Facts for Features

CB05-FF.19
October 27, 2005

The Holiday Season

The holiday season, with its many traditions, family gatherings and general good feelings, will soon be upon us. To commemorate this time of year, the U.S. Census Bureau presents the following holiday-related facts and figures from its data collection.

Season's Greetings

1.9 billion

Number of Christmas cards sent to friends and loved ones every year, making Christmas the largest card-sending occasion in the United States. The second largest is Valentine's Day, with approximately 192 million cards being given. (Source: Hallmark research)

Christmas Trees

20.8 million

Number of Christmas trees cut around the country in 2002. These trees were located on 21,904 farms spread out across 447,000 acres. (Source: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service at <http://www.nass.usda.gov/census/census02/volume1/us/st99_1_039_039.pdf>)

6.5 million

Number of Christmas trees cut in Oregon in 2002, making the Beaver State the nation's leader. (There were 2.6 million trees cut in Clackamas County, Ore., alone.) Also topping the 1-million mark among states were Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Washington and Wisconsin.

Pennsylvania led the nation in the number of Christmas tree farms, with 2,164; Oregon was tops in acres devoted to Christmas tree production, with 67,800. (Source: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service at <http://www.nass.usda.gov/census/census02/volume1/us/st99_2_035_036.pdf> and <http://www.nass.usda.gov/census/census02/volume1/or/st41_2_035_035.pdf>)

$506 million

The amount of money the nation's Christmas tree farmers received from tree sales in 2004. Oregon was the top state in tree sales ($143 million), followed by North Carolina, Washington and Michigan. (Source: USDA Economic Research Service at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/>)

$561 million

The value of U.S. imports of Christmas tree ornaments from China between January and August 2005. China was the leading country of origin for such items. Similarly, China was the leading foreign source of artificial Christmas trees shipped to the United States ($69 million worth) during the same period. <http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/www/>

$80.2 million

Value of shipments by U.S. manufacturers of article trees, including Christmas trees, in 2002. <http://www.census.gov/prod/ec02/ec0231i339999t.pdf>

Holiday Names

1,162

Population of Christmas, Fla., an unincorporated town.
(Source: American FactFinder)

Other places whose names are associated with the holiday season include North Pole, Alaska (population 1,659 in 2004); Santa Claus, Ind. (2,201); Santa Claus, Ga. (238); Noel, Mo. (1,476); and — if you know about reindeer — the village of Rudolph, Wis. (418). (Source: American FactFinder)

$291,085

The value of U.S. imports between January and August 2005 from Christmas Island, an Australian territory in the Pacific Ocean, south of Hawaii. Perhaps some of these were "Christmas gifts from Christmas Island." <http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/www/>

Holiday Shopping — The December Rush

The holiday season is critical for retailers. How critical? Well, here are some examples using the most recent Census Bureau data available. Note that the estimates that follow have not been adjusted to account for seasonal or pricing variations.

$31.9 billion

Retail sales by the nation's department stores (including leased departments) in December 2004. This represented a 54 percent jump from the previous month (when retail sales, many Christmas-related, registered $20.8 billion). No other month-to-month increase in department store sales last year was as large.

Other U.S. retailers with sizable jumps in sales between November and December 2004 were clothing stores (48 percent); jewelry stores (170 percent); book stores (100 percent); sporting goods stores (63 percent); and radio, TV and other electronics stores (58 percent). <http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>

15 percent

The proportion of total 2004 sales for department stores (including leased departments) that took place in December. For jewelry stores, the percentage was 24 percent.
<http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>

24 percent

The proportion of growth in inventories by our nation's department stores (excluding leased departments) between the end of August and the end of November 2004. Thanks to the holiday crowds, inventories plummeted by 23 percent in the year's final month.
<http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/mrts.html>

1.8 million

The number of people employed at department stores in December 2004. Retail employment typically swells during the holiday season, last year rising by 50,900 from November and 195,500 from October. <http://www.bls.gov>

