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Timothy Winters / Ian Thomas  
Service Sector Statistics Division  
(301) 763-2713

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## ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES MARCH 2011

**Intention to Revise Retail Estimates:** Monthly retail sales estimates will be revised based on the results of the 2009 Annual Retail Trade Survey. Revised not adjusted estimates and corresponding adjusted estimates are scheduled for release on April 29, 2011.

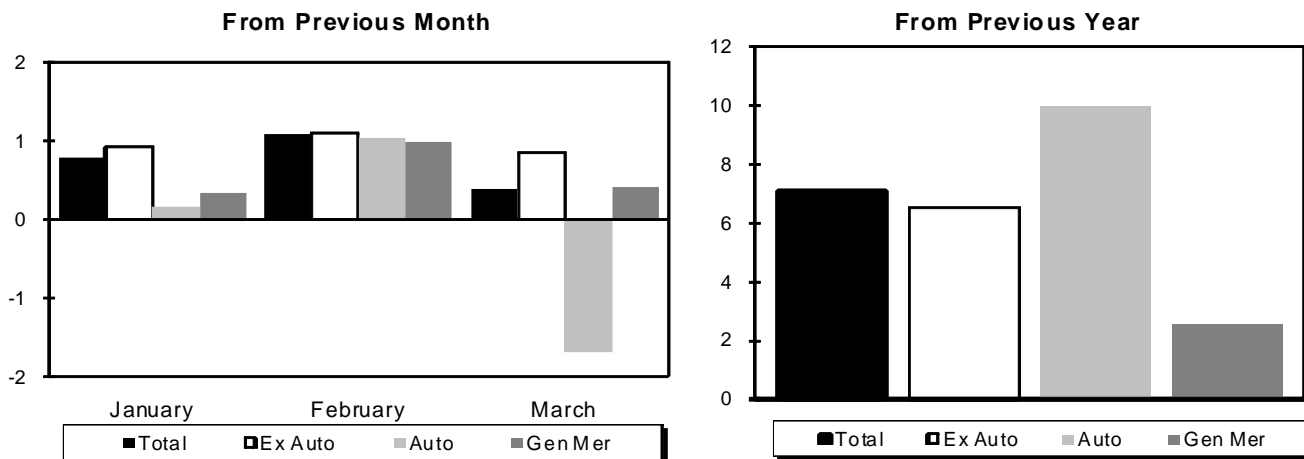
The U.S. Census Bureau announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for March, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$389.3 billion, an increase of 0.4 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ )\* from the previous month, and 7.1 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) above March 2010. Total sales for the January through March 2011 period were up 8.1 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ ) from the same period a year ago. The January to February 2011 percent change was revised from +1.0 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ ) to +1.1 percent ( $\pm 0.2\%$ ).

Retail trade sales were up 0.3 percent ( $\pm 0.5\%$ )\* from February 2011, and 7.3 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) above last year. Gasoline stations sales were up 16.7 percent ( $\pm 1.7\%$ ) from March 2010 and nonstore retailers sales were up 12.4 percent ( $\pm 3.1\%$ ) 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 5,000 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 65% 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 April is scheduled to be released May 12, 2011 at 8:30 a.m. EDT.

For information, visit the Census Bureau's Web site at <<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>				
		3 Month Total		2011			2010		2011			2010	
		2011	% Chg. 2010	Mar. <sup>3</sup> (a)	Feb. (p)	Jan. (r)	Mar.	Feb.	Mar. <sup>3</sup> (a)	Feb. (p)	Jan. (r)	Mar. (r)	Feb. (r)
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>												
	<b>total</b> .....	1,089,157	8.0	396,270	347,574	345,313	369,339	317,961	389,320	387,813	383,660	363,495	355,458
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	889,179	6.4	319,873	283,263	286,043	300,064	264,903	320,644	317,964	314,531	301,039	297,802
	Retail .....	971,833	8.4	353,946	309,852	308,035	329,308	281,998	348,028	346,944	343,533	324,210	316,453
	<b>GAFO<sup>4</sup></b>	(*)	(*)	(*)	86,659	83,181	92,552	83,866	(*)	98,007	96,653	95,876	95,291
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	199,978	15.4	76,397	64,311	59,270	69,275	53,058	68,676	69,849	69,129	62,456	57,656
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	181,446	16.6	69,526	58,336	53,584	62,589	47,392	62,132	63,203	62,525	56,033	51,346
44111	New car dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	46,846	44,226	50,271	37,442	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,975	5,686	6,686	5,666	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	21,644	0.6	8,106	6,893	6,645	7,810	6,935	7,932	7,659	7,560	7,725	7,714
4421	Furniture stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,080	3,785	4,362	4,086	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,813	2,860	3,448	2,849	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	24,242	0.1	8,398	8,068	7,776	8,109	8,198	8,759	8,581	8,456	8,511	8,749
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,320	6,037	6,300	6,516	(*)	6,660	6,541	6,702	6,917
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,748	1,739	1,809	1,682	(*)	1,921	1,915	1,809	1,832
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	60,555	7.1	24,856	17,862	17,837	23,563	16,625	25,026	24,483	24,676	23,826	22,463
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	14,766	14,865	19,682	14,235	(*)	19,506	19,689	19,941	18,657
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	146,331	3.6	50,587	46,462	49,282	48,771	44,829	50,869	50,816	50,475	48,945	49,145
4451	Grocery stores .....	132,198	3.8	45,572	41,771	44,855	43,757	40,343	45,436	45,305	45,080	43,626	43,851
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,063	2,931	3,205	2,895	(*)	3,616	3,544	3,454	3,438
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	68,074	6.2	23,925	21,593	22,556	22,761	20,369	22,983	22,826	22,946	21,615	21,509
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	18,058	19,134	19,369	17,304	(*)	19,150	19,211	18,429	18,331
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	113,521	14.7	41,712	35,230	36,579	35,734	30,653	41,754	40,681	39,717	35,770	35,560
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	48,474	4.1	18,321	16,169	13,984	17,718	15,240	18,946	18,838	18,506	18,329	17,886
44811	Men's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	564	552	635	526	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
44812	Women's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,587	2,253	3,183	2,426	(*)	3,190	3,053	3,099	3,010
44814	Family clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,897	5,189	6,894	5,607	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,151	1,771	2,368	2,067	(*)	2,361	2,330	2,299	2,284
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	20,338	5.0	7,123	6,157	7,058	6,741	5,647	7,701	7,696	7,485	7,256	7,103
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	141,608	2.2	50,357	46,409	44,842	49,181	45,028	52,145	51,938	51,428	50,868	50,717
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	39,036	-3.2	14,168	12,874	11,994	14,783	13,126	15,414	15,448	15,277	15,946	15,821
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) <sup>5</sup> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	13,133	12,226	15,116	13,424	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	33,535	32,848	34,398	31,902	(*)	36,490	36,151	34,922	34,896
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	29,529	29,235	30,138	28,135	(*)	31,958	31,674	30,597	30,615
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,006	3,613	4,260	3,767	(*)	4,532	4,477	4,325	4,281
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	28,426	9.0	10,204	9,436	8,786	9,555	8,321	10,466	10,695	10,369	9,753	9,417
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	98,642	14.3	33,960	31,262	33,420	30,090	27,095	32,771	32,882	32,786	29,156	28,534
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses ....	(*)	(*)	(*)	21,829	23,354	21,973	18,884	(*)	24,527	24,403	21,864	21,242
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ...	117,324	4.7	42,324	37,722	37,278	40,031	35,963	41,292	40,869	40,127	39,285	39,005

