



ADVANCE MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

U.S. Department of Commerce
ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS ADMINISTRATION
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

FEBRUARY 1991

CB-91-95

INTENTION TO REVISE ESTIMATES. The unadjusted and adjusted monthly retail sales estimates will be revised based on the results of the 1989 Annual Retail Trade Survey. Revised estimates for January 1988 through February 1991 are scheduled for release the week of March 18, 1991. Estimates shown in this report do not reflect this revision.

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. EST., Wednesday, March 13, 1991

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for February adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$148.1 billion, an increase of 0.8 percent (+1.6%) from the previous month but 1.0 percent (+1.5%) below February 1990. Total sales in the December through February period were 0.5 percent (+1.6%) below the same period a year ago.

Durable goods increased 2.3 percent (+4.4%) from the previous month but were 6.5 percent below the previous year. Automotive dealers sales were down 5.7 percent from a year ago.

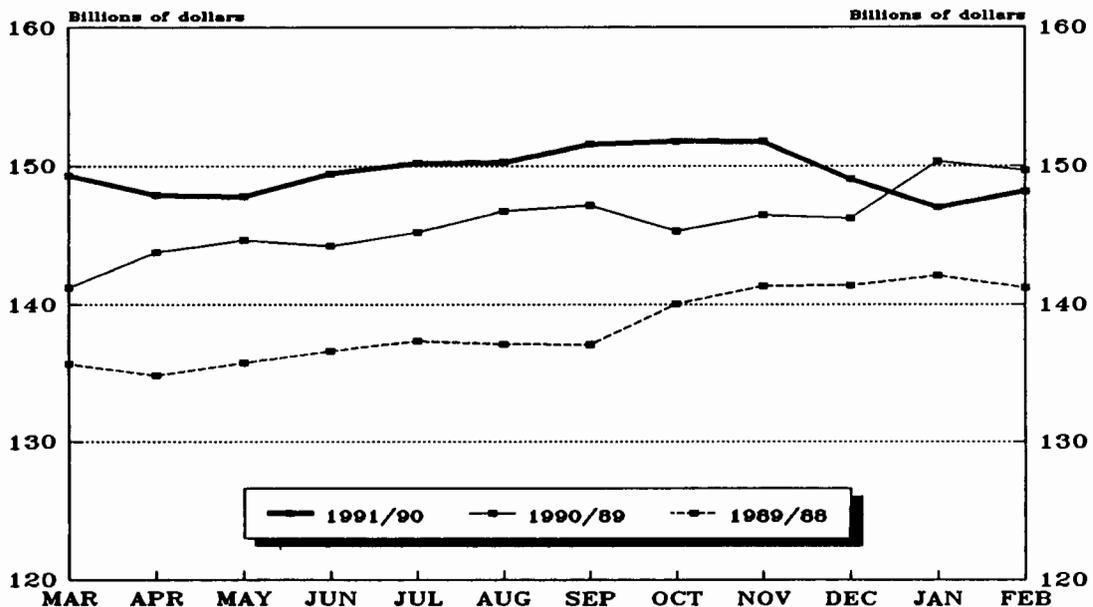
Nondurable goods were unchanged from the previous month but were 2.2 percent above last year. General merchandise stores increased 2.1 percent from January but were down 1.4 percent from February 1990. Gasoline service stations declined 4.9 percent from the previous month.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for March is scheduled to be released April 11, 1991 at 8:30 a.m.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

March 1988 - February 1991

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



Address inquiries concerning this report to Ronald Pienycoski, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233. Telephone: (301) 763-5294 or (301) 763-7561.

This report is available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's online Economic Bulletin Board (N-8-1) (202-377-3870) and through the Census Bureau's online information service - CENDATA. CENDATA is available from Dialog Information Services, INC. (1-800-334-2464) and CompuServe (1-800-848-8199). The CENDATA staff at the Bureau of the Census (301-763-2074) can provide content information and general guidance.

