

Advance Monthly Retail Sales

May 1988

CB 88-99

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EDT, June 15, 1988

Advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for May adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$131.9 billion, an increase of 0.1 percent (+1.2%) from the previous month and 5.6 percent (+ 1.7%) above May 1987. Total sales in the March through May period were 2.2 percent (+ 1.7%) above the prior three months and were 6.1 percent (+ 1.7%) above the same period a year ago.

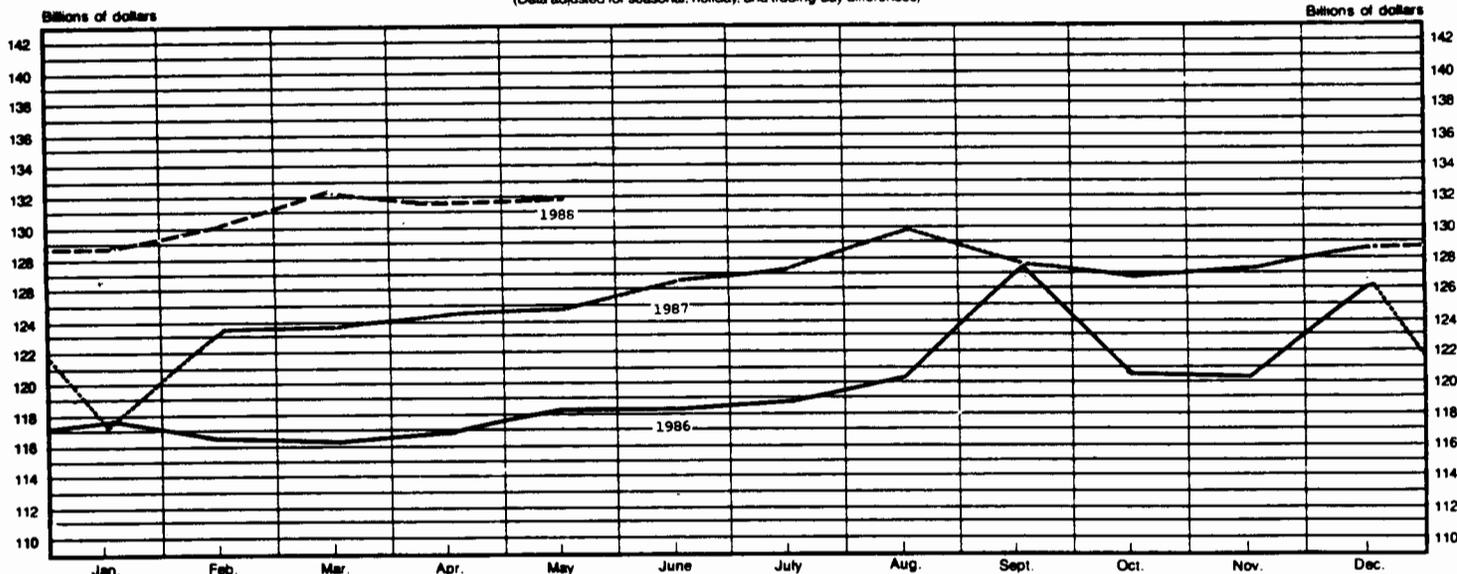
Durable goods decreased 0.6 percent (+ 2.8%) from the previous month but were 9.3 percent (+ 4.3%) above the previous year. Automotive sales were up 9.7 percent from May a year ago. Both building materials and furniture stores were up 9.0 percent from the previous year.

Nondurable goods increased 0.5 percent (+ 1.2%) from the previous month and were up 3.5 percent (+1.7%) above the previous year. General merchandise stores were up 0.7 percent from May a year ago while food stores were up 4.7 percent in the same period. Apparel stores were up 4.1 percent from May 1987.

The Advance Monthly Sales Report for June is scheduled to be released July 14, 1988 at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES January 1986-May 1988

(Data adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences)



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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. This report is available electronically in CENDATA, the Bureau's on-line information service, through a commercial vendor. For further information, contact Customer Services, DUSD, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233, or call (301) 763-4100 or (301) 763-7561.