(\*) Advance estimates are not available for this kind of business.

(NA) Not available (S) Suppressed (a) Advance estimate (p) Preliminary estimate (r) Revised estimate

(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-12 ARIMA 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>					
		Mar. 2011 Advance from --		Feb. 2011 Preliminary from --		Jan. 2011 through Mar. 2011 from --	
		Feb. 2011 (p)	Mar. 2010 (r)	Jan. 2011 (r)	Feb. 2010 (r)	Oct. 2010 through Dec. 2010	Jan. 2010 through Mar. 2010
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>						
	<b>total .....</b>	0.4	7.1	1.1	9.1	2.3	8.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ....	0.8	6.5	1.1	6.8	2.4	6.7
	Retail .....	0.3	7.3	1.0	9.6	2.4	8.5
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers .....</b>	-1.7	10.0	1.0	21.1	1.9	15.3
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	-1.7	10.9	1.1	23.1	2.3	16.6
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores .....</b>	3.6	2.7	1.3	-0.7	1.8	0.8
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores .....</b>	2.1	2.9	1.5	-1.9	1.1	0.1
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers.....</b>	2.2	5.0	-0.8	9.0	-0.5	8.3
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores.....</b>	0.1	3.9	0.7	3.4	1.9	3.8
4451	Grocery stores .....	0.3	4.1	0.5	3.3	2.0	3.9
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores .....</b>	0.7	6.3	-0.5	6.1	1.9	6.7
447	<b>Gasoline stations .....</b>	2.6	16.7	2.4	14.4	7.3	14.6
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores .....</b>	0.6	3.4	1.8	5.3	1.8	4.3
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores.....</b>	0.1	6.1	2.8	8.3	2.0	6.3
452	<b>General merchandise stores.....</b>	0.4	2.5	1.0	2.4	0.8	2.4
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	-0.2	-3.3	1.1	-2.4	-0.6	-2.8
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers .....</b>	-2.1	7.3	3.1	13.6	1.9	10.1
454	<b>Nonstore retailers .....</b>	-0.3	12.4	0.3	15.2	4.2	14.0
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places .....</b>	1.0	5.1	1.8	4.8	2.1	4.9

(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 5,000 employer firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey (MRTS). Firms responding to MARTS account for approximately 65% 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  $\pm 1.65 \times 0.9$  percent or  $\pm 1.5$  percent, and the 90 percent confidence interval is -0.3 percent to +2.7 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  $\pm 1.65 \times CV \times$  (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 Mar 2011**

(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>						
	total .....	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ..	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2
	<b>Retail</b> .....	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.1
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	2.3	1.1	0.5	1.3	0.3	0.6
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	2.5	1.2	0.6	1.5	0.3	0.6
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	3.2	1.7	0.9	1.8	-0.1	0.8
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> ....	1.6	0.5	0.3	1.0	-0.1	0.3
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	3.2	1.8	0.9	2.4	0.3	0.6
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	1.2	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.2
4451	Grocery stores .....	1.3	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.3
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	1.9	0.4	0.3	0.7	-0.1	0.3
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	2.5	0.5	0.3	1.0	0.3	0.4
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	2.5	0.6	0.6	1.0	0.1	0.7
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	3.7	2.0	1.2	2.2	0.3	0.7
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.1	0.1
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	3.6	2.2	1.3	2.8	0.8	0.6
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	2.1	0.9	0.7	1.9	0.1	0.4
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ..	2.0	0.7	0.6	1.2	0.2	0.3



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