

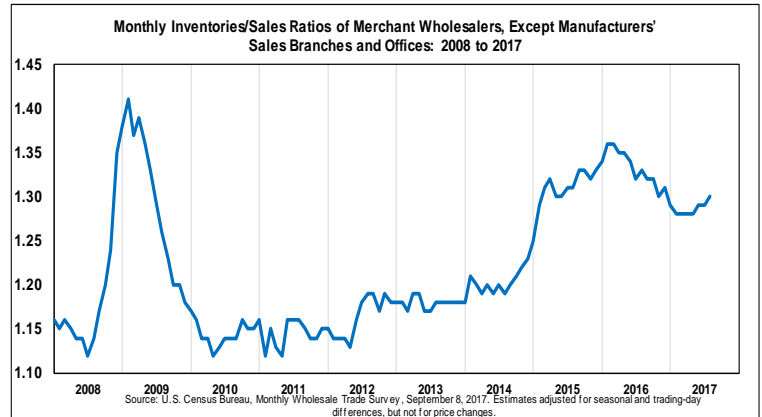
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MONTHLY WHOLESALE TRADE: SALES AND INVENTORIES, JULY 2017

Release Number: CB17-155

September 8, 2017 — The U.S. Census Bureau announced the following new wholesale trade statistics for July 2017:

 MONTHLY WHOLESALE INVENTORIES		
JULY 2017	\$602.4 billion	+0.6%
JUNE 2017 (revised)	\$598.6 billion	+0.6%
Next release: October 6, 2017		
* The 90 percent confidence interval includes zero. There is insufficient evidence to conclude that the actual change is different from zero. Data adjusted for seasonality but not price changes. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey, September 8, 2017.		



Sales

July 2017 sales of merchant wholesalers, except manufacturers' sales branches and offices, after adjustment for seasonal variations and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$465.1 billion, down 0.1 percent (± 0.2 percent)* from the revised June level, but were up 5.9 percent (± 1.1 percent) from the July 2016 level. The May 2017 to June 2017 percent change was revised from the preliminary estimate of up 0.7 percent (± 0.5 percent) to up 0.6 percent (± 0.7 percent)*.

Inventories

Total inventories of merchant wholesalers, except manufacturers' sales branches and offices, after adjustment for seasonal variations but not for price changes, were \$602.4 billion at the end of July, up 0.6 percent (± 0.4 percent) from the revised June level. Total inventories were up 3.3 percent (± 0.7 percent) from the revised July 2016 level. The June 2017 to July 2017 percent change was revised from the advance estimate of up 0.4 percent (± 0.4 percent)* to up 0.6 percent (± 0.4 percent).

Inventories/Sales Ratio

The July inventories/sales ratio for merchant wholesalers, except manufacturers' sales branches and offices, based on seasonally adjusted data, was 1.30. The July 2016 ratio was 1.33.

General Information

The August 2017 Monthly Wholesale Trade Report is scheduled for release on October 6, 2017. View the full schedule in the Economic Briefing Room: www.census.gov/economic-indicators/.

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For additional survey information, including customizable time series estimates by industry, visit www.census.gov/wholesale/.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Reliability of the 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, as given in Table 2 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 can be used to construct a 90-percent confidence interval. If, for example, the percent change estimate is +1.2 percent and its estimated standard error is 0.8 percent, then the margin of sampling error is $\pm 1.753 \times 0.8$ percent or ± 1.4 percent, and the 90 percent confidence interval is 1.2 +/-1.4 or -0.2 percent to 2.6 percent. If the interval contains 0, then one does not have sufficient statistical evidence to conclude at the 90 percent confidence level that the actual change is different from zero. Estimated changes shown in the text are statistically significant unless otherwise noted. For a monthly total, the estimated coefficient of variation is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated monthly total $\pm 1.753 \times CV \times$ (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 wholesale businesses, mistakes in the recording and coding of data, model error, 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.