E-Shopping

$21.5 billion

The value of total retail e-commerce sales for the fourth quarter of 2004. This amount, represented 2.3 percent of total retail sales over the period and exceeded e-commerce sales for all other quarters of the year. E-commerce sales were up 24 percent from the fourth quarter of 2003.
<http://www.census.gov/mrts/www/ecomm.html>

32 percent

The percentage of adults who shopped online in 2003, up from 2 percent in 1997. No doubt many of these customers were doing some holiday shopping at some point during the year.
<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/miscellaneous/005863.html>

Where are Christmas Gifts Made?

124

Number of establishments around the country that primarily manufactured dolls and stuffed toys in 2003; they employed 2,123 people. California led the nation with 19 such locations, and Vermont employed the most, 670.
<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/county_business_patterns/005507.html>

733

The number of locations that primarily produced games, toys and children's vehicles in 2003; they employed 16,996 workers. California led the nation with 118 establishments and in the number of people they employed, 2,581.
<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/county_business_patterns/005507.html>

$3.9 billion

Total value of shipments for dolls, toys and games by manufacturers in 2003. <http://www.census.gov/mcd/asm-as1.html>

$656 million

The value of U.S. imports of stuffed toys (excluding dolls) from China between January and August 2005. China was the leading country of origin for stuffed toys coming into this country, as well as for a number of other popular holiday gifts that were imported. These include electric trains ($71 million); puzzles ($48 million); roller skates ($44 million); sports footwear ($204 million); golf equipment ($43 million); and basketballs ($26 million). Canada was the leading supplier of ice skates ($7 million). <http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/www/>

Where Holiday Gifts are Purchased

16,049

The number of electronic shopping and mail-order houses in business in 2003. These businesses, which employed 264,868 workers, are a popular source of holiday gifts. Their sales: $131 billion, of which 31 percent were attributable to e-commerce. California led the nation in the number of these establishments and their employees, with 2,493 and 32,665, respectively. <http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/county_business_patterns/005507.html> and <http://www.census.gov/eos/www/papers/2003/2003finaltables.pdf>

If you're not sure where to do your shopping, choices of retail establishments abound: In 2003, there were 148,012 clothing and clothing accessories stores; 9,366 department stores; 10,274 hobby, toy and game shops; 34,287 gift, novelty and souvenir shops; 22,410 sporting goods stores; 28,527 jewelry stores; and 11,036 book stores. <http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/county_business_patterns/005507.html>

47,835

The number of malls and shopping centers dotting the U.S. landscape as of 2004, a total that had increased by approximately 10,000 since 1990. (Source: Upcoming 2006 Statistical Abstract)

Winter Wonderland

6.8 million

The number of Americans who say they downhill-ski more than once a year. Other popular winter sports are cross-country skiing (1.9 million), ice hockey (1.8 million) and snowboarding (6.3 million). (Source: Upcoming 2006 Statistical Abstract)

Following is a list of observances typically covered by the Census Bureau's *Facts for Features* series:

African-American History Month (February)
Valentine's Day (Feb. 14)
Women's History Month (March)
St. Patrick's Day (March 17)
Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month (May)
Older Americans Month (May)
Mother's Day (May 8)
Father's Day (June 19
The Fourth of July (July 4)
Anniversary of Americans with Disabilities Act (July 26)
Back to School (August)
Labor Day (Sept. 5)
Grandparents Day (Sept. 11)
Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15-Oct. 15)
Halloween (Oct. 31)
American Indian/Alaska Native Heritage Month (November)
Veterans Day (Nov. 11)
Thanksgiving Day (Nov. 24)
The Holiday Season (December)

Editor's note: The preceding data were collected from a variety of sources and may be subject to sampling variability and other sources of error. Questions or comments should be directed to the Census Bureau's Public Information Office: telephone: (301) 763-3030; fax: (301) 457-3670; or e-mail: <pio@census.gov>.