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

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted ¹				
		1991		1990			1991		1990		
		Feb. ² adv.	Jan. prel.	Dec. final	Feb.	Jan.	Feb. ² adv.	Jan. prel.	Dec. final	Feb. ²	Jan. ²
	Retail trade, total.....	126,217	130,459	178,851	127,338	132,560	148,128	146,985	149,048	149,657	150,295
	Total (excl. auto group)...	100,046	105,247	152,828	99,562	102,645	118,532	118,326	119,093	118,263	116,574
	Durable goods, total.....	43,762	43,539	56,006	46,720	49,283	51,406	50,233	51,760	54,982	56,604
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers....	5,520	5,685	6,576	5,911	6,065	7,470	7,279	7,349	8,056	7,790
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores....	(*)	4,223	4,591	4,433	4,595	(*)	5,246	5,401	5,958	5,744
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	866	1,124	789	845	(*)	1,045	1,024	1,059	1,034
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	26,171	25,212	26,023	27,776	29,915	29,596	28,659	29,955	31,394	33,721
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	23,910	22,902	23,466	25,528	27,541	26,805	25,995	27,286	28,619	30,980
551	Motor vehicle (franchised).....	(*)	20,229	21,025	22,478	24,492	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	2,310	2,557	2,248	2,374	(*)	2,664	2,669	2,775	2,741
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	6,275	6,626	9,672	6,698	7,150	7,254	7,175	7,250	7,788	7,733
571	Furniture and home furnishings....	(*)	3,515	4,428	3,657	3,926	(*)	3,829	3,891	4,203	4,267
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	2,476	3,972	2,394	2,573	(*)	2,654	2,629	2,847	2,758
5722	Household appliance stores.....	(*)	612	953	606	660	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	82,455	86,920	122,845	80,618	83,277	96,722	96,752	97,288	94,675	93,691
53	General merchandise group stores....	12,474	12,187	32,124	12,674	12,069	17,627	17,263	17,263	17,872	17,457
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts)....	10,237	9,939	26,028	10,105	9,701	14,583	14,158	14,077	14,415	14,100
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) ³ ..	(*)	10,237	26,722	10,467	10,011	(*)	14,500	14,460	15,017	14,467
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	425	1,053	464	440	(*)	570	546	605	591
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	1,823	5,043	2,105	1,928	(*)	2,535	2,640	2,852	2,766
54	Food stores.....	27,873	29,961	33,315	27,304	28,470	30,922	31,164	31,152	30,292	29,885
541	Grocery stores.....	26,237	28,303	31,089	25,648	26,855	29,120	29,330	29,302	28,466	28,091
554	Gasoline service stations.....	9,328	10,446	11,426	8,786	9,427	10,648	11,196	11,624	10,030	10,082
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	5,500	5,612	12,645	5,668	5,802	7,639	7,456	7,662	7,836	7,734
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	592	1,473	562	657	(*)	728	758	796	813
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	1,937	4,208	2,031	2,131	(*)	2,474	2,577	2,723	2,732
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	1,524	4,216	1,566	1,482	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,101	1,995	1,059	1,107	(*)	1,390	1,456	1,425	1,417
58	Eating and drinking places.....	13,459	13,804	15,081	13,262	13,478	15,347	15,153	15,172	15,122	14,827
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	5,367	5,556	7,289	4,902	5,254	5,796	5,698	5,699	5,294	5,394
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,600	2,498	1,419	1,478	(*)	1,796	1,782	1,697	1,668
5961 (pt)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	297	522	284	291	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAF ⁴	(*)	28,894	66,144	29,596	29,600	(*)	37,357	37,662	39,198	38,556

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

NA Not available.

²Revised.

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, BR-91-01.

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

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

⁴GAF 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. 1991 advance from--		Jan. 1991 preliminary from--		Dec. 1990 through Feb. 1991 from--	
		Jan. 1991 prelim.	Feb. 1990 final	Dec. 1990 final	Jan. 1990 final	Sept. 1990 through Nov. 1990	Dec. 1989 through Feb. 1990
	Retail trade, total.....	+0.8	-1.0	-1.4	-2.2	-2.4	-0.5
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	+0.2	+0.2	-0.6	+1.5	-1.4	+1.5
	Durable goods, total.....	+2.3	-6.5	-3.0	-11.3	-4.9	-6.8
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+2.6	-7.3	-1.0	-6.6	-3.7	-6.1
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+3.3	-5.7	-4.3	-15.0	-6.0	-7.8
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+3.1	-6.3	-4.7	-16.1	-6.8	-8.4
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+1.1	-6.9	-1.0	-7.2	-3.7	-5.9
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.0	+2.2	-0.6	+3.3	-1.0	+3.3
53	General merchandise group stores.....	+2.1	-1.4	0.0	-1.1	-0.5	-0.9
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.) ²	+3.0	+1.2	+0.6	+0.4	+1.0	+0.6
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	(NA)	(NA)	+0.3	+0.2	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	-0.8	+2.1	0.0	+4.3	-0.1	+3.5
541	Grocery stores.....	-0.7	+2.3	+0.1	+4.4	-0.1	+3.6
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-4.9	+6.2	-3.7	+11.0	-6.1	+11.3
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+2.5	-2.5	-2.7	-3.6	-3.0	-2.2
58	Eating and drinking places.....	+1.3	+1.5	-0.1	+2.2	0.0	+2.8
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+1.7	+9.5	0.0	+5.6	-0.4	+7.8