Description of the Survey

The Census Bureau conducts the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey to provide national estimates of monthly sales, end-of-month inventories, and inventories-to-sales ratios by kind of business for wholesale firms located in the United States. Specifically, the MWTS covers wholesale merchants who sell goods on their own account and include such businesses as wholesale merchants or jobbers, industrial distributors, exporters, and importers. Sales offices and branches maintained by manufacturing, refining, or mining firms for the purpose of marketing their products are not covered in this report. Also excluded is NAICS Industry Group 4251: Wholesale Electronic Markets and Agents and Brokers.

The MWTS sample was selected using a stratified, one-stage design with strata defined by kind of business (e.g., Automotive, Furniture, Lumber, etc.) and annual sales size. The sample includes firms of all sizes and is

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updated on a quarterly basis to account for new wholesale firms, deaths, and other changes to the wholesale universe. Each month, questionnaires are mailed to employer firms selected in a probability sample of approximately 4,200. For surveyed companies, approximately 63.2 percent provided data for this reporting period, resulting in a total quantity response rate of 65.1 percent for sales and 65.3 percent for inventories.

Monthly sales and inventories estimates are obtained by summing weighted data (either reported or imputed). The monthly estimates are benchmarked to annual survey estimates and are adjusted for seasonal variation and trading-day differences. Individuals who use estimates in this report to create new estimates should cite the Census Bureau as the source of only the original estimates. Additional information on the MWTS can be found on the Census Bureau website at: <www.census.gov/wholesale/>.

America's Economy Mobile App

The America's Economy app provides real-time updates for 19 key economic indicators released from the U.S. 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 evidence to conclude that the actual change is different from zero.

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Table 1. Estimates of Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Inventories/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers, Except Manufacturers' Sales Branches and Offices

[Total sales and inventories estimates are shown in millions of dollars. Estimates are based on data from the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey.]

