

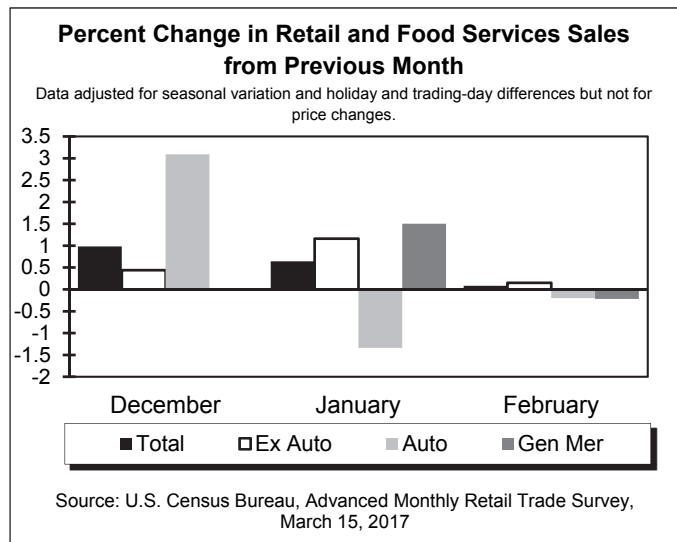
ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES, FEBRUARY 2017

Release Number: CB17-36

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.

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

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES		
February 2017	\$474.0 billion	+0.1%*
January 2017 (revised)	\$473.6 billion	+0.6%
Next release: April 14, 2017		
<small>* 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, March 15, 2017.</small>		



Advance Estimates of U.S. Retail and Food Services

Advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for February 2017, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$474.0 billion, an increase of 0.1 percent (± 0.5 percent)* from the previous month, and 5.7 percent (± 0.9 percent) above February 2016. Total sales for the December 2016 through February 2017 period were up 5.4 percent (± 0.7 percent) from the same period a year ago. The December 2016 to January 2017 percent change was revised from up 0.4 percent (± 0.5 percent)* to up 0.6 percent (± 0.3 percent).

Retail trade sales were up 0.1 percent (± 0.5 percent)* from January 2017, and up 5.9 percent (± 0.7 percent) from last year. Gasoline Stations sales were up 19.6 percent (± 1.4 percent) from February 2016, while Nonstore Retailers were up 13.0 percent (± 1.8 percent) from last year.

Data Inquiries

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General Information

The March 2017 Advance Monthly Retail report is scheduled for release on April 14, 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 $\pm 1.753 \times 0.9$ 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 $\pm 1.753 \times CV \times$ (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.

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.

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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				
		2 Month Total		2017		2016			2017		2016		
		2017	% Chg. 2016	Feb. ³ (a)	Jan. (p)	Dec. (r)	Feb.	Jan.	Feb. ³ (a)	Jan. (p)	Dec. (r)	Feb. (r)	Jan. (r)
	Retail & food services,												
	total	844,833	3.7	422,072	422,761	541,179	413,554	400,928	473,991	473,614	470,616	448,591	446,757
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	671,235	3.7	332,300	338,935	441,709	325,292	321,727	376,276	375,702	371,377	356,035	355,048
	Retail	740,519	3.9	370,072	370,447	484,004	361,878	350,742	417,775	417,362	415,321	394,366	393,874
	GAFO⁴	(*)	(*)	(*)	89,382	148,972	94,231	89,684	(*)	105,787	104,367	104,766	104,352
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	173,598	3.7	89,772	83,826	99,470	88,262	79,201	97,715	97,912	99,239	92,556	91,709
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	160,493	4.2	83,213	77,280	92,283	81,364	72,669	90,547	90,598	91,642	85,287	84,303
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	65,427	79,944	66,981	61,792	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,546	7,187	6,898	6,532	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	16,584	2.1	8,321	8,263	10,880	8,203	8,039	9,339	9,274	9,059	8,907	8,922
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,450	5,088	4,638	4,464	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,813	5,792	3,565	3,575	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	14,793	-5.6	7,177	7,616	12,442	7,956	7,710	8,008	8,242	8,155	8,522	8,348
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,423	8,723	5,929	5,546	(*)	6,066	6,003	6,375	6,155
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers	48,174	6.1	24,160	24,014	27,473	23,290	22,100	31,421	30,860	30,501	29,280	29,166
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	21,572	24,065	20,706	19,769	(*)	26,965	26,680	25,469	25,345
445	Food & beverage stores	111,867	-0.1	54,182	57,685	65,050	54,663	57,362	59,473	59,495	59,232	58,195	58,076
4451	Grocery stores	100,912	-0.4	48,653	52,259	56,284	49,193	52,167	52,999	53,001	52,998	52,001	52,011
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,636	5,916	3,718	3,559	(*)	4,429	4,256	4,264	4,197
446	Health & personal care stores	55,666	6.1	27,265	28,401	32,008	26,559	25,930	29,036	28,834	28,579	27,129	26,568
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	24,228	26,200	22,346	22,121	(*)	24,180	23,818	22,849	22,344
447	Gasoline stations	64,506	14.8	31,375	33,131	34,292	27,096	29,094	36,782	37,018	36,249	30,756	32,471
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	34,259	0.0	18,511	15,748	34,300	18,712	15,564	21,660	21,760	21,500	21,327	21,031
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	598	1,045	617	557	(*)	768	721	704	707
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,469	4,760	2,978	2,529	(*)	3,444	3,338	3,516	3,483
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,851	12,960	6,726	5,968	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,032	4,103	2,764	2,051	(*)	2,907	2,916	2,934	2,849
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores	12,515	-5.1	5,867	6,648	12,271	6,288	6,903	7,551	7,580	7,473	7,831	7,645
452	General merchandise stores	98,813	-0.9	49,947	48,866	75,308	50,661	49,050	56,224	56,349	55,517	55,405	55,601
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	19,855	-7.3	10,226	9,629	21,696	11,208	10,221	12,563	12,706	12,578	13,314	13,167
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) ⁵	(*)	(*)	(*)	9,778	22,801	11,406	10,400	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	39,237	53,612	39,453	38,829	(*)	43,643	42,939	42,091	42,434
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	34,057	45,891	34,060	33,903	(*)	37,549	37,099	36,273	36,652
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,180	7,721	5,393	4,926	(*)	6,094	5,840	5,818	5,782
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	18,172	1.8	9,042	9,130	12,345	9,094	8,748	10,635	10,717	10,750	10,263	10,325
454	Nonstore retailers	91,572	11.5	44,453	47,119	68,165	41,094	41,041	49,931	49,321	49,067	44,195	44,012
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	40,390	61,245	34,821	34,714	(*)	43,430	42,949	38,647	38,358
722	Food services & drinking places ...	104,314	2.4	52,000	52,314	57,175	51,676	50,186	56,216	56,252	55,295	54,225	52,883

