

advance monthly RETAIL SALES

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The Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce, announced today that total sales of retail stores in January were estimated at \$35.6 billion. The Bureau, part of the Department's Social and Economic Statistics Administration (SESA), said this advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal and holiday variations and trading day differences but not for price changes, was \$40.5 billion, about 3 percent above December and about 16 percent above January sales last year. Adjusted total November-through-January sales averaged about 3 percent above the prior 3 months and 12 percent above the comparable period a year ago.

Based on the full sample, the total U. S. adjusted sales estimate for December was about \$0.4 billion less than the \$38.9 billion published earlier in the December Advance Monthly Retail Sales report released January 10, 1973. The seasonally adjusted sales for December as revised were about 1 percent above November.

The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting, by a small subsample of the Census Bureau's retail survey panel, of sales figures for the weeks and part-weeks comprising the month. Because retailers' weekly records often differ

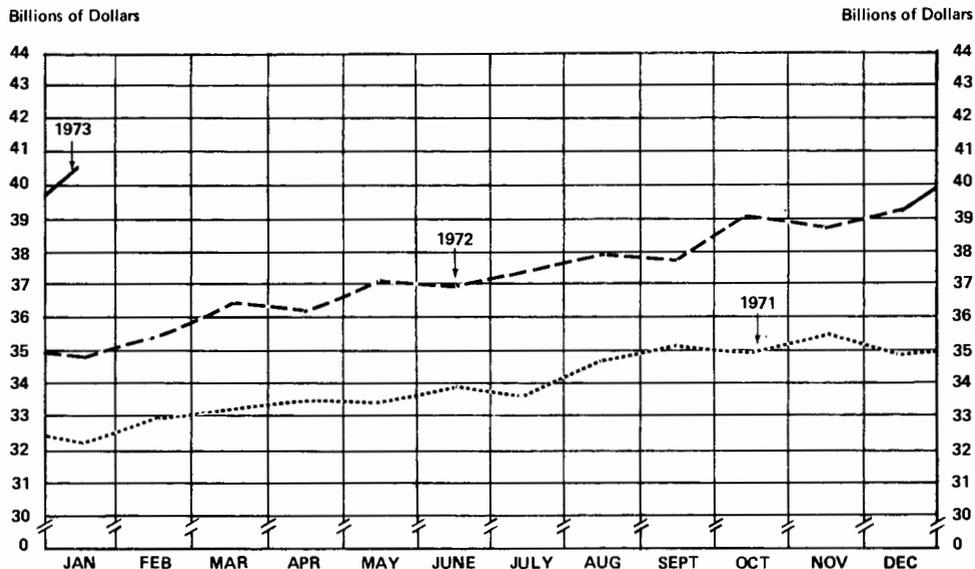
from their monthly records (in reflecting such elements as carrying charges, sales taxes, merchandise returns), the sales figures estimated for the advance report can differ from the subsequently issued report based on the monthly records of the full sample of retailers. Additionally, sampling variability between sub-sample and later full sample results can be a cause of difference. For most months, such differences have been reduced by modifying the advance estimate, prior to publication, on the basis of the relationship between the advance and full-sample data for previous months.

The differences between the month-to-month change in advance and full-sample estimates for total retail sales seldom exceed 1.0 percent and for the past year has averaged 0.5 percent. For individual kind of business groups, differences have been greater, ranging on the average from 0.8 percent for the Gasoline group to 2.3 percent for the Building materials group.

Even for figures derived from the full sample, sales movements from one month to the next can be relatively irregular. Data for 3 months are generally required to indicate the underlying trend.

MONTHLY SALES OF ALL RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES

(Data ADJUSTED for seasonal, holiday, and trading day differences)



Annual subscription to current retail trade reports are for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. (Weekly Retail Sales Report, Advance Monthly Retail Trade Report, Monthly Retail Trade Report, and Annual Retail Trade Report sold as a single subscription.) Price: \$6.00. Single copies of the Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report are available only from the Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233, at 10 cents each.

Table 1. Sales of Retail Stores in the United States, by Kind-of-Business Group

Part A. NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal variations or trading day differences

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)		
	1973	1972	
	Jan. ¹	Dec. ²	Jan.
Total, retail stores ³	35,608	46,799	30,604
Total (excluding automotive group).....	28,058	39,519	24,848
Durable goods stores, total ³	12,055	13,663	9,661
Nondurable goods stores, total ³	23,553	33,136	20,943
Food group.....	7,934	8,897	7,101
Grocery stores.....	7,389	8,277	6,620
Eating and drinking places.....	2,698	2,917	2,454
General merchandise group with nonstores.....	4,940	10,707	4,428
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....	4,517	10,197	4,004
Department stores.....	3,055	7,058	2,680
Apparel group.....	1,539	3,127	1,437
Furniture and appliance group.....	1,693	2,311	1,560
Eldg. materials, hardware, farm equip. group.....	1,883	2,233	1,541
Automotive group.....	7,550	7,280	5,756
Gasoline service stations.....	2,665	2,736	2,388
Drug and proprietary stores.....	1,189	1,653	1,105

Part B. ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)					Percentage change December 1972 from--	
	1973	1972		1971	November 1972	December 1971	
	January ¹	December ²	November	January			December
Total, retail stores ³	40,526	39,277	38,713	34,886	34,896	+1	+13
Total (excluding automotive group).....	31,956	30,966	30,888	28,308	28,257	0	+10
Durable goods stores, total ³	14,131	13,594	13,173	11,475	11,334	+3	+20
Nondurable goods stores, total ³	26,395	25,683	25,540	23,411	23,562	+1	+9
Food group.....		8,025	8,134	7,387	7,523	-1	+7
Eating and drinking places.....		2,964	2,913	2,745	2,746	+2	+8
General merchandise group with nonstores.....		6,334	6,354	5,874	5,756	0	+10
General merchandise group without nonstores (except department stores mail order).....		5,858	5,833	5,376	5,261	0	+11
Apparel group.....		1,868	1,891	1,732	1,773	-1	+5
Furniture and appliance group.....		1,793	1,846	1,741	1,651	-3	+9
Eldg. materials, hardware, farm equip. group.....		2,368	2,341	2,192	2,067	+1	+15
Automotive group.....		8,311	7,825	6,578	6,639	+6	+25
Gasoline service stations.....		2,725	2,681	2,506	2,523	+2	+8
Drug and proprietary stores.....		1,225	1,250	1,137	1,165	-2	+5

¹Advance sample estimates.

²Preliminary estimates of full sample.

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

Table 2. Percentage Changes for Retail Sales

(ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	January 1973 from--		November 1972 through January 1973 from--	
	December 1972	January 1972	August 1972 through October 1972	November 1971 through January 1972
	Total, retail stores.....	+3	-16	+3
Total (excluding automotive group).....	+3	+13	+2	-11
Durable goods stores, total.....	+4	+23	+6	+18
Nondurable goods stores, total.....	+3	-13	+2	+10

Source: Bureau of the Census