

Advance Monthly Retail Sales

FEBRUARY 1984

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EST, Tuesday, March 13, 1984

CB-84-46

INTENTION TO REVISE RETAIL SALES ESTIMATES: The unadjusted and adjusted monthly retail sales estimates will be revised based on the 1982 Annual Retail Trade Survey estimates. Revised estimates for January 1978 through February 1984 are scheduled for release the week of March 19, 1984. Estimates shown in this report do not reflect this revision.

Advance U.S. retail sales for February, adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$106.0 billion, down 0.2 percent from the revised January level of \$106.2 billion but 16.3 percent above year-ago sales. This monthly decrease is the first since August 1983 and follows strong January sales, which were 3.3 percent above December 1983. The previously published January increase was 2.2 percent. The final December estimates were 0.7 percent above November (revised from the previously published increase of only 0.1 percent). Excluding the automotive group, sales in February declined 0.4 percent from January but were 10.9 percent above February 1983.

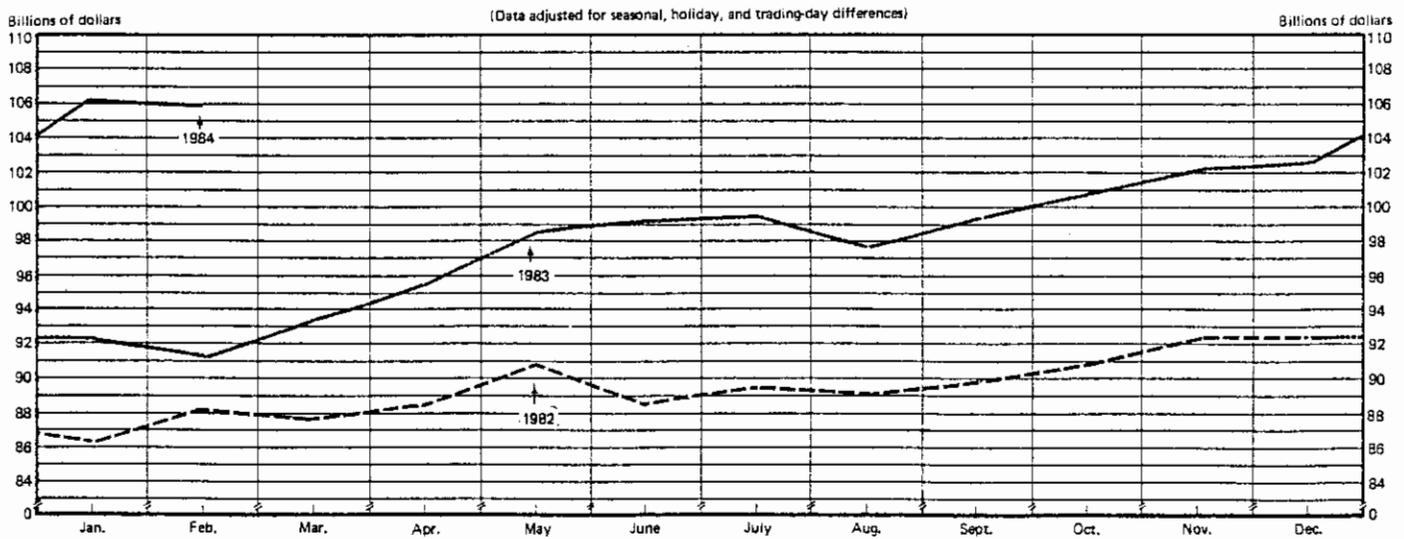
Sales of durable goods rose 1.0 percent from January, for the sixth consecutive monthly increase, and were 33.4 percent above the year-ago level. The January revised sales were 2.8 percent above the December 1983 estimates. All of the major kinds of business showed increases from January, ranging from 0.4 percent for furniture stores to 2.8 percent for building materials dealers. Automotive group sales increased 0.7 percent above January and were 42.3 percent above February 1983 when the sales level for this group was the lowest of the year. The increase in year-to-year sales is the largest since November 1971.

Nondurable goods sales declined 0.8 percent from the strong sales in January but were 8.9 percent above the previous year level. General merchandise group sales declined 0.3 percent from January but were 13.7 percent above previous year sales. Following a 3.1 percent increase in January, food store sales declined 0.9 percent in February but were 5.6 percent above February 1983. Apparel stores showed the largest monthly increase in nondurable goods, up 1.6 percent from January.

