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Rebecca DeNale / Paul Bucchioni  
Economic Indicators Division  
(301) 763-2713

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## ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES MAY 2015

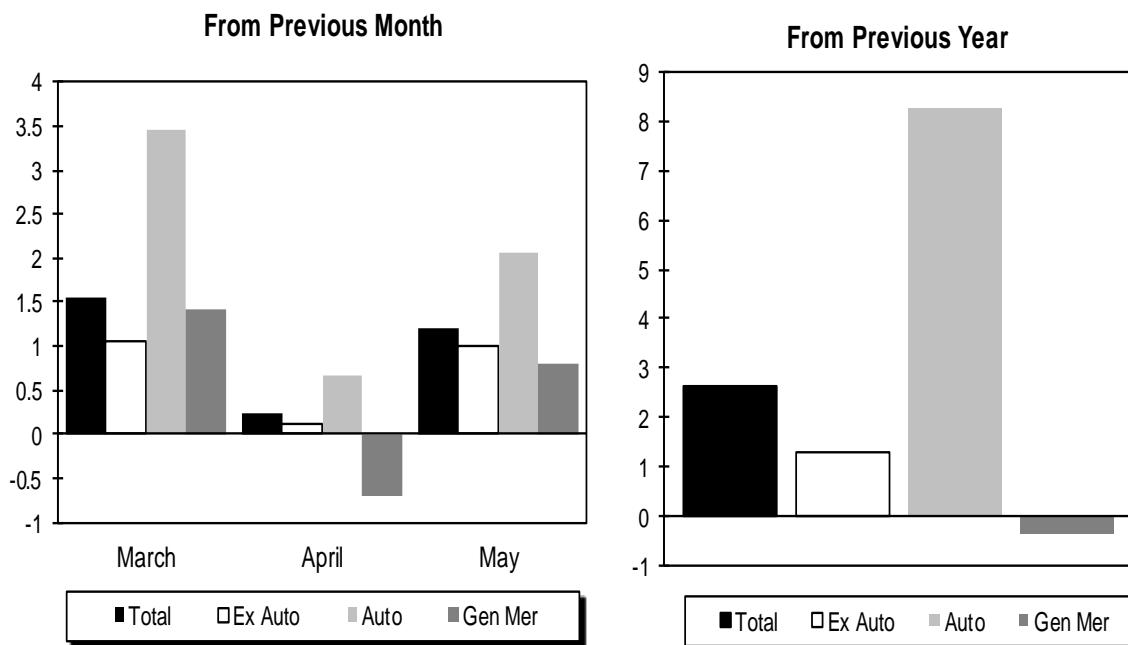
The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for May, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$444.9 billion, an increase of 1.2 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ ) from the previous month, and 2.7 percent ( $\pm 0.9\%$ ) above May 2014. Total sales for the March 2015 through May 2015 period were up 2.1 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) from the same period a year ago. The March 2015 to April 2015 percent change was revised from virtually unchanged ( $\pm 0.5\%$ )\* to +0.2 percent ( $\pm 0.2\%$ )\*.

Retail trade sales were up 1.4 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ ) from April 2015, and 2.0 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) above last year. Motor vehicle and parts dealers were up 8.2 percent ( $\pm 3.0\%$ ) from May 2014 and food services and drinking places were up 8.2 percent ( $\pm 3.3\%$ ) 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 4,900 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 60% 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 June is scheduled to be released July 14, 2015 at 8:30 a.m. EDT.

For customized retail time series estimates by industry, visit the Census Bureau's web site at [www.census.gov/timeseries](http://www.census.gov/timeseries).

To learn more about this release and the other indicators the U.S. Census Bureau publishes, join us for the Investigating Economic Indicators Webinar Series. For more information, visit <http://www.census.gov/econ/webinar>.

To receive the latest updates on the nation's key economic indicators, download the America's Economy app for Apple and Android smartphones and tablets.

The U.S. Census Bureau updated its Application Programming Interface (API) with monthly and quarterly economic indicators. The API allows developers to combine Census Bureau statistics with other data sets to create tools for research on a variety of topics. For more information, visit [www.census.gov/developers](http://www.census.gov/developers).

