453	50,076
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	127,871	-7.0	13,691	15,442	14,177	13,958	16,507	15,656	15,592	15,419	16,262	16,571
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁵	(*)	(*)	(*)	15,840	14,546	14,407	17,009	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	33,995	33,159	30,221	33,867	(*)	33,981	33,547	33,191	33,505
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	30,355	29,449	26,842	30,276	(*)	30,054	29,686	29,432	29,741
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,640	3,710	3,379	3,591	(*)	3,927	3,861	3,759	3,764
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	83,248	-4.9	9,275	9,434	9,485	9,686	9,899	9,317	9,498	9,413	9,752	9,779
454	Nonstore retailers	207,397	-4.3	23,398	22,654	22,723	23,887	23,109	24,152	24,173	24,150	24,723	24,935
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	16,800	16,660	16,618	16,185	(*)	17,518	17,336	16,905	16,930
722	Food services & drinking places ...	344,407	1.1	37,547	39,690	39,713	37,020	40,270	38,352	38,274	38,039	38,126	37,955

(*) 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/eos/www/naics>

(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/retail>

(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/retail>

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					
		Sep. 2009 Advance from --		Aug. 2009 Preliminary from --		Jul. 2009 through Sep. 2009 from --	
		Aug. 2009 (p)	Sep. 2008 (r)	Jul. 2009 (r)	Aug. 2008 (r)	Apr. 2009 through Jun. 2009	Jul. 2008 through Sep. 2008
	Retail & food services, total	-1.5	-5.7	2.2	-5.8	1.6	-6.6
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	0.5	-4.9	1.0	-6.3	0.9	-6.6
	Retail	-1.7	-6.4	2.4	-6.5	1.8	-7.5
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	-10.4	-9.3	7.8	-3.2	5.0	-6.7
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	-11.8	-10.4	8.8	-3.3	5.7	-7.4
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	1.4	-6.5	-0.8	-11.5	-0.3	-10.1
443	Electronics & appliance stores	0.0	-9.7	0.5	-11.2	-1.0	-11.8
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	-0.2	-13.0	-1.2	-13.7	-2.9	-13.7
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.7	0.4	0.8	-0.9	0.6	-0.5
4451	Grocery stores	0.9	0.2	0.6	-1.4	0.6	-0.8
446	Health & personal care stores	0.8	3.5	0.5	2.7	0.3	2.9
447	Gasoline stations	1.1	-25.3	4.7	-26.8	7.5	-28.5
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	0.5	-1.3	1.1	-5.7	0.9	-4.8
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	0.1	2.0	1.8	-1.1	0.8	-1.0
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.9	1.1	1.2	-1.0	0.8	-1.2
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.4	-3.7	1.1	-5.9	-0.4	-6.6
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	-1.9	-4.5	0.9	-2.9	-1.0	-4.9
454	Nonstore retailers	-0.1	-2.3	0.1	-3.1	1.3	-3.6
722	Food services & drinking places	0.2	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.0	0.5

(p) Preliminary estimate (r) Revised estimate

(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/retail>.

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/retail>.

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

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 Sep 2009

(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	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.4	-0.1	0.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.2
	Retail	0.7	0.4	0.2	0.4	-0.1	0.1
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	2.3	1.6	0.8	1.5	-0.1	1.0
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	2.7	1.8	0.9	1.6	-0.1	1.1
442	Furniture & home furn. stores.....	2.7	1.9	0.9	2.0	-0.1	0.4
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.4	0.6	0.5	1.0	0.1	0.9
444	Building material & garden eq. &... supplies dealers.....	2.6	1.4	0.9	1.2	-0.1	0.5
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.9	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.0	0.3
4451	Grocery stores	1.0	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.0	0.3
446	Health & personal care stores	1.9	0.4	0.3	0.9	-0.1	0.3
447	Gasoline stations	2.4	0.7	0.5	0.8	-0.2	0.6
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	2.2	0.6	0.6	0.9	-0.4	1.0
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	2.8	1.3	1.2	1.6	-0.1	0.6
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	-0.1	0.2
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.1	0.3
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	4.0	3.3	1.6	3.4	0.6	0.8
454	Nonstore retailers	1.8	1.0	0.5	1.0	0.1	0.5
722	Food services & drinking places ..	2.0	0.8	0.6	1.4	0.5	0.7



- (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/retail>