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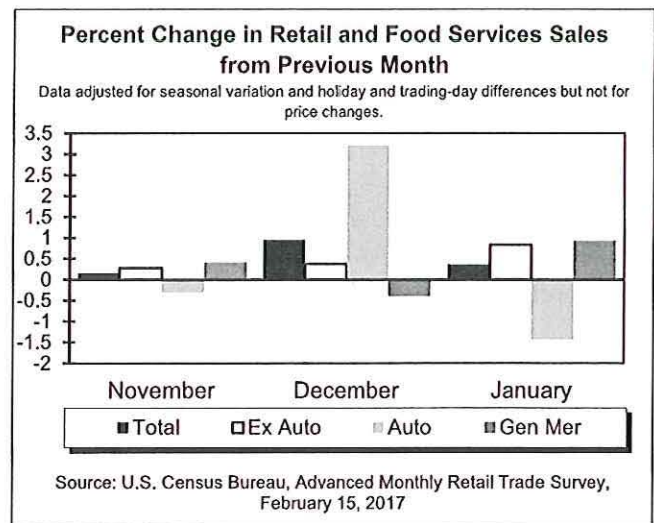
ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES, JANUARY 2017

Release Number: CB17-20

Intention to Revise: Monthly retail sales estimates will be revised based on the results of the 2015 Annual Retail Trade Survey. Revised not adjusted estimates and corresponding adjusted estimates are scheduled for release on April 26, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. EDT.

February 15, 2017 — The U.S. Census Bureau announced the following advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for January 2017:

	ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES	
January 2017	$472.1 billion	+0.4%*
December 2016 (revised)	$470.5 billion	+1.0%

Next release: March 15, 2017

* The 90 percent confidence interval includes zero. There is insufficient statistical evidence to conclude that the actual change is different from zero.
Data adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences but not for price changes. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advanced Monthly Retail Trade Survey, February 15, 2017.

Percent Change in Retail and Food Services Sales from Previous Month

Data adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences but not for price changes.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advanced Monthly Retail Trade Survey, February 15, 2017

Advance Estimates of U.S. Retail and Food Services

Advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for January 2017, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were $472.1 billion, an increase of 0.4 percent (±0.5 percent)* from the previous month, and 5.6 percent (±0.9 percent) above January 2016. Total sales for the November 2016 through January 2017 period were up 4.6 percent (±0.7 percent) from the same period a year ago. The November 2016 to December 2016 percent change was revised from up 0.6 percent (±0.5 percent) to up 1.0 percent (±0.2 percent).

Retail trade sales were up 0.2 percent (±0.5 percent)* from December 2016, and up 5.6 percent (±0.7 percent) from last year. Gasoline Stations sales were up 14.2 percent (±1.4 percent) from January 2016, while Nonstore Retailers were up 12.0 percent (±1.8 percent) from last year.

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General Information

The February 2017 Advance Monthly Retail report is scheduled for release on March 15, 2017 at 8:30 a.m. EDT. View the full schedule in the Economic Briefing Room: <www.census.gov/economic-indicators/>. The full text and tables of this release can be found at <www.census.gov/retail/>.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

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 4,700 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.

Survey Description

The U.S. Census Bureau conducts the Advance Monthly Retail Trade and Food Services Survey 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 4,700 employer firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey. Advance sales estimates are computed using a link relative estimator. For each detailed industry, we compute a ratio of current-to-previous month weighted sales using data from units for which we have obtained usable responses for both the current and previous month. For each detailed industry, the advance total sales estimates for the current month is computed by multiplying this ratio by the preliminary sales estimate for the previous month (derived from the larger MRTS) at the appropriate industry level. Total estimates for broader industries are computed as the sum of the detailed industry estimates. The link relative estimate is used because imputation is not performed for most nonrespondents in MARTS. For a limited number of nonresponding companies that have influential effects on the estimates, sales may be estimated based on historical performance of that company. The monthly estimates are benchmarked to the annual survey estimates from the Annual Retail Trade Survey once available. The estimates are adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading day differences. Additional information on MARTS and MRTS can be found on the Census Bureau website at: <www.census.gov/retail>.

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.

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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 ±1.753 x 0.9 percent or ±1.6 percent, and the 90 percent confidence interval is –0.4 percent to +2.8 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 ±1.753 x CV x (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.