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

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted ¹				
		1988			1987		1988			1987	
		May ² adv.	Apr. prel.	Mar. final	May	Apr.	May ² adv.	Apr. prel.	Mar. final	May ² adv.	Apr. prel.
	Retail trade, total.....	134,941	131,003	131,589	128,689	124,739	131,880	131,761	132,259	124,844	124,609
	Total (excl. auto group)..	102,895	99,643	99,445	99,704	95,717	102,584	102,105	102,364	98,132	97,730
	Durable goods, total.....	53,057	51,177	51,327	48,262	47,370	50,062	50,381	50,480	45,786	45,942
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..	8,034	7,364	6,590	7,309	6,787	6,998	6,986	6,987	6,422	6,312
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	5,346	4,923	5,153	4,846	(*)	5,200	5,188	4,715	4,620
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,371	1,168	1,306	1,244	(*)	1,278	1,240	1,158	1,172
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	32,046	31,360	32,144	28,985	29,022	29,296	29,656	29,895	26,712	26,879
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	29,484	28,821	29,730	26,729	26,805	26,804	27,164	27,401	24,522	24,705
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	25,238	26,512	23,032	23,403	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	2,539	2,414	2,256	2,217	(*)	2,492	2,494	2,190	2,174
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	7,167	7,061	7,208	6,642	6,470	7,600	7,612	7,513	6,974	7,037
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	3,809	3,857	3,679	3,564	(*)	3,939	3,892	3,679	3,724
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	2,830	2,906	2,563	2,505	(*)	3,205	3,155	2,845	2,873
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	843	833	834	797	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	81,884	79,826	80,262	80,427	77,369	81,818	81,380	81,779	79,058	78,667
53	General merchandise group stores..	14,521	13,791	13,743	14,642	13,722	14,717	14,734	14,911	14,618	14,372
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)	12,179	11,588	11,520	12,147	11,364	12,339	12,367	12,468	12,111	11,924
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts.) ³	(*)	12,025	11,953	12,577	11,805	(*)	12,834	12,936	12,539	12,400
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	664	685	700	746	(*)	670	691	698	702
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	1,539	1,538	1,795	1,612	(*)	1,697	1,752	1,809	1,746
54	Food stores.....	27,497	26,917	26,968	27,125	25,745	27,369	27,021	27,036	26,151	26,156
541	Grocery stores.....	25,931	25,373	25,430	25,597	24,226	25,828	25,475	25,507	24,660	24,670
554	Gasoline service stations.....	9,223	8,851	8,708	8,788	8,469	8,981	8,931	8,996	8,565	8,563
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	6,541	6,451	6,640	6,416	6,592	6,729	6,619	6,689	6,462	6,493
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	718	667	739	723	(*)	753	768	730	740
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	2,545	2,579	2,567	2,572	(*)	2,624	2,605	2,590	2,575
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	1,546	1,564	1,534	1,580	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,234	1,359	1,217	1,341	(*)	1,198	1,227	1,182	1,186
58	Eating and drinking places.....	13,056	12,850	12,537	12,906	12,262	12,542	12,610	12,664	12,210	12,141
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	4,951	4,830	4,987	4,599	4,535	4,996	4,974	4,977	4,636	4,585
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,506	1,462	1,635	1,504	(*)	1,594	1,586	1,648	1,610
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	293	290	267	297	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57,594	GAF ⁴	(*)	31,630	31,919	32,020	30,745	(*)	31,092	34,163	32,709	32,481

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

NA Not available. ² Revised

¹ Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-11 program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publication. Factors and explanatory material are contained in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-88-04.

² Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.

³ Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

⁴ GAF 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					
		May 1988 advance from--		Apr. 1988 preliminary from--		Mar. 1988 through May 1988	
		Apr. 1988 prelim.	May 1987 final	Mar. 1988 final	Apr. 1987 final	Dec. 1987 through Feb. 1988	Mar. 1987 through May 1987
	Retail trade, total.....	+0.1	+5.6	-0.4	+5.7	+2.2	+6.1
	Total (excl. automotive group)....	+0.5	+4.5	-0.3	+4.5	+2.1	+4.8
	Durable goods, total.....	-0.6	+9.3	-0.2	+9.7	+3.1	+9.9
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+0.2	+9.0	0.0	+10.7	+5.1	+9.1
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-1.2	+9.7	-0.8	+10.3	+2.5	+10.7
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	-1.3	+9.3	-0.9	+10.0	+2.4	+10.4
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	-0.2	+9.0	+1.3	+8.2	+5.8	+8.1
	Nondurable goods, total.....	+0.5	+3.5	-0.5	+3.4	+1.6	+3.9
53	General merchandise group stores.....	-0.1	+0.7	-1.2	+2.5	-0.6	+2.5
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	-0.2	+1.9	-0.8	+3.7	-0.4	+3.5
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	(NA)	(NA)	-0.8	+3.5	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	+1.3	+4.7	-0.1	+3.3	+3.0	+4.1
541	Grocery stores.....	+1.4	+4.7	-0.1	+3.3	+3.1	+4.1
554	Gasoline service stations.....	+0.6	+4.9	-0.7	+4.3	+2.9	+5.4
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+1.7	+4.1	-1.0	+1.9	+1.4	+2.3
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.5	+2.7	-0.4	+3.9	-0.4	+3.8
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+0.4	+7.8	-0.1	+8.5	+3.2	+8.8

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		
		Apr. 1988 prelim.	Mar. 1988 final	Apr. 1987	Apr. 1988 prelim.	Mar. 1988 final	Apr. 1987
	Retail trade, total.....	47,406	47,574	45,774	48,901	48,895	46,842
53	General merchandise group stores.....	12,740	12,722	12,623	13,629	13,804	13,279
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	11,215	11,157	11,041	11,956	12,075	11,598
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	11,630	11,569	11,454	12,399	12,507	12,032
533	Variety stores.....	519	542	597	518	545	560
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	1,006	1,023	985	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	15,450	15,559	14,726	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	15,223	15,334	14,497	15,193	15,182	14,643
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	3,431	3,613	3,553	3,564	3,579	3,474
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	1,346	1,389	1,411	1,406	1,390	1,410
566	Shoe stores.....	765	874	829	749	774	715
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	2,804	2,930	2,679	2,936	2,945	2,731

NA Not available. † Revised

¹Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-11 program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publication. Factors and explanatory material are contained in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, 8R-88-04.

²Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

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

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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 sample 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 sample used for the advance estimates and the full sample can cause a difference.

Percentage differences between advance and full sample preliminary estimates of month-to-month percentage change seasonally adjusted total retail store sales have ranged from approximately -0.8 percent to +1.0 percent with an 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 April 1988 and final estimates for March 1988 based on the full sample will be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for April (BR-88-4). The complete report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and will present a description of revisions, and the techniques used in developing estimates.

Whenever a statement such as "up 0.8 percent (+1.0%)" appears in the text, this indicates a range from -0.2 percent to +1.8 percent. All ranges given are 90 percent confidence intervals. If the range contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. The Monthly Retail Trade Report includes explanations of confidence intervals, sampling variability along with 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.....	0.7	0.9	0.8	-0.8	+1.0	+0.1	0.5
	Total (excl. automotive group)...	0.8	0.9	0.8	-1.0	+1.0	0.0	0.4
	Durable goods stores, total.....	1.3	1.7	1.6	-1.6	+1.8	+0.3	1.0
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	0.9	2.0	1.3	-5.2	+1.5	-0.9	1.6
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.5	2.2	1.7	-2.1	+2.7	+0.4	1.2
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	0.9	1.6	1.2	-2.5	+2.8	+0.3	1.2
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	1.8	2.5	2.1	-3.3	+4.4	+0.5	1.5
	Nondurable goods stores, total.....	0.5	0.7	0.6	-0.8	+0.7	0.0	0.4
53	General merchandise group stores, total...	0.5	1.0	0.6	-2.6	+1.8	-0.2	0.8
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)	0.2	0.5	0.2	-2.1	+2.0	-0.2	0.8
54	Food stores.....	1.0	1.2	1.0	-0.9	+0.8	+0.1	0.3
541	Grocery stores.....	0.3	0.5	0.4	-0.8	+0.9	+0.1	0.3
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.6	1.3	0.9	-1.4	+2.3	-0.1	1.0
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.1	3.1	1.7	-2.8	+2.2	-0.5	1.3
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.8	1.3	0.9	-1.7	+1.8	+0.3	0.9
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	0.3	1.8	0.6	-1.6	+1.3	-0.1	0.7

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 1983.
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, May 1987 - April 1988.

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