(*) 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, March 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 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					
		Feb. 2017 Advance from --		Jan. 2017 Preliminary from --		Dec. 2016 through Feb. 2017 from --	
		Jan. 2017 (p)	Feb. 2016 (r)	Dec. 2016 (r)	Jan. 2016 (r)	Sep. 2016 through Nov. 2016	Dec. 2015 through Feb. 2016
	Retail & food services,						
	total	0.1	5.7	0.6	6.0	1.8	5.4
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	0.2	5.7	1.2	5.8	1.7	5.0
	Retail	0.1	5.9	0.5	6.0	1.9	5.5
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	-0.2	5.6	-1.3	6.8	2.2	6.5
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	-0.1	6.2	-1.1	7.5	2.2	7.0
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	0.7	4.9	2.4	3.9	0.4	3.2
443	Electronics & appliance stores	-2.8	-6.0	1.1	-1.3	-1.7	-3.7
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....	1.8	7.3	1.2	5.8	4.2	5.9
445	Food & beverage stores.....	0.0	2.2	0.4	2.4	0.1	2.3
4451	Grocery stores	0.0	1.9	0.0	1.9	0.2	2.1
446	Health & personal care stores	0.7	7.0	0.9	8.5	1.5	7.3
447	Gasoline stations	-0.6	19.6	2.1	14.0	5.2	13.5
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	-0.5	1.6	1.2	3.5	1.0	2.1
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	-0.4	-3.6	1.4	-0.9	-1.3	-3.3
452	General merchandise stores.....	-0.2	1.5	1.5	1.3	1.3	0.2
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	-1.1	-5.6	1.0	-3.5	-0.7	-5.9
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	-0.8	3.6	-0.3	3.8	-1.2	4.6
454	Nonstore retailers	1.2	13.0	0.5	12.1	3.1	12.9
722	Food services & drinking places	-0.1	3.7	1.7	6.4	0.8	4.2

(p) Preliminary estimate (r) Revised estimate

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

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, March 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 Feb. 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	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.2
	Retail	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1.4	0.9	0.4	1.2	0.2	0.6
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	1.4	1.0	0.4	1.3	0.2	0.6
442	Furniture & home furn. stores.....	2.5	1.1	0.7	1.3	0.1	0.5
443	Electronics & appliance stores	2.9	0.6	0.6	2.2	-0.2	0.3
444	Building material & garden eq. &....						
	supplies dealers.....	2.1	0.8	0.7	1.0	-0.1	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	0.5	0.0	0.2
446	Health & personal care stores	2.8	0.4	0.6	2.7	0.2	0.3
447	Gasoline stations	1.8	0.5	0.3	0.8	0.3	0.5
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	2.4	0.6	0.4	0.7	0.0	0.2
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book & music stores.....	2.5	1.2	0.7	1.2	-0.2	0.4
452	General merchandise stores.....	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.2
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	3.2	2.8	1.4	3.4	0.3	0.6
454	Nonstore retailers	1.6	0.4	0.4	1.0	0.3	0.4
722	Food services & drinking places ..	2.2	1.0	0.7	1.5	0.2	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, March 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>.