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ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES MARCH 2010

Intention to Revise Retail Estimates: Monthly retail sales estimates will be revised based on the results of the 2008 Annual Retail Trade Survey. Revised not adjusted estimates and corresponding adjusted data are scheduled for release on April 30, 2010.

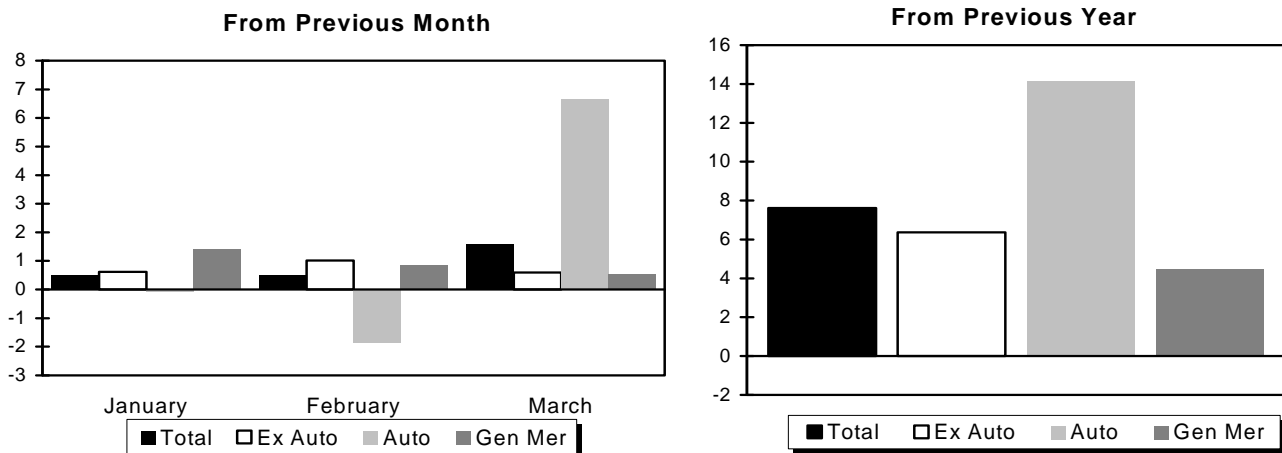
The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for March, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$363.2 billion, an increase of 1.6 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from the previous month and 7.6 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) above March 2009. Total sales for the January through March 2010 period were up 5.5 percent ($\pm 0.3\%$) from the same period a year ago. The January to February 2010 percent change was revised from +0.3 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$)* to +0.5 percent ($\pm 0.3\%$).

Retail trade sales were up 1.8 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) from February 2010 and 8.2 percent ($\pm 0.5\%$) above last year. Gasoline stations sales were up 26.4 percent ($\pm 1.5\%$) from March 2009 and motor vehicle and parts dealers sales were up 14.1 percent ($\pm 2.5\%$) from last year.

The advance estimates are based on a subsample of the Census Bureau's full retail and food services sample. A stratified random sampling method is used to select approximately 5,000 retail and food services firms whose sales are then weighted and benchmarked to represent the complete universe of over three million retail and food services firms. Responding firms account for approximately 65% of the MARTS dollar volume estimate. For an explanation of the measures of sampling variability included in this report, please see the Reliability of Estimates section on the last page of this publication.

Percent Change in Retail and Food Services Sales

(Estimates adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)



The Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services for April is scheduled to be released May 14, 2010 at 8:30 a.m. EDT.

For information, visit the Census Bureau's Web site at <<http://www.census.gov/retail>>. This report is also available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's STAT-USA (202-482-1986).

* The 90 percent confidence interval includes zero. The Census Bureau does not have sufficient statistical evidence to conclude that the actual change is different than zero.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services, by Kind of Business

(Total sales estimates are shown in millions of dollars and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, Monthly Retail Trade Survey, and administrative records.)