America's Economy Mobile App
The America's Economy app provides real-time updates for 19 key economic indicators released from the Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Bureau of Economic Analysis.
<www.census.gov/mobile/economy/>

API
The Census Bureau's application programming interface lets developers create custom apps to reach new users and makes key demographic, socio-economic and housing statistics more accessible than ever before.
<www.census.gov/developers/>

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* The 90 percent confidence interval includes zero. There is insufficient statistical evidence to conclude that the actual change is different from 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 1 Month Total 2017	% Chg. 2016	2017 Jan.[3] (a)	2016 Dec. (p)	2016 Nov. (r)	2016 Jan.	2015 Dec.	Adjusted[2] 2017 Jan.[3] (a)	2016 Dec. (p)	2016 Nov. (r)	2016 Jan. (r)	2015 Dec. (r)
	Retail & food services, total	420,638	4.9	420,638	541,774	468,304	400,928	518,253	472,142	470,461	466,028	447,266	450,831
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	336,821	4.7	336,821	442,201	379,500	321,727	425,937	374,207	371,110	369,760	355,532	358,284
	Retail	368,738	5.1	368,738	484,678	415,243	350,742	463,668	416,155	415,242	410,174	394,271	396,893
	GAFO[4]	(*)	(*)	(*)	148,847	114,553	89,684	150,000	(*)	104,191	104,594	104,589	106,212
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	83,817	5.8	83,817	99,573	88,804	79,201	92,316	97,935	99,351	96,268	91,734	92,547
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers	77,273	6.3	77,273	92,358	81,803	72,669	85,451	90,590	91,716	89,110	84,303	85,366
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	80,032	70,074	61,792	74,187	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,215	7,001	6,532	6,865	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	8,017	-0.3	8,017	10,908	9,872	8,039	10,762	9,059	9,060	9,141	8,952	8,983
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,099	5,074	4,464	5,076	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,809	4,798	3,575	5,686	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	7,580	-1.7	7,580	12,426	10,004	7,710	12,933	8,295	8,162	8,249	8,403	8,475
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera	(*)	(*)	(*)	8,709	7,324	5,546	9,105	(*)	6,027	6,186	6,197	6,271
44312	Computer & software stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	23,563	6.6	23,563	27,522	29,053	22,100	27,044	30,284	30,198	29,838	29,178	29,201
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	24,085	25,962	19,769	23,672	(*)	26,409	26,145	25,312	25,536
445	Food & beverage stores	57,588	0.4	57,588	65,048	59,290	57,362	62,673	59,486	59,249	59,379	58,179	57,848
4451	Grocery stores	52,326	0.3	52,326	56,264	52,750	52,167	54,146	53,123	53,029	52,909	52,063	51,666
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,948	4,567	3,559	5,834	(*)	4,264	4,491	4,227	4,299
446	Health & personal care stores	28,377	9.4	28,377	32,173	27,860	25,930	30,387	28,838	28,649	28,487	26,568	26,844
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	26,313	23,294	22,121	25,180	(*)	23,877	23,818	22,435	22,603
447	Gasoline stations	33,143	13.9	33,143	34,274	33,075	29,094	31,512	37,156	36,307	35,186	32,544	33,739
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	15,620	0.4	15,620	34,333	23,438	15,564	33,123	21,687	21,481	21,458	21,155	21,224
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,046	761	557	1,040	(*)	714	720	710	712
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,760	3,736	2,529	4,984	(*)	3,340	3,390	3,488	3,547
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	12,929	9,436	5,968	12,565	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,119	2,916	2,051	3,938	(*)	2,938	2,928	2,853	2,889
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	6,647	-3.7	6,647	12,276	8,096	6,903	12,897	7,640	7,508	7,524	7,704	7,903
452	General merchandise stores	48,348	-1.4	48,348	75,135	60,535	49,050	76,391	55,814	55,300	55,522	55,571	56,821
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.)	9,650	-5.6	9,650	21,687	15,210	10,221	23,425	12,741	12,591	12,665	13,164	13,754
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.)[5]	(*)	(*)	(*)	22,801	15,720	10,400	23,820	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	53,448	45,325	38,829	52,966	(*)	42,709	42,857	42,407	43,067
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters	(*)	(*)	(*)	45,735	39,102	33,903	45,266	(*)	36,883	36,958	36,612	37,256
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,713	6,223	4,926	7,700	(*)	5,826	5,899	5,795	5,811
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	9,039	3.3	9,039	12,327	10,648	8,748	11,683	10,737	10,760	10,808	10,318	10,095
454	Nonstore retailers	46,999	14.5	46,999	68,683	54,568	41,041	61,947	49,224	49,217	48,314	43,965	43,213
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	61,764	48,723	34,714	55,765	(*)	43,131	42,627	38,316	37,781
722	Food services & drinking places	51,900	3.4	51,900	57,096	53,061	50,186	54,585	55,987	55,219	55,854	52,995	53,938