NAICS ¹ code	Kind of Business	Sales						Inventories ⁴						Inventories/Sales Ratios		
		Monthly			Percent change			Monthly			Percent change			Ratios		
		Jul. 2017 (p)	Jun. 2017 (r)	Jul. 2016 (r)	Jul./Jun.	Jun./May	Jul. 17/Jul. 16	Jul. 2017 (p)	Jun. 2017 (r)	Jul. 2016 (r)	Jul./Jun.	Jun./May	Jul. 17/Jul. 16	Jul. 2017 (p)	Jun. 2017 (r)	Jul. 2016 (r)
Adjusted²																
42	U.S. Total	465,059	465,292	438,985	-0.1	0.6	5.9	602,352	598,648	583,169	0.6	0.6	3.3	1.30	1.29	1.33
423	.Durable	223,280	223,399	210,986	-0.1	-0.2	5.8	368,458	365,187	353,794	0.9	0.4	4.1	1.65	1.63	1.68
4231	..Automotive	37,923	38,240	34,681	-0.8	0.2	9.3	68,120	67,999	65,484	0.2	1.1	4.0	1.80	1.78	1.89
4232	..Furniture	6,904	6,827	6,959	1.1	-0.7	-0.8	11,474	11,501	10,923	-0.2	0.6	5.0	1.66	1.68	1.57
4233	..Lumber	11,231	11,117	10,350	1.0	0.7	8.5	16,230	16,160	15,404	0.4	0.0	5.4	1.45	1.45	1.49
4234	..Prof. equip.	40,173	39,533	38,659	1.6	-1.4	3.9	44,053	43,997	40,668	0.1	1.4	8.3	1.10	1.11	1.05
42343	...Comp. equip.	19,316	19,339	18,955	-0.1	-1.5	1.9	17,278	17,297	15,250	-0.1	1.6	13.3	0.89	0.89	0.80
4235	..Metals	13,374	13,490	11,614	-0.9	-0.2	15.2	27,447	27,097	25,733	1.3	0.5	6.7	2.05	2.01	2.22
4236	..Electrical	48,769	49,100	46,482	-0.7	0.3	4.9	50,308	49,050	45,824	2.6	-0.9	9.8	1.03	1.00	0.99
4237	..Hardware	11,227	11,341	11,332	-1.0	-1.3	-0.9	23,319	23,269	22,737	0.2	0.3	2.6	2.08	2.05	2.01
4238	..Machinery	34,441	34,341	32,795	0.3	-1.0	5.0	100,295	99,182	100,518	1.1	0.3	-0.2	2.91	2.89	3.07
4239	..Misc. Durable	19,238	19,410	18,114	-0.9	2.4	6.2	27,212	26,932	26,503	1.0	0.0	2.7	1.41	1.39	1.46
424	.Nondurable	241,779	241,893	227,999	0.0	1.3	6.0	233,894	233,461	229,375	0.2	0.9	2.0	0.97	0.97	1.01
4241	..Paper	8,215	8,212	7,966	0.0	0.9	3.1	8,331	8,416	8,199	-1.0	0.4	1.6	1.01	1.02	1.03
4242	..Drugs	57,085	57,381	53,330	-0.5	2.7	7.0	58,023	60,160	59,028	-3.6	1.9	-1.7	1.02	1.05	1.11
4243	..Apparel	12,743	12,558	13,391	1.5	-0.6	-4.8	26,420	26,387	28,722	0.1	0.2	-8.0	2.07	2.10	2.14
4244	..Groceries	53,770	54,365	51,456	-1.1	0.3	4.5	36,160	36,330	34,897	-0.5	0.5	3.6	0.67	0.67	0.68
4245	..Farm products	17,207	17,486	17,955	-1.6	1.3	-4.2	25,942	24,667	24,512	5.2	3.5	5.8	1.51	1.41	1.37
4246	..Chemicals ³	10,158	9,817	9,309	3.5	-1.7	9.1	11,744	11,629	11,512	1.0	0.6	2.0	1.16	1.18	1.24
4247	..Petroleum	49,028	48,518	42,294	1.1	2.1	15.9	20,443	19,980	18,992	2.3	-5.6	7.6	0.42	0.41	0.45
4248	..Alcohol	11,758	12,262	11,261	-4.1	3.2	4.4	15,700	15,526	15,306	1.1	-0.4	2.6	1.34	1.27	1.36
