



For release
September 9, 1966

AUGUST 1966

CB-66-363

The U.S. Department of Commerce announced today that total sales of retail stores in August were estimated at \$25.7 billion; this advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal and holiday variations and trading day differences but not price changes, was \$25.9 billion. The advance estimate, after adjustment, was about 1 1/2 percent above July and almost 10 percent above August last year. Adjusted June-through-August sales averaged about 2 percent above the prior three months and 9 percent above the comparable period in 1965.

The Office of Business Economics noted that, after adjustment, sales of durable goods rose 2 percent from July to August with most of the increase due to an improvement in sales by automotive dealers. August sales of nondurable goods retailers advanced almost 1 1/2 percent from July with gains for all lines of trade except food and drug stores, where sales were maintained at close to the July rates. Average monthly sales during the June-August period for durable-goods stores were about 2 percent more than the average for the prior three months while the average for nondurable-goods stores for the same period exceeded the average for the prior three months by almost 3 percent. The year-to-year gain in the three month average was about 5 percent for the durable-goods stores, as compared to 10 percent for nondurable-goods stores. Average automotive sales were about 3 percent above last year for this period.

Based on the full sample the total U.S. unadjusted sales estimate for July was \$25.5 billion, unchanged from the \$25.5 billion published earlier in the July Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report released on August 10, 1966. The seasonally adjusted sales for July as revised showed a less than 1 percent increase from June.

The August sales figures are based on advance reporting of a small sub-sample of the Census Bureau's panel of retail firms. The advance estimates are subject to revision by estimates subsequently derived from the full sample.

The revision of the total seldom exceeds 1.5 percent and for the past year has averaged 1.2 percent. For individual kind-of-business groups revisions have been greater, ranging on the average from 1.5 percent for drug and proprietary stores to 4.2 percent for the apparel group.

It should be noted that even for figures derived from the full sample, sales movements between individual pairs of months tend to be relatively irregular. Data for several months are generally required to indicate the underlying trend.

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Annual subscription to Current Retail Trade Reports (Weekly Retail Sales Report, Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report, Monthly Retail Trade Report, and Annual Retail Trade Report sold as a single subscription) \$6.00. Single copies, available only from the Bureau of the Census, 10¢ each.

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES FOR AUGUST 1966

Table 1. SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP

(NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal variations or trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)		
	1966		1965
	August ¹	July ²	August
Retail stores, total ³	25,662	25,461	22,989
Durable-goods stores, total ³	8,161	8,184	7,448
Nondurable-goods stores, total ³	17,501	17,277	15,541
Food group.....	5,906	6,293	5,453
Grocery stores.....	5,367	5,777	4,956
Eating and drinking places.....	2,282	2,250	1,984
General merchandise group.....	3,319	2,954	2,865
Department stores.....	2,125	1,928	1,863
Apparel group.....	1,477	1,259	1,173
Furniture and appliance group.....	1,291	1,233	1,139
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. group	1,468	1,492	1,474
Automotive group.....	4,661	4,766	4,243
Gasoline service stations.....	2,092	2,084	1,926
Drug and proprietary stores.....	836	837	757

See footnotes below table 2.

Source: Bureau of the Census

Table 2. SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP

(ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Percentage change, August 1966 from		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, July 1966 from	
	July 1966	Aug. 1965	1966			1965	June 1966	July 1965
			Aug. ¹	July ²	June	July		
Retail stores, total ³	+2	+10	25,883	25,491	25,394	23,668	0	+8
Durable-goods stores, total ³ ..	+2	+7	8,294	8,129	8,056	7,827	+1	+4
Nondurable-goods stores, total ³ .	+1	+11	17,589	17,362	17,338	15,841	0	+10
Food group.....				5,953	5,975	5,571	0	+7
Eating and drinking places.....				2,023	1,967	1,812	+3	+12
General merchandise group.....				3,355	3,355	2,961	0	+13
Apparel group.....				1,471	1,460	1,315	+1	+12
Furniture and appliance group.....				1,252	1,208	1,118	+4	+12
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group....				1,368	1,342	1,343	+2	+2
Automotive group.....				4,775	4,771	4,743	0	+1
Gasoline service stations.....				1,944	1,927	1,831	+1	+6
Drug and proprietary stores.....				853	848	775	+1	

¹Advance sample estimates.

²Preliminary estimates of full sample.

³Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.