NAICS ¹ code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted							Adjusted ²				
		3 Month Total		2010			2009		2010			2009	
		2010	% Chg. 2009	Mar. ³ (a)	Feb. (p)	Jan. (r)	Mar.	Feb.	Mar. ³ (a)	Feb. (p)	Jan. (r)	Mar. (r)	Feb. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	1,007,359	5.8	367,616	318,118	321,625	334,149	304,056	363,194	357,466	355,606	337,476	342,487
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	832,825	5.4	297,755	264,715	270,355	275,000	252,560	300,460	298,660	295,682	282,500	285,826
	Retail	896,043	6.4	327,837	282,378	285,828	295,520	269,015	324,003	318,406	317,685	299,493	304,149
	GAFO⁴		(*)		84,716	83,427	87,477	82,918		96,494	95,397	93,123	95,006
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	174,534	7.7	69,861	53,403	51,270	59,149	51,496	62,734	58,806	59,924	54,976	56,661
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	156,504	9.1	63,109	47,617	45,778	52,498	45,544	56,297	52,384	53,604	48,475	50,048
44111	New car dealers		(*)	(*)	36,982	36,943	40,575	35,304	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....		(*)	(*)	5,786	5,492	6,651	5,952	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	22,466	1.0	8,097	7,262	7,107	7,601	7,219	8,154	8,033	7,879	7,828	8,012
4421	Furniture stores		(*)	(*)	4,320	4,147	4,262	4,296	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores		(*)	(*)	2,942	2,960	3,339	2,923	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	24,763	-1.1	8,315	8,370	8,078	7,929	8,481	8,761	8,877	8,611	8,468	9,079
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....		(*)	(*)	6,508	6,214	6,139	6,759	(*)	6,894	6,632	6,658	7,229
44312	Computer & software stores.....		(*)	(*)	1,862	1,864	1,790	1,722	(*)	1,983	1,979	1,810	1,850
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	58,905	-3.2	24,251	17,512	17,142	23,469	18,457	24,136	23,406	23,390	24,010	24,518
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers		(*)	(*)	14,706	14,684	19,423	15,944	(*)	19,049	19,070	20,024	20,573
445	Food & beverage stores	144,511	3.1	49,954	45,763	48,794	47,273	44,201	50,428	50,337	49,821	48,779	48,627
4451	Grocery stores	130,398	3.1	44,830	41,204	44,364	42,501	39,800	44,965	44,933	44,542	43,502	43,402
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores		(*)	(*)	2,964	2,948	3,140	2,897	(*)	3,545	3,485	3,489	3,474
446	Health & personal care stores	63,830	2.9	22,535	20,338	20,957	21,531	19,843	21,482	21,431	21,428	21,088	20,909
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores		(*)	(*)	16,761	17,386	17,892	16,485	(*)	17,680	17,651	17,524	17,371
447	Gasoline stations	95,005	27.0	33,716	29,627	31,662	26,342	23,801	34,723	34,855	34,793	27,468	28,100
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	46,154	3.9	17,457	15,120	13,577	15,890	14,930	18,224	17,807	17,621	17,244	17,770
44811	Men's clothing stores		(*)	(*)	554	583	646	589	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
44812	Women's clothing stores		(*)	(*)	2,386	2,241	2,846	2,343	(*)	2,986	2,968	2,901	2,940
44814	Family clothing stores		(*)	(*)	5,642	5,059	6,243	5,687	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores		(*)	(*)	2,052	1,717	2,071	1,930	(*)	2,280	2,215	2,128	2,169
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	20,178	4.8	7,015	5,939	7,224	6,433	5,727	7,576	7,499	7,424	7,124	7,259
452	General merchandise stores	139,413	4.2	49,667	45,226	44,520	46,753	43,640	51,453	51,164	50,727	49,270	49,631
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	40,713	1.6	15,050	13,191	12,472	14,306	13,127	16,120	15,959	15,802	15,738	15,915
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁵		(*)	(*)	13,519	12,783	14,716	13,495	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....		(*)	(*)	32,035	32,048	32,447	30,513	(*)	35,205	34,925	33,532	33,716
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....		(*)	(*)	28,343	28,663	28,822	27,188	(*)	30,976	30,787	29,744	29,877
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....		(*)	(*)	3,692	3,385	3,625	3,325	(*)	4,229	4,138	3,788	3,839
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	26,169	0.8	9,332	8,486	8,351	9,072	8,570	9,648	9,552	9,391	9,602	9,660
454	Nonstore retailers	80,115	12.3	27,637	25,332	27,146	24,078	22,650	26,684	26,639	26,676	23,636	23,923
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses		(*)	(*)	17,084	18,252	16,660	15,118	(*)	19,196	19,172	16,931	16,948
722	Food services & drinking places ...	111,316	1.3	39,779	35,740	35,797	38,629	35,041	39,191	39,060	37,921	37,983	38,338

(*) Advance estimates are not available for this kind of business.

