

# U.S. Census Bureau News

U.S. Department of Commerce • Washington, D.C. 20233

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
TUESDAY, MARCH 15, 2016, AT 8:30 A.M. EDT

Rebecca DeNale  
Economic Indicators Division  
(301) 763-2713

CB16-37

## ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES FEBRUARY 2016

**Intention to Revise Retail Estimates:** Monthly retail sales estimates will be revised based on the results of the 2014 Annual Retail Trade Survey and the final results from the 2012 Economic Census. Revised not adjusted estimates and corresponding adjusted estimates are scheduled for release on April 29, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. EDT.

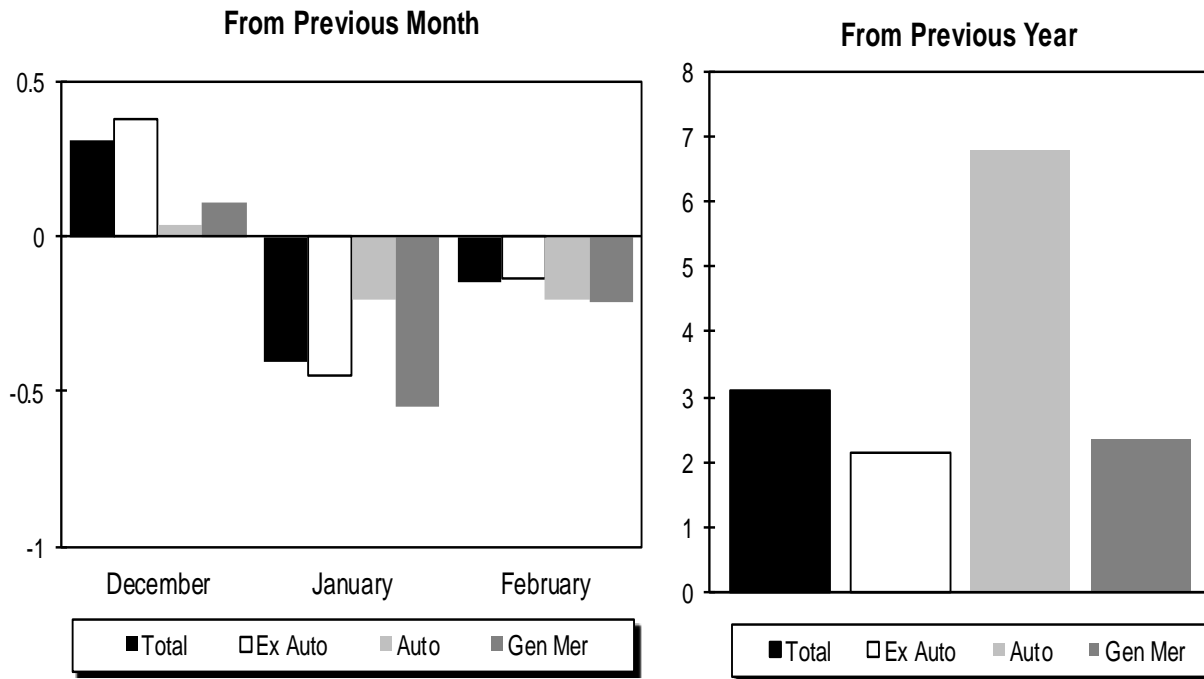
The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for February, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$447.3 billion, a decrease of 0.1 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ )\* from the previous month, and 3.1 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) above February 2015. Total sales for the December 2015 through February 2016 period were up 2.9 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ ) from the same period a year ago. The December 2015 to January 2016 percent change was revised from up 0.2 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ )\* to down 0.4 percent ( $\pm 0.3\%$ ).