4249	..Misc. Nondur.	21,815	21,294	21,037	2.4	0.7	3.7	31,131	30,366	28,207	2.5	3.4	10.4	1.43	1.43	1.34
													Sales to date			
													2017		2016	
42	U.S. Total	446,437	489,865	420,959	-8.9	1.1	6.1	596,143	592,798	577,480	0.6	0.5	3.2	3,202,236	2,982,787	
423	.Durable	212,921	238,748	201,104	-10.8	4.0	5.9	371,799	365,450	356,874	1.7	0.3	4.2	1,526,404	1,427,541	
4231	..Automotive	35,837	39,731	33,120	-9.8	0.5	8.2	68,256	67,727	65,680	0.8	1.7	3.9	264,931	243,649	
4232	..Furniture	6,586	6,895	6,618	-4.5	-1.8	-0.5	11,692	11,420	11,141	2.4	2.3	4.9	46,179	45,399	
4233	..Lumber	11,568	12,740	10,629	-9.2	4.8	8.8	16,717	16,726	15,835	-0.1	-0.3	5.6	77,890	72,153	
4234	..Prof. equip.	39,169	43,684	37,538	-10.3	11.9	4.3	44,229	43,645	40,790	1.3	1.8	8.4	270,124	258,323	
42343	...Comp. equip.	19,683	22,259	19,220	-11.6	20.8	2.4	17,416	17,349	15,357	0.4	3.1	13.4	129,006	126,077	
4235	..Metals	12,772	14,421	11,173	-11.4	1.2	14.3	27,886	27,287	26,119	2.2	0.6	6.8	93,946	80,822	
4236	..Electrical	44,770	51,309	42,531	-12.7	5.6	5.3	50,912	48,805	46,282	4.3	-2.1	10.0	322,769	303,803	
4237	..Hardware	11,474	12,838	11,581	-10.6	3.5	-0.9	23,599	23,571	23,010	0.1	0.1	2.6	79,463	77,621	
4238	..Machinery	32,719	36,711	31,122	-10.9	-1.2	5.1	100,997	99,579	101,222	1.4	-0.3	-0.2	239,266	227,632	
4239	..Misc. Durable	18,026	20,419	16,792	-11.7	4.9	7.3	27,511	26,690	26,795	3.1	0.6	2.7	131,836	118,139	
424	.Nondurable	233,516	251,117	219,855	-7.0	-1.6	6.2	224,344	227,348	220,606	-1.3	0.9	1.7	1,675,832	1,555,246	
4241	..Paper	7,870	8,540	7,623	-7.8	0.2	3.2	8,348	8,492	8,232	-1.7	0.7	1.4	55,526	55,326	
4242	..Drugs	53,945	58,873	50,290	-8.4	0.6	7.3	57,617	61,303	58,733	-6.0	6.7	-1.9	384,303	364,307	
4243	..Apparel	12,552	11,968	13,204	4.9	-0.7	-4.9	28,137	26,836	30,531	4.8	5.4	-7.8	83,045	89,241	
4244	..Groceries	53,071	55,344	50,478	-4.1	-4.4	5.1	35,726	35,422	34,478	0.9	0.6	3.6	372,068	361,869	
4245	..Farm products	15,228	16,682	15,675	-8.7	-4.4	-2.9	18,886	19,832	17,673	-4.8	-2.9	6.9	118,604	113,046	
4246	..Chemicals	9,924	10,357	9,151	-4.2	-1.5	8.4	11,744	11,629	11,512	1.0	0.6	2.0	71,132	66,099	
4247	..Petroleum	49,322	50,944	43,351	-3.2	0.3	13.8	20,259	20,460	18,992	-1.0	-7.6	6.7	353,255	271,330	
4248	..Alcohol	10,923	14,113	10,540	-22.6	8.8	3.6	15,920	15,650	15,520	1.7	-2.6	2.6	79,667	77,479	
4249	..Misc. Nondur.	20,681	24,296	19,543	-14.9	-8.1	5.8	27,707	27,724	24,935	-0.1	-2.9	11.1	158,232	156,549	