(NA) Not available (S) Suppressed (a) Advance estimate (p) Preliminary estimate (r) Revised estimate

(1) For a full description of the NAICS codes used in this table, see <http://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics>

(2) Estimates are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variation and for holiday and trading day differences, but not for price changes. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-12 ARIMA program. The factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted estimates shown in this table. Year-to-date seasonally adjusted sales estimates are not tabulated. Adjustment factors and explanatory material can be found on the Internet at <http://www.census.gov/retail>

(3) Advance estimates are based on early reports obtained from a small sample of firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey (MRTS) sample. All other estimates are from the MRTS sample

(4) GAFO represents firms which specialize in department store types of merchandise and is comprised of furniture & home furnishings (442), electronics & appliances (443), clothing & accessories (448), sporting goods, hobby, book, and music (451), general merchandise (452), office supply, stationery, and gift stores (4532).

(5) Estimates include data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line are not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

Note: Table 3 provides estimated measures of sampling variability. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <http://www.census.gov/retail>

Table 2. Estimated Change in Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services, by Kind of Business

(Estimates are shown as percents and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, Monthly Retail Trade Survey, and administrative records.)

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Percent Change ¹					
		Mar. 2010 Advance from --		Feb. 2010 Preliminary from --		Jan. 2010 through Mar. 2010 from --	
		Feb. 2010 (p)	Mar. 2009 (r)	Jan. 2010 (r)	Feb. 2009 (r)	Oct. 2009 through Dec. 2009	Jan. 2009 through Mar. 2009
	Retail & food services, total	1.6	7.6	0.5	4.4	1.9	5.5
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	0.6	6.4	1.0	4.5	2.1	5.1
	Retail	1.8	8.2	0.2	4.7	1.9	6.0
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	6.7	14.1	-1.9	3.8	1.1	7.4
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	7.5	16.1	-2.3	4.7	1.1	8.8
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	1.5	4.2	2.0	0.3	3.2	0.9
443	Electronics & appliance stores	-1.3	3.5	3.1	-2.2	2.7	-1.6
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	3.1	0.5	0.1	-4.5	1.5	-3.1
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.2	3.4	1.0	3.5	1.2	2.8
4451	Grocery stores	0.1	3.4	0.9	3.5	1.2	2.8
446	Health & personal care stores	0.2	1.9	0.0	2.5	-0.1	2.6
447	Gasoline stations	-0.4	26.4	0.2	24.0	4.4	26.7
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	2.3	5.7	1.1	0.2	2.4	2.6
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	1.0	6.3	1.0	3.3	2.3	3.9
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.6	4.4	0.9	3.1	1.8	3.4
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	1.0	2.4	1.0	0.3	1.6	0.8
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	1.0	0.5	1.7	-1.1	-1.2	1.1
454	Nonstore retailers	0.2	12.9	-0.1	11.4	4.1	12.3
722	Food services & drinking places	0.3	3.2	3.0	1.9	2.1	1.5

(p) Preliminary estimate (r) Revised estimate

(1) Estimates shown in this table are derived from adjusted estimates provided in Table 1 of this report.

Note: Table 3 provides estimated measures of sampling variability. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <http://www.census.gov/retail>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Survey Description

The U.S. Census Bureau conducts the Advance Monthly Retail Trade and Food Services Survey (MARTS) to provide an early estimate of monthly sales by kind of business for retail and food service firms located in the United States. Each month, questionnaires are mailed to a probability sample of approximately 5,000 employer firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey (MRTS). Firms responding to MARTS account for approximately 65% of the total national sales estimate. Advance sales estimates are computed using a link relative estimator. The change in sales from the previous month is estimated using only units that have reported data for both the current and

previous month. There is no imputation or adjustment for nonrespondents in MARTS. The total sales estimate is derived by multiplying this ratio by the preliminary sales estimate for the previous month (derived from the larger MRTS sample). Detailed industry estimates are summed to derive total estimates at broad industry levels. The monthly estimates are adjusted using annual survey estimates and for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences. Additional information on MARTS and MRTS can be found on the Census Bureau website at: <http://www.census.gov/retail>.