For a description of the sample design and reliability of the data, see back page.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales report for March is scheduled to be released April 12, 1984, at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES January 1982-February 1984



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The Advance Monthly Retail Sales report, the Monthly Retail Trade report, and the Annual Retail Trade report are available on a single subscription from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, at \$39 per year. Add \$9.75 for each subscription to a foreign address. Postage stamps not acceptable; currency submitted at sender's risk. Remittances from foreign countries must be by international money order or by a draft on a U.S. bank. Single copies of the Advance Monthly Retail Sales report are for sale by Subscriber Services (Publications), Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233, at \$1.75 each.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, by Kind of Business

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted ¹				
		1984			1983		1984			1983	
		Feb. ² adv.	Jan. prel.	Dec. final	Feb.	Jan.	Feb. ² adv.	Jan. prel.	Dec. final	Feb.	Jan.
	Retail trade, total.....	94,256	92,881	125,666	78,884	81,342	105,982	106,154	102,738	91,164	92,308
	Total (excl. auto group)..	73,533	74,138	106,752	64,348	67,566	83,937	84,264	81,475	75,668	76,329
	Durable goods stores, total.	32,829	30,584	37,708	24,159	23,808	36,669	36,306	35,315	27,490	28,307
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..	4,106	3,888	4,588	3,159	3,261	5,284	5,140	5,010	4,222	4,366
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	2,908	3,134	2,323	2,391	(*)	3,836	3,644	3,101	3,214
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	605	911	525	564	(*)	750	760	702	710
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	20,723	18,743	18,914	14,536	13,776	22,045	21,890	21,263	15,496	15,979
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	19,027	16,958	16,764	13,076	12,292	20,007	19,765	19,159	13,664	14,227
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	15,583	15,408	11,707	11,122	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	1,785	2,150	1,460	1,484	(*)	2,125	2,104	1,832	1,752
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	4,278	4,291	6,206	3,440	3,639	4,807	4,788	4,759	3,973	4,100
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	2,532	3,147	2,011	2,117	(*)	2,810	2,715	2,296	2,384
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	1,451	2,483	1,159	1,236	(*)	1,640	1,710	1,375	1,414
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	646	951	521	558	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods total.....	61,427	62,297	87,958	54,725	57,534	69,313	69,848	67,423	63,674	64,001
53	General merchandise group stores..	9,044	8,775	23,250	7,747	7,896	12,652	12,684	12,350	11,131	11,317
531	Department stores.....	7,377	7,254	18,836	6,267	6,470	10,390	10,498	10,051	9,056	9,301
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	577	1,514	549	541	(*)	814	777	758	747
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	944	2,900	931	885	(*)	1,372	1,522	1,317	1,257
54	Food stores.....	21,142	21,372	24,715	19,323	20,354	22,541	22,737	22,057	21,347	21,115
541	Grocery stores.....	19,874	20,136	23,037	18,146	19,173	21,210	21,421	20,680	20,073	19,868
554	Gasoline service stations.....	8,060	8,431	9,022	7,353	8,072	8,732	8,819	8,915	8,216	8,596
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	3,678	3,804	7,973	3,203	3,496	4,820	4,743	4,697	4,332	4,263
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	566	1,342	479	562	(*)	711	682	664	682
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	1,493	3,081	1,233	1,330	(*)	1,871	1,862	1,651	1,656
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	704	1,852	600	644	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	769	1,255	641	696	(*)	922	897	878	822
58	Eating and drinking places.....	9,503	9,465	10,044	8,413	8,673	10,618	10,587	9,954	9,715	9,626
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	3,271	3,264	4,457	2,930	2,975	3,461	3,450	3,244	3,209	3,148
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,476	2,413	1,329	1,386	(*)	1,687	1,658	1,545	1,542
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	370	570	294	318	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57 594	GAP ³	(*)	19,656	44,447	16,749	17,562	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)

¹Advance estimates are not available from the subsample panel for these kinds of business.

NA Not available.

²Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-84-01).

³Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.

⁴GAP represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise.

Note: Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, by Kind of Business

(Adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences)

SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change					
		Feb. 1984 advance from--		Jan. 1984 preliminary from--		Dec. 1983 through Feb. 1984	
		Jan. 1984 prelim.	Feb. 1983 final	Dec. 1983 final	Jan. 1983 final	Sep. 1983 through Nov. 1983	Dec. 1982 through Feb. 1983
	Retail trade, total.....	-0.2	+16.3	+3.3	+15.0	+4.2	+14.1
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	-0.4	+10.9	+3.4	+10.4	+2.4	+9.6
	Durable goods stores, total.....	+1.0	+33.4	+2.3	+28.3	+9.0	+28.1
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+2.8	+25.2	+2.6	+17.7	+7.0	+21.2
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+0.7	+42.3	+2.9	+37.0	+11.7	+35.3
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+1.2	+46.4	+3.2	+38.9	+12.6	+37.5
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+0.4	+21.0	+0.6	+16.8	+6.9	+17.9
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	-0.8	+8.9	+3.6	+9.1	+1.9	+7.9
53	General merchandise group stores.....	-0.3	+13.7	+2.7	+12.1	+4.9	+11.3
531	Department stores.....	-1.0	+14.7	+4.4	+12.8	+5.3	+12.0
54	Food stores.....	-0.9	+5.6	+3.1	+7.7	+0.4	+5.4
541	Grocery stores.....	-1.0	+5.7	+3.6	+7.8	+0.6	+5.4
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-1.0	+6.3	-1.1	+2.6	-0.4	+4.0
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+1.6	+11.3	+1.0	+11.3	+2.5	+10.2
58	Eating and drinking places.....	+0.3	+9.3	+6.4	+10.0	+1.5	+8.6
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+0.3	+7.9	+6.4	+9.6	+1.8	+8.3

Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales of Group II Companies, by Kind of Business

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted ¹		
		Jan. 1984 prelim.	Dec. 1983 final	Jan. 1983	Jan. 1984 prelim.	Dec. 1983 final	Jan. 1983
	Retail trade, total.....	30,633	51,924	28,146	36,903	35,620	33,312
53	General merchandise group stores.....	7,956	21,307	7,122	11,650	11,255	10,356
531	Department stores.....	6,973	18,113	6,223	10,106	9,696	8,967
533	Variety stores.....	439	1,231	423	637	613	598
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	544	1,963	476	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	11,536	13,571	11,038	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	11,389	13,276	10,905	12,052	11,534	11,185
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1,423	3,568	1,228	2,039	1,996	1,726
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	614	1,564	513	911	896	748
566	Shoe stores.....	332	610	287	429	416	370
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	1,780	2,717	1,575	1,928	1,861	1,694

¹Data adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. (See Explanatory Material in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-84-01).

Note: The Group II component of the sample consists of companies which had 11 or more retail establishments according to the most recent update of multi-establishment files and which were selected with certainty (i.e., their sales size exceeded specified dollar volume cutoffs which vary by kind of business).

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Sample Design and Reliability of Data

The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting of sales by a small subsample of the Bureau's retail survey panel. Because of the early reporting, the advance estimates can differ from the subsequent estimates which are based on monthly reports obtained from the full sample of retail stores. In addition, sampling variability between the subsample used for the advance estimates and the full sample can cause a difference. For most months, such differences have been reduced by modifying the advance estimates prior to publication on the basis of the relationship between the advance and full sample data for previous months.

Percentage differences between advance and full sample preliminary estimates of month-to-month percentage change in seasonally adjusted total retail store sales have ranged from approximately -0.8 percent to +1.4 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.5 percent for the past 12 months. For individual kind-of-business groups, these differences tend to be higher. Sampling variability of and revisions to advance-to-preliminary estimates are shown in table 4 below.

Preliminary estimates for January 1984 and final estimates for December 1983 based on the full sample will be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for January (BR-84-01). The complete report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and will present a description of revisions, and the techniques used in developing the estimates. The complete report will include additional measures of sampling variability.

Table 4. Sampling Variability of and Revision to Advance-to-Preliminary Estimate

SIC code	Kind of business	Estimated coefficient of variation in percent of the advance-to-preliminary ratio			Preliminary-to-final percent change minus the advance-to-preliminary percent change			
		Range ¹		Median	Range ²		Mean	Average of absolute difference
		From	To		From	To		
	Retail trade, total.....	0.6	0.8	0.8	-0.8	+1.4	+0.1	0.5
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	0.7	0.9	0.8	-1.1	-0.9	-0.1	0.5
	Durable goods stores, total.....	1.2	2.1	1.5	-3.7	+2.3	-0.2	1.2
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	1.6	4.2	2.4	-4.7	+4.9	+0.4	2.5
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.5	2.7	2.0	-4.5	+2.7	-0.2	1.6
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	1.1	2.3	1.6	-4.6	+3.0	-0.2	1.8
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	1.6	6.7	2.7	-2.7	+3.9	+0.2	1.9
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0.6	0.8	0.7	-0.8	+0.9	-0.1	0.6
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.4	0.7	0.5	-1.8	+2.2	+0.1	1.1
531	Department stores.....	0.2	0.5	0.3	-1.3	+2.6	+0.1	0.9
54	Food stores.....	0.7	1.6	1.0	-1.6	+1.4	-0.1	0.7
541	Grocery stores.....	0.3	0.7	0.4	-1.6	+1.4	-0.2	0.7
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.7	1.2	1.0	-3.6	+3.2	-0.1	1.4
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.2	3.0	1.9	-3.6	+8.7	+0.4	2.1
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.8	1.5	1.0	-3.0	+4.0	+0.3	1.5
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	0.3	2.5	1.1	-1.9	+2.4	-0.2	0.9

¹The ranges of sampling variability shown are based on sales estimates unadjusted for seasonal variation, holiday, and trading-day differences for the data months of January-December 1982.

²The ranges shown for the retail trade total are based on sales estimates adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences for the 12-month period, February 1983-January 1984. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period January-December 1982.

Note: See appendix B, Reliability of Data, in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for a discussion on the measures of sampling variability.