(*) Advance estimates are not available for this kind of business.　　(NA) Not available　(a) Advance estimate　(p) Preliminary estimate　(r) Revised estimate

(S) Estimate does not meet publication standards because of high sampling variability (coefficient of variation is greater than 30%), poor response quality (total quantity response rate is less than 50%), or other concerns about the estimate's quality.

(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-13ARIMA-SEATS 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.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, February 15, 2017. 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

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]					
		Jan. 2017 Advance from --		Dec. 2016 Preliminary from --		Nov. 2016 through Jan. 2017 from --	
		Dec. 2016 (p)	Jan. 2016 (r)	Nov. 2016 (r)	Dec. 2015 (r)	Aug. 2016 through Oct. 2016	Nov. 2015 through Jan. 2016
	Retail & food services, total	0.4	5.6	1.0	4.4	1.7	4.6
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.8	5.3	0.4	3.6	1.5	4.2
	Retail	0.2	5.6	1.2	4.6	1.8	4.6
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	-1.4	6.8	3.2	7.4	2.5	5.9
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	-1.2	7.5	2.9	7.4	2.5	6.3
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	0.0	1.2	-0.9	0.9	-0.7	1.5
443	Electronics & appliance stores	1.6	-1.3	-1.1	-3.7	-1.4	-3.0
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers...........................	0.3	3.8	1.2	3.4	2.4	4.0
445	Food & beverage stores..................	0.4	2.2	-0.2	2.4	0.4	2.4
4451	Grocery stores	0.2	2.0	0.2	2.6	0.5	2.3
446	Health & personal care stores	0.7	8.5	0.6	6.7	1.1	7.4
447	Gasoline stations	2.3	14.2	3.2	7.6	6.0	8.4
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	1.0	2.5	0.1	1.2	0.6	1.5
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores..............................	1.8	-0.8	-0.2	-5.0	-1.4	-3.0
452	General merchandise stores...........	0.9	0.4	-0.4	-2.7	0.6	-1.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).........	1.2	-3.2	-0.6	-8.5	-0.7	-6.2
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	-0.2	4.1	-0.4	6.6	0.4	5.6
454	Nonstore retailers	0.0	12.0	1.9	13.9	2.9	12.7
722	Food services & drinking places	1.4	5.6	-1.1	2.4	0.9	4.5

(p) Preliminary estimate   (r) Revised estimate

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

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, February 15, 2017. 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 <www.census.gov/retail/how_surveys_are_collected.html>.

Table 3. Estimated Measures of Sampling Variability and Revision to Advance Estimates Jan. 2017

(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	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
	Retail	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.2
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1.3	0.9	0.4	1.1	0.1	0.7
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	1.4	1.0	0.4	1.2	0.1	0.6
442	Furniture & home furn. stores.......	2.4	1.1	0.8	1.3	-0.1	0.4
443	Electronics & appliance stores	3.0	0.6	0.6	2.2	-0.2	0.3
444	Building material & garden eq. &.... supplies dealers.........................	2.1	0.9	0.7	1.1	-0.2	0.7
445	Food & beverage stores................	1.5	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
4451	Grocery stores	1.5	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.0	0.2
446	Health & personal care stores	2.5	0.4	0.5	2.0	0.1	0.3
447	Gasoline stations	1.8	0.5	0.3	0.8	0.3	0.5
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	2.3	0.6	0.4	0.7	0.0	0.2
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.............................	2.3	1.0	0.8	1.2	-0.2	0.4
452	General merchandise stores..........	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	-0.2	0.2
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.)......	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	3.1	2.6	1.4	3.1	0.3	0.6
454	Nonstore retailers	1.6	0.4	0.4	1.0	0.3	0.3
722	Food services & drinking places ..	2.3	1.0	0.7	1.6	0.1	0.4

(1) Estimated measures of sampling variability are based on estimates not adjusted for seasonal variation or holiday or trading day variation. 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.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, February 15, 2017. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <www.census.gov/retail/how_surveys_are_collected.html>.