Retail trade sales were down 0.3 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ )\* from January 2016, and up 2.7 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ ) from last year. Building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers were up 12.2 percent ( $\pm 2.5\%$ ) from February 2015, while gasoline stations were down 15.6 percent ( $\pm 1.6\%$ ) 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 4,700 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. 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 March is scheduled to be released April 13, 2016 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>				
		2 Month Total		2016		2015			2016		2015		
		2016	% Chg. 2015	Feb. <sup>3</sup> (a)	Jan. (p)	Dec. (r)	Feb.	Jan.	Feb. <sup>3</sup> (a)	Jan. (p)	Dec. (r)	Feb. (r)	Jan. (r)
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>												
	<b>total</b> .....	809,849	3.5	409,600	400,249	517,152	385,731	396,495	447,308	447,962	449,744	433,912	434,966
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	640,406	2.9	320,874	319,532	423,095	305,303	317,033	352,997	353,459	355,048	345,592	345,247
	Retail .....	708,648	3.0	358,623	350,025	462,497	339,180	348,575	393,591	394,759	395,950	383,423	384,417
	<b>GAFO<sup>4</sup></b> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	89,634	150,242	89,530	89,902	(*)	105,033	105,578	102,736	104,275
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	169,443	6.0	88,726	80,717	94,057	80,428	79,462	94,311	94,503	94,696	88,320	89,719
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	155,896	6.1	81,717	74,179	87,175	73,890	72,978	86,933	87,065	87,437	81,198	82,554
44111	New car dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	63,500	76,194	61,314	62,426	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,538	6,882	6,538	6,484	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	15,735	3.8	7,887	7,848	10,622	7,403	7,759	8,696	8,739	8,793	8,374	8,443
4421	Furniture stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,396	5,026	4,221	4,371	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,452	5,596	3,182	3,388	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	15,617	-3.3	7,922	7,695	12,983	7,952	8,206	8,402	8,414	8,430	8,683	8,840
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,408	8,938	5,738	5,853	(*)	6,090	6,101	6,305	6,482
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	45,448	10.3	23,386	22,062	27,076	19,996	21,222	29,865	29,397	29,528	26,627	27,325
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	19,677	23,648	17,695	18,857	(*)	25,422	25,732	22,951	23,571
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	110,207	2.7	53,712	56,495	61,810	51,402	55,954	57,210	57,301	57,011	56,437	56,231
4451	Grocery stores .....	99,371	2.6	48,175	51,196	53,165	46,192	50,652	50,925	51,094	50,778	50,318	50,101
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,570	5,834	3,519	3,578	(*)	4,220	4,274	4,160	4,146
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	51,779	3.3	25,941	25,838	30,511	24,257	25,865	26,606	26,419	26,717	25,860	25,891
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	21,842	24,973	20,129	21,775	(*)	22,040	22,297	21,437	21,538
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	56,055	-11.1	26,981	29,074	31,483	31,033	32,002	31,048	32,485	33,600	36,769	35,322
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	34,433	3.2	18,863	15,570	33,087	17,787	15,589	21,492	21,308	21,280	20,903	20,897
44811	Men's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	609	1,139	693	636	(*)	782	770	832	806
44812	Women's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,797	5,507	3,094	2,806	(*)	3,890	3,892	3,801	3,839
44814	Family clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,756	12,115	6,297	5,813	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,063	3,985	2,585	2,057	(*)	2,873	2,928	2,807	2,814
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	12,919	7.9	6,120	6,799	13,025	5,606	6,365	7,621	7,529	7,698	7,141	6,949
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	100,195	2.4	50,846	49,349	76,721	48,413	49,475	56,210	56,326	56,636	54,923	56,375
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	21,608	-2.2	11,281	10,327	23,530	11,237	10,855	13,437	13,495	13,717	13,741	14,062
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) <sup>5</sup> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	10,571	24,045	11,466	11,083	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	39,022	53,191	37,176	38,620	(*)	42,831	42,919	41,182	42,313
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	34,071	45,540	32,142	33,847	(*)	36,993	37,145	35,595	36,750
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,951	7,651	5,034	4,773	(*)	5,838	5,774	5,587	5,563
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	17,580	2.2	8,998	8,582	11,636	8,571	8,635	10,040	10,147	10,043	9,801	9,974
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	79,237	6.5	39,241	39,996	59,486	36,332	38,041	42,090	42,191	41,518	39,585	38,451
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses ....	(*)	(*)	(*)	33,744	53,409	28,819	30,633	(*)	36,678	36,209	33,278	32,450
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ...	101,201	7.1	50,977	50,224	54,655	46,551	47,920	53,717	53,203	53,794	50,489	50,549