For additional survey information, visit [www.census.gov/retail](http://www.census.gov/retail).

\* 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 <sup>1</sup> code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted						Adjusted <sup>2</sup>					
		5 Month Total		2015			2014		2015			2014	
		2015	% Chg. 2014	May <sup>3</sup> (a)	Apr. (p)	Mar. (r)	May	Apr.	May <sup>3</sup> (a)	Apr. (p)	Mar. (r)	May (r)	Apr. (r)
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>												
	<b>total</b> .....	2,125,476	1.9	463,124	437,250	442,876	458,705	431,335	444,926	439,607	438,572	433,421	433,049
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	1,673,990	0.5	364,027	342,409	345,218	364,347	342,380	351,902	348,451	348,016	347,478	347,217
	Retail .....	1,870,801	1.0	408,085	385,130	389,831	407,633	383,622	393,440	388,156	387,665	385,824	385,855
	<b>GAFO<sup>4</sup></b> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	96,262	100,225	103,651	96,818	(*)	103,464	103,628	102,748	103,429
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	451,486	7.1	99,097	94,841	97,658	94,358	88,955	93,024	91,156	90,556	85,943	85,832
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	416,266	7.9	91,715	87,496	90,187	86,889	81,538	85,715	83,969	83,352	78,775	78,553
44111	New car dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	72,462	75,100	72,476	67,924	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,345	7,471	7,469	7,417	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	40,278	5.1	8,631	8,081	8,404	8,293	7,705	8,666	8,597	8,489	8,162	8,197
4421	Furniture stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,355	4,696	4,583	4,137	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,726	3,708	3,710	3,568	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	39,412	-1.2	7,789	7,305	8,160	8,066	7,512	8,628	8,617	8,633	8,781	8,842
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,433	5,946	6,086	5,652	(*)	6,303	6,332	6,454	6,557
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	134,040	4.8	34,528	31,706	26,588	33,889	30,564	28,127	27,544	27,656	26,492	26,494
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	25,889	23,021	27,377	24,646	(*)	23,883	24,005	22,682	22,611
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	277,108	3.3	58,510	55,161	56,081	57,208	53,697	56,653	56,521	56,630	54,776	54,707
4451	Grocery stores .....	248,608	3.0	52,123	49,312	50,329	51,084	48,141	50,458	50,318	50,480	48,931	48,874
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,884	3,882	4,202	3,713	(*)	4,190	4,210	4,002	4,010
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	128,013	4.7	25,697	25,748	26,446	25,398	24,658	25,904	25,982	25,877	25,122	24,732
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	21,595	21,866	21,118	20,682	(*)	21,660	21,479	20,826	20,641
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	175,624	-21.8	40,148	36,366	36,075	49,803	46,630	37,627	36,293	36,513	46,242	46,444
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	96,215	2.2	21,934	20,291	20,614	21,451	20,217	21,373	21,056	21,065	20,631	20,847
44811	Men's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	824	763	835	813	(*)	809	817	781	776
44812	Women's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,896	3,968	4,191	3,984	(*)	3,805	3,834	3,841	3,820
44814	Family clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,715	7,874	7,922	7,575	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,743	2,923	2,849	2,867	(*)	2,802	2,835	2,815	2,881
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	31,959	6.0	6,862	6,416	6,710	6,382	6,154	7,363	7,308	7,246	6,818	6,853
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	260,119	0.0	56,670	51,671	53,890	56,914	52,801	55,532	55,086	55,482	55,732	56,016
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	61,253	-2.3	13,574	12,390	13,197	14,017	13,100	13,783	13,673	14,076	14,208	14,487
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) <sup>5</sup> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	12,539	13,429	14,301	13,361	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	39,281	40,693	42,897	39,701	(*)	41,413	41,406	41,524	41,529
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	33,835	35,074	37,253	34,447	(*)	35,804	35,753	36,133	36,146
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,446	5,619	5,644	5,254	(*)	5,609	5,653	5,391	5,383
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	46,534	4.4	10,538	9,461	9,329	10,317	9,010	9,950	9,951	9,789	9,468	9,358
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	190,013	4.9	37,681	38,083	39,876	35,554	35,719	40,593	40,045	39,729	37,657	37,533
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses ....	(*)	(*)	(*)	32,320	32,840	29,294	28,985	(*)	34,057	33,579	30,578	30,446
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ...	254,675	8.9	55,039	52,120	53,045	51,072	47,713	51,486	51,451	50,907	47,597	47,194

(\*) 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.