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use, \$300

Reliability of Estimates

Because the estimates presented in this report are based on a sample survey, they contain sampling error and nonsampling error.

Sampling error is the difference between the estimate and the result that would be obtained from a complete enumeration of the sampling frame conducted under the same survey conditions. This error occurs because only a subset of the entire sampling frame is measured in a sample survey. Standard errors and coefficients of variation (CV), as given in Table 3 of this report, are estimated measures of sampling variation.

The margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is a 90 percent confidence interval. If, for example, the percent change estimate is +1.2 percent and its estimated standard error is 0.9 percent, then the margin of sampling error is $\pm 1.65 \times 0.9$ percent or ± 1.5 percent, and the 90 percent confidence interval is -0.3 percent to +2.7 percent. If the interval contains 0, then one does not have sufficient evidence to conclude at the 90 percent

confidence level that the change is different from zero and therefore the change is not statistically significant. Estimated changes shown in the text are statistically significant unless otherwise noted. For a monthly total, the median estimated coefficient of variation is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated value $\pm 1.65 \times CV \times$ (the estimated monthly total). The Census Bureau recommends that individuals using estimates in this report incorporate this information into their analyses, as sampling error could affect the conclusions drawn from the estimates.

Nonsampling error encompasses all other factors that contribute to the total error of a sample survey estimate. This type of error can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, mistakes in the recording and coding of data, and other errors of collection, response, coverage, or processing. Although nonsampling error is not measured directly, the Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the process to minimize this type of error.

Table 3. Estimated Measures of Sampling Variability and Revision to Advance Estimates Mar 2010

(Estimates are shown as percents and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey and Monthly Retail Trade Survey)

NAICS Code	Kind of Business	Median CV ⁽¹⁾ for Current Mo. (%)	Median standard error ⁽¹⁾ for Percent change			Revision for month-to-month change ⁽²⁾	
			Previous Mo. to Current Mo.	Previous Qtr. to Current Qtr.	Current Mo. to same Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	Retail & food services,						
	total	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.3	-0.1	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1
	Retail	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.3	-0.1	0.1
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	2.2	1.5	0.6	1.5	-0.8	0.5
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	2.5	1.7	0.7	1.6	-0.8	0.6
442	Furniture & home furn. stores.....	2.7	1.6	0.8	1.9	0.1	0.6
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.4	0.6	0.5	1.0	0.3	0.9
444	Building material & garden eq. &... supplies dealers.....	2.7	1.2	0.9	1.2	0.0	0.4
445	Food & beverage stores.....	1.0	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.1
4451	Grocery stores	1.0	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
446	Health & personal care stores	1.9	0.4	0.4	0.8	-0.1	0.4
447	Gasoline stations	2.4	0.6	0.4	0.9	0.4	0.6
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	2.5	0.7	0.6	1.0	-0.2	0.5
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	3.1	1.6	1.0	1.9	-0.2	0.4
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	-0.2	0.3
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.2	0.2
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	3.3	2.3	1.6	2.8	0.6	0.8
454	Nonstore retailers	2.0	0.8	0.5	1.0	0.3	0.2
722	Food services & drinking places ..	1.9	0.8	0.7	1.2	0.2	0.4



- (1) Estimated measures of sampling variability are based on estimates not adjusted for seasonal variation or holiday or trading-day differences. Medians are based on estimates for the most recent 12 months.
- (2) These columns provide measures of the difference between the advance-to-preliminary and preliminary-to-final estimates of month-to-month change for the same pair of months as measured by the Advance sample and MRTS sample. The average and median revisions are based on estimates for the most recent 12 months.

Note: Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <http://www.census.gov/retail>