(\*) 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>					
		Feb. 2016 Advance from --		Jan. 2016 Preliminary from --		Dec. 2015 through Feb. 2016 from --	
		Jan. 2016 (p)	Feb. 2015 (r)	Dec. 2015 (r)	Jan. 2015 (r)	Sep. 2015 through Nov. 2015	Dec. 2014 through Feb. 2015
	<b>Retail &amp; food services, total .....</b>	-0.1	3.1	-0.4	3.0	0.2	2.9
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) .....	-0.1	2.1	-0.4	2.4	0.2	2.0
	Retail .....	-0.3	2.7	-0.3	2.7	0.0	2.5
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers .....</b>	-0.2	6.8	-0.2	5.3	0.1	6.2
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .....	-0.2	7.1	-0.4	5.5	0.0	6.4
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores .....</b>	-0.5	3.8	-0.6	3.5	-0.6	3.9
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores .....</b>	-0.1	-3.2	-0.2	-4.8	-2.2	-4.4
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers.....</b>	1.6	12.2	-0.4	7.6	5.9	9.7
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores.....</b>	-0.2	1.4	0.5	1.9	0.4	1.4
4451	Grocery stores .....	-0.3	1.2	0.6	2.0	0.4	1.3
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores .....</b>	0.7	2.9	-1.1	2.0	-0.3	2.8
447	<b>Gasoline stations .....</b>	-4.4	-15.6	-3.3	-8.0	-6.4	-12.9
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores .....</b>	0.9	2.8	0.1	2.0	0.8	1.8
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores.....</b>	1.2	6.7	-2.2	8.3	1.1	7.9
452	<b>General merchandise stores.....</b>	-0.2	2.3	-0.5	-0.1	-0.5	1.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	-0.4	-2.2	-1.6	-4.0	-1.1	-2.7
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers .....</b>	-1.1	2.4	1.0	1.7	0.5	2.3
454	<b>Nonstore retailers .....</b>	-0.2	6.3	1.6	9.7	1.7	7.5
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places .....</b>	1.0	6.4	-1.1	5.3	1.5	6.2

(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 4,700 employer firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey (MRTS). 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  $\pm 1.753 \times 0.9$  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 Feb. 2016**

(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	0.4	0.0	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.1
	<b>Retail</b> .....	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.2
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	1.4	1.0	0.5	1.3	0.1	0.3
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	1.4	1.1	0.5	1.4	0.1	0.3
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	2.4	1.3	0.8	1.4	0.3	0.4
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	2.7	0.5	0.6	1.3	-0.1	0.3
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; .....</b>						
	<b>supplies dealers</b> .....	2.0	1.2	0.8	1.4	0.0	0.6
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	1.4	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
4451	Grocery stores .....	1.5	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.2
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	2.2	0.5	0.4	1.1	0.0	0.2
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	1.8	0.5	0.4	0.9	0.1	0.5
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories</b>						
	<b>stores</b> .....	2.1	0.5	0.5	1.0	0.1	0.3
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	2.3	0.7	0.9	1.2	0.1	0.3
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.4
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.) .....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	2.7	2.0	1.1	2.4	0.0	1.2
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	1.3	0.4	0.4	0.7	0.0	0.3
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ..	2.1	1.0	0.9	2.1	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.