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		
		Jan. 1991 prelim.	Dec. 1990 final	Jan. 1990	Jan. 1991 prelim.	Dec. 1990 final	Jan. ^r 1990
	Retail trade, total.....	49,450	82,369	47,395	57,660	57,972	56,202
53	General merchandise group stores.....	11,161	29,878	11,046	15,841	15,863	16,007
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	9,659	25,237	9,393	13,720	13,649	13,613
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) ²	9,944	25,905	9,692	14,085	14,041	14,006
533	Variety stores.....	313	836	331	439	418	467
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	1,189	3,805	1,322	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	17,380	19,114	16,308	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	17,178	18,702	16,103	17,511	17,333	16,601
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	2,997	7,506	2,951	4,266	4,358	4,257
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	1,106	2,614	1,071	1,497	1,519	1,483
566	Shoe stores.....	637	1,245	655	853	887	891
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	3,327	4,852	3,136	3,412	3,518	3,216

NA Not available.

^rRevised.

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, ER-91-01.

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 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.

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 -1.1 percent to +0.6 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.4 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 1991 and final estimates for December 1990 based on the full sample are published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for January (BR-91-01). 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 margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, indicates a range about the estimate which corresponds to a 90 percent confidence interval. If, for example, the estimate is up 0.8 percent and the margin of sampling error is 1.2 percentage points above or below the estimate, then the indicated range is -0.4 percent to +2.0 percent. 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 and 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						Preliminary-to-final percent change minus the Advance-to-preliminary percent change			
		Advance-to-preliminary ratio		Ratio to same month a year ago	Dollar volume sales est.	Ratio of current quarter to prev. quarter	Range ²		Mean	Avg. of absolute diff.	
		Range ¹		Median	Median	Median	Median	From	To		
		From	To								
	Retail trade, total.....	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.9	0.8	1.0	-1.1	+0.6	+0.1	0.4
	Total (excl. auto).....	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.9	-0.3	+0.5	+0.1	0.2
	Durable goods, total.....	1.4	2.0	1.6	2.3	1.8	2.2	-0.9	+1.7	-0.1	0.7
52	Building materials, group stores....	1.1	3.0	1.7	3.8	3.2	3.1	-1.9	+3.1	0.0	0.7
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.6	2.4	2.0	3.2	2.6	3.0	-2.1	+2.9	-0.1	0.9
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	1.3	2.0	1.6	4.0	2.8	3.3	-2.5	+3.3	-0.1	1.0
57	Furniture, home furn., and equipment stores.....	1.3	3.8	2.1	4.2	3.9	3.1	-1.9	+5.0	+0.5	1.5
	Nondurable goods, total.....	0.5	0.7	0.6	1.0	0.7	0.9	-0.2	+0.7	+0.1	0.2
53	General merch. group, total.....	0.2	0.9	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	-0.9	+1.3	0.0	0.4
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)..	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	-0.5	+1.2	+0.1	0.4
54	Food stores.....	0.8	1.3	1.0	1.7	1.3	1.6	-0.4	+1.5	+0.2	0.4
541	Grocery stores.....	0.2	0.5	0.3	1.8	1.3	1.6	-0.5	+1.3	+0.2	0.4
554	Gasoline service stations.....	0.6	1.0	0.9	2.9	2.1	2.7	-1.8	+1.9	0.0	0.7
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	1.1	3.6	1.7	2.5	2.0	1.9	-3.9	+3.8	+0.2	1.4
58	Eating and drinking places.....	0.4	1.9	0.8	2.7	2.3	2.6	-1.3	+1.6	+0.2	0.8
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	0.6	1.8	0.7	2.5	1.9	2.1	-1.7	+2.1	+0.3	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 November 1988 - October 1989.

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 1990 - January 1991. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period October 1988 - September 1989.

Note: Coefficients of variation for the ratio of current quarter to current quarter a-year-ago estimates are approximately the same as those for the ratio of current quarter to previous quarter. See appendix B, Reliability of Data, in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for a discussion of the measures of sampling variability.