Footnotes:

^p Preliminary estimate.

^r Revised estimate.

¹ For a full description of the NAICS codes used in this table, see the 2007 NAICS manual or <www.census.gov/eos/www/naics>.

² Except where indicated, sales and inventories estimates are adjusted for seasonal variation. Estimates of sales are also adjusted for trading-day differences and moving holidays. See Table 3 for the combined adjustment factors. Adjusted sales-to-date estimates are not tabulated.

³ No significant seasonal pattern for this NAICS code was detected in the latest annual review of the seasonal adjustment for inventories. Consequently, the "Adjusted" inventories estimates are equal to the "Not Adjusted" estimates.

⁴ Adjusted and not adjusted inventories for aggregate NAICS levels 42, 423, and 424 are revised from the Advance Economic Indicators Report.

Data adjusted for seasonality but not price changes. Explanations of confidence intervals and sampling variability can be found on our website at <www.census.gov/wholesale/www/how_surveys_are_collected/monthly_methodology.html>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey, September 8, 2017.

Table 2. Estimated Measures of Sampling Variability of Monthly Wholesale Sales and Inventory Estimates

[Estimates are shown as percents and are based on data from the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey.]

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Coefficient of variation for monthly total				Standard error for monthly total				Coefficient of variation for total		Standard error for percent change
		Preliminary estimates		Final estimates		Ratio of two consecutive months		Current month to current month last year		Sales to date		Current year sales to date to previous year sales to date
		Sales	Inv.	Sales	Inv.	Sales	Inv.	Sales	Inv.	Current year	Previous year	
42	U.S. Total	1.2	1.5	1.1	1.5	0.1	0.2	0.6	0.4	1.1	1.1	0.5
423	..Durable	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.7	0.3	0.2	0.7	0.7	1.5	1.4	0.5
4231	..Automotive	4.8	4.6	3.9	4.7	0.9	0.5	1.4	2.0	4.0	3.7	1.2
4232	..Furniture	6.6	7.4	5.7	7.2	1.8	0.4	5.1	2.5	6.1	7.5	4.2
4233	..Lumber	4.9	5.3	5.1	5.3	0.7	0.4	1.9	1.5	5.0	5.1	1.1
4234	..Prof. equip.	3.9	4.0	3.8	4.0	0.8	0.3	2.1	1.3	3.7	3.4	1.5
42343	...Comp. equip.	4.2	6.0	4.9	6.0	0.9	0.4	2.4	1.4	4.6	4.4	1.2
4235	..Metals	4.7	6.3	4.8	6.2	0.8	0.4	1.3	2.2	4.9	5.1	2.3
4236	..Electrical	2.6	3.5	2.7	3.5	0.8	0.4	2.4	3.1	2.5	2.8	2.0
4237	..Hardware	3.9	4.0	3.7	4.0	1.1	0.3	1.8	1.1	3.3	2.9	1.5
4238	..Machinery	3.4	3.9	3.3	3.8	0.9	0.3	2.3	2.3	2.8	2.6	1.8
4239	..Misc. Durable	5.4	5.4	5.5	5.2	1.5	0.7	3.0	2.0	5.1	4.7	2.0
424	..Nondurable	1.7	2.1	1.7	2.1	0.3	0.4	0.9	0.9	1.7	1.8	0.8
4241	..Paper	4.7	5.4	4.6	5.4	0.7	0.3	1.3	1.6	4.7	5.0	1.5
4242	..Drugs	2.6	5.4	2.6	5.5	0.3	0.5	1.6	1.3	2.4	3.4	1.5
4243	..Apparel	7.9	7.3	7.1	7.1	2.6	0.6	2.6	1.6	7.2	6.7	1.7
4244	..Groceries	4.0	6.3	4.1	6.0	0.5	1.0	2.1	2.4	4.2	3.6	1.7
4245	..Farm products	3.9	8.1	4.2	8.4	0.9	0.7	2.2	3.6	3.5	2.5	2.3
4246	..Chemicals	3.6	5.2	3.6	5.3	0.8	0.5	2.4	1.4	3.4	3.7	2.2
4247	..Petroleum	5.6	5.1	5.5	4.8	0.5	0.4	1.8	1.9	5.2	5.5	1.7
4248	..Alcohol	5.5	6.3	5.2	6.3	0.8	0.5	1.9	1.8	5.3	4.9	1.1
4249	..Misc. Nondur.	3.7	6.2	4.0	5.9	0.8	0.7	2.2	2.2	3.1	3.3	1.7

Note:

Estimated measures of sampling variability are based on estimates not adjusted for seasonal variation, trading-day differences, or moving holidays. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <www.census.gov/wholesale/www/how_surveys_are_collected/monthly_methodology.html>.

Data adjusted for seasonality but not price changes. Explanations of confidence intervals and sampling variability can be found on our website at <www.census.gov/wholesale/www/how_surveys_are_collected/monthly_methodology.html>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey, September 8, 2017.

Table 3. Combined¹ Adjustment Factors for Monthly Wholesale Sales and Inventory Estimates

[Combined adjustment factors are computed using the Census Bureau's X-13 ARIMA-SEATS program and are based on data from the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey.]

