

advance monthly RETAIL SALES



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MAY 1968

The U.S. Department of Commerce announced today that total sales of retail stores in May were estimated at \$29.0 billion; this advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal and holiday variations and trading day differences but not for price changes, was \$27.9 billion. The advance estimate, after adjustment, was about 1 percent above April sales and about 8 percent above May sales last year. Adjusted March-through-May sales averaged about 3 percent above the prior 3 months and 8 percent above the comparable period a year ago.

The Office of Business Economics noted that after adjustment, sales of durable goods stores rose about 2 percent from April to May with increases reported for all major kinds of business. Sales at nondurable goods stores were up 1 percent

in May with sales unchanged or up slightly for all major groups. Average monthly sales for durable goods stores during the March-May period were about 5 percent above the average for the prior 3 months, and the average for nondurable goods stores for the comparable period increased 3 percent. The year-to-year gain in the 3 month average for nondurable goods stores was about 7 percent and about 10 percent for durable goods stores.

Based on the full sample the total U.S. unadjusted sales estimate for April was unchanged from the \$27.5 billion published earlier in the April Advance Monthly Retail Sales report released on May 10, 1968. The seasonally adjusted sales for April as revised were about 2 percent below March.

The May sales figures are based on advance reporting of a small subsample of the Census Bureau's panel of retail firms. Beginning with the October 1967 report, the advance figures have been modified on the basis of the relationship between the advance estimates and full sample estimates. 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 0.7 percent. For individual kind-of-business groups revisions have been greater, ranging on the average from 0.9 percent for food stores to 3.8 percent for the furniture and appliance 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.

(more)

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. 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¢.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE C. R. Smith, Secretary
William H. Chartener, Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS A. Ross Eckler, Director

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES FOR MAY 1968

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)		
	1968		1967
	May ¹	April ²	May
Retail stores, total ³	29,007	27,479	26,557
Durable-goods stores, total ³	9,769	9,072	8,928
Nondurable-goods stores, total ³	19,238	18,407	17,629
Food group.....	6,567	6,088	5,888
Grocery stores.....	6,045	5,572	5,391
Eating and drinking places.....	2,296	2,137	2,093
General merchandise group.....	3,666	3,607	3,322
Department stores.....	2,431	2,374	2,194
Apparel group.....	1,510	1,616	1,439
Furniture and appliance group.....	1,356	1,264	1,245
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. group	1,739	1,575	1,544
Automotive group.....	5,892	5,527	5,413
Gasoline service stations.....	2,226	2,133	2,034
Drug and proprietary stores.....	947	912	894

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, May 1968 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, Apr. 1968 from--	
	Apr. 1968	May 1967	1968			1967	Mar. 1968	Apr. 1967
			May ¹	Apr. ²	Mar.	Apr.		
Retail stores, total ³	+1	+8	27,876	27,565	28,120	25,918	-2	+6
Durable-goods stores, total ³ ..	+2	+10	8,966	8,822	9,053	8,104	-3	+9
Nondurable-goods stores, total ³	+1	+7	18,910	18,743	19,067	17,814	-2	+5
Food group.....				6,342	6,272	5,985	+1	+6
Eating and drinking places.....				2,205	2,230	2,034	-1	+8
General merchandise group.....				3,769	3,880	3,479	-3	+8
Apparel group.....				1,533	1,652	1,585	-7	-3
Furniture and appliance group.....				1,401	1,430	1,286	-2	+9
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group....				1,519	1,555	1,430	-2	+6
Automotive group.....				5,095	5,279	4,660	-3	+9
Gasoline service stations.....				2,163	2,174	1,992	-1	+9
Drug and proprietary stores.....				940	948	906	-1	+4

¹Advance sample estimates.

²Preliminary estimates of full sample.

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