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 <sup>1</sup>					
		May 2015 Advance from --		Apr. 2015 Preliminary from --		Mar. 2015 through May 2015 from --	
		Apr. 2015 (p)	May 2014 (r)	Mar. 2015 (r)	Apr. 2014 (r)	Dec. 2014 through Feb. 2015	Mar. 2014 through May 2014
	<b>Retail &amp; food services, total .....</b>	1.2	2.7	0.2	1.5	1.5	2.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) .....	1.0	1.3	0.1	0.4	1.0	0.9
	Retail .....	1.4	2.0	0.1	0.6	1.5	1.3
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers .....</b>	2.0	8.2	0.7	6.2	3.3	7.1
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	2.1	8.8	0.7	6.9	3.4	7.7
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores .....</b>	0.8	6.2	1.3	4.9	2.5	5.4
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores .....</b>	0.1	-1.7	-0.2	-2.5	-1.5	-2.2
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers.....</b>	2.1	6.2	-0.4	4.0	2.3	5.8
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores.....</b>	0.2	3.4	-0.2	3.3	0.6	3.5
4451	Grocery stores .....	0.3	3.1	-0.3	3.0	0.6	3.2
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores .....</b>	-0.3	3.1	0.4	5.1	0.3	4.4
447	<b>Gasoline stations .....</b>	3.7	-18.6	-0.6	-21.9	0.0	-20.2
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores .....</b>	1.5	3.6	0.0	1.0	1.4	2.5
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores.....</b>	0.8	8.0	0.9	6.6	3.5	7.3
452	<b>General merchandise stores.....</b>	0.8	-0.4	-0.7	-1.7	-0.3	-0.5
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.8	-3.0	-2.9	-5.6	-0.2	-2.9
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers .....</b>	0.0	5.1	1.7	6.3	0.6	4.7
454	<b>Nonstore retailers .....</b>	1.4	7.8	0.8	6.7	2.8	6.3
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places ....</b>	0.1	8.2	1.1	9.0	1.7	8.5

(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 4,900 employer firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey (MRTS). Firms responding to MARTS account for approximately 60% 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

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## 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  $\pm 1.753 \times 0.9$  percent or  $\pm 1.6$  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  $\pm 1.753 \times CV \times$  (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 May 2015**

(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 <sup>(1)</sup> for Current Mo. (%)	Median standard error <sup>(1)</sup> for Percent change			Revision for month-to-month change <sup>(2)</sup>	
			Previous Mo. to Current Mo.	Previous Qtr. to Current Qtr.	Current Mo. to same Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>						
	<b>total</b> .....	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.1
	<b>Retail</b> .....	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.1
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	1.7	1.2	0.6	1.5	0.2	0.4
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	1.6	1.3	0.6	1.7	0.3	0.4
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	2.4	1.2	0.8	1.7	0.2	0.5
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	2.3	0.5	0.5	1.6	0.0	0.3
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp;...   supplies dealers</b> .....	2.0	1.2	0.9	1.4	0.2	0.5
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	1.4	0.2	0.2	1.3	0.1	0.2
4451	Grocery stores .....	1.4	0.2	0.2	1.4	0.1	0.2
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	2.2	0.4	0.4	1.0	0.0	0.3
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	1.8	0.4	0.4	0.8	-0.2	0.4
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories   stores</b> .....	2.3	0.5	0.6	1.5	0.1	0.4
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp;   music stores</b> .....	2.2	0.7	0.9	1.1	0.1	0.5
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.3
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.1	0.5
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	2.6	1.7	1.1	2.1	-0.2	1.1
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	1.3	0.4	0.4	1.1	0.1	0.3
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ..	2.4	0.9	0.7	1.9	0.3	0.5

(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.

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