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Sales						Inventories					
		2017					2016	2017					2016
		Aug.	Jul.r	Jun.r	May	Apr.	Jul.r	Aug.	Jul.r	Jun.r	May	Apr.	Jul.r
42	U.S. Total²	1.048	0.961	1.053	1.049	0.966	0.961	0.982	0.991	0.990	0.991	1.004	0.990
423	..Durable	1.056	0.952	1.066	1.024	0.952	0.952	1.004	1.009	1.000	1.002	1.001	1.009
4231	..Automotive	1.048	0.945	1.039	1.035	0.982	0.955	0.961	1.002	0.996	0.991	1.006	1.003
4232	..Furniture	1.108	0.954	1.010	1.021	0.924	0.951	1.029	1.019	0.993	0.977	0.969	1.020
4233	..Lumber	1.150	1.030	1.146	1.101	0.981	1.027	1.013	1.030	1.035	1.038	1.041	1.028
4234	..Prof. equip.	1.006	0.975	1.105	0.973	0.920	0.971	1.010	1.004	0.992	0.988	0.991	1.003
42343	...Comp. equip.	0.978	1.019	1.151	0.939	0.913	1.014	1.009	1.008	1.003	0.988	0.986	1.007
4235	..Metals	1.084	0.955	1.069	1.054	0.971	0.962	1.010	1.016	1.007	1.006	0.999	1.015
4236	..Electrical	1.030	0.918	1.045	0.992	0.931	0.915	1.029	1.012	0.995	1.007	0.990	1.010
4237	..Hardware	1.129	1.022	1.132	1.080	0.948	1.022	1.006	1.012	1.013	1.015	1.018	1.012
4238	..Machinery	1.070	0.950	1.069	1.072	0.993	0.949	1.003	1.007	1.004	1.010	1.006	1.007
4239	..Misc. Durable	1.086	0.937	1.052	1.027	0.923	0.927	1.019	1.011	0.991	0.985	0.988	1.011
424	..Nondurable	1.041	0.970	1.044	1.069	0.980	0.969	0.947	0.962	0.974	0.974	1.007	0.961
4241	..Paper	1.094	0.958	1.040	1.047	0.945	0.957	0.978	1.002	1.009	1.006	1.015	1.004
4242	..Drugs	1.051	0.945	1.026	1.047	0.939	0.943	0.970	0.993	1.019	0.973	0.996	0.995
4243	..Apparel	1.185	0.985	0.953	0.954	0.842	0.986	1.076	1.065	1.017	0.967	0.952	1.063
4244	..Groceries	1.047	0.987	1.018	1.068	0.976	0.981	0.997	0.988	0.975	0.974	0.982	0.988
4245	..Farm products	0.917	0.885	0.954	1.011	0.949	0.873	0.647	0.728	0.804	0.857	1.008	0.721
4246	..Chemicals ³	1.074	0.977	1.055	1.053	0.972	0.983	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
4247	..Petroleum	1.044	1.006	1.050	1.069	1.006	1.025	0.967	0.991	1.024	1.046	1.032	1.000
4248	..Alcohol	1.084	0.929	1.151	1.092	0.927	0.936	0.997	1.014	1.008	1.030	1.017	1.014
4249	..Misc. Nondur.	0.949	0.948	1.141	1.251	1.170	0.929	0.912	0.890	0.913	0.973	1.083	0.884

Footnotes:

¹ Revised factors.

¹ Combined factors for sales include the effects of seasonal variation, trading day differences, and moving holidays. Combined factors for inventories include only the effects of seasonal variation.

² Adjusted sales and inventories estimates for detailed kind-of-business levels in Table 1 are computed by dividing each "Not Adjusted" estimate by the combined adjustment factor for the corresponding kind of business and month. Adjusted estimates for broad kind-of-business levels are obtained by summing adjusted estimates at the appropriate detailed levels. Combined factors shown for broad kind-of-business levels may be used to approximate adjusted estimates at these levels, but the resulting estimates may differ slightly from the published estimates.

³ No significant seasonal pattern for this NAICS code was detected in the latest annual review of the seasonal adjustment for inventories. Therefore, the combined adjustment factors for inventories are set to one for this NAICS code.

Note:

The seasonal adjustment factors shown are estimates derived from a model that uses sample survey data as input. Therefore, these estimates may contain sampling error and nonsampling error. Additional information on the general form of the model and the X-13 ARIMA-SEATS program may be found at <www.census.gov/srd/www/x13as/>.

Data adjusted for seasonality but not price changes. Explanations of confidence intervals and sampling variability can be found on our website at <www.census.gov/wholesale/www/how_surveys_are_collected/monthly_methodology.html>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey, September 8, 2017.