

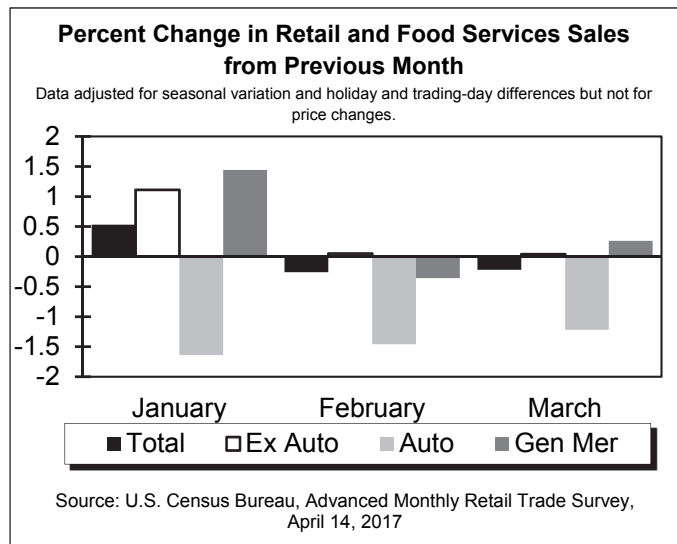
## ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES, MARCH 2017

Release Number: CB17-56

**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.

**April 14, 2017** — The U.S. Census Bureau announced the following advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for March 2017:

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES		
March 2017	\$470.8 billion	-0.2%*
February 2017 (revised)	\$471.9 billion	-0.3%
Next release: May 12, 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, April 14, 2017.</small>		



### Advance Estimates of U.S. Retail and Food Services

Advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for March 2017, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$470.8 billion, a decrease of 0.2 percent ( $\pm 0.5$  percent)\* from the previous month, and 5.2 percent ( $\pm 0.9$  percent) above March 2016. Total sales for the January 2017 through March 2017 period were up 5.4 percent ( $\pm 0.7$  percent) from the same period a year ago. The January 2017 to February 2017 percent change was revised from up 0.1 percent ( $\pm 0.5$  percent)\* to down 0.3 percent ( $\pm 0.2$  percent).

Retail trade sales were down 0.2 percent ( $\pm 0.5$  percent)\* from February 2017, and up 5.5 percent ( $\pm 0.9$  percent) from last year. Gasoline Stations sales were up 14.3 percent ( $\pm 1.4$  percent) from March 2016, while Nonstore Retailers were up 11.9 percent ( $\pm 1.8$  percent) from last year.

#### Data Inquiries

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## General Information

The April 2017 Advance Monthly Retail report is scheduled for release on May 12, 2017 at 8:30 a.m. EDT. View the full schedule in the Economic Briefing Room: <[www.census.gov/economic-indicators/](http://www.census.gov/economic-indicators/)>. The full text and tables of this release can be found at <[www.census.gov/retail/](http://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/](http://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  $\pm 1.6$  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.

### **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/](http://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/](http://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 <sup>1</sup> code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted						Adjusted <sup>2</sup>					
		3 Month Total		2017			2016		2017			2016	
		2017	% Chg. 2016	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> .....	1,324,786	3.9	482,257	419,730	422,799	460,093	413,554	470,844	471,865	473,104	447,757	448,895
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	1,048,211	4.0	377,632	331,629	338,950	361,020	325,292	375,828	375,677	375,491	357,795	356,078
	Retail .....	1,162,160	4.1	423,916	367,779	370,465	404,012	361,878	415,122	415,823	416,891	393,572	394,727
	<b>GAFO<sup>4</sup></b> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	91,066	89,384	103,670	94,231	(*)	104,734	105,704	104,952	104,989
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	276,575	3.8	104,625	88,101	83,849	99,073	88,262	95,016	96,188	97,613	89,962	92,817
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	255,933	4.3	96,981	81,650	77,302	91,366	81,364	87,845	89,138	90,306	82,759	85,556
44111	New car dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	67,435	65,470	75,242	66,981	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,451	6,547	7,707	6,898	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	25,872	2.1	9,401	8,225	8,246	9,102	8,203	9,226	9,252	9,234	8,967	8,916
4421	Furniture stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,541	4,445	5,013	4,638	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,684	3,801	4,089	3,565	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	22,978	-3.1	8,022	7,310	7,646	8,057	7,956	8,382	8,170	8,332	8,444	8,529
44311, 13	Appl., T.V. & camera.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,336	5,453	6,038	5,929	(*)	5,996	6,148	6,323	6,375
44312	Computer & software stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	80,257	6.4	31,929	24,317	24,011	30,027	23,290	31,120	31,594	30,787	29,274	29,223
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	21,369	21,564	25,617	20,706	(*)	27,187	26,821	25,439	25,406
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	171,742	0.6	59,793	54,272	57,677	58,653	54,663	59,888	59,580	59,584	57,813	58,213
4451	Grocery stores .....	154,738	0.4	53,687	48,806	52,245	52,741	49,193	53,420	53,166	53,095	51,656	52,001
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,684	3,643	3,986	3,718	(*)	4,380	4,426	4,254	4,274
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	85,662	5.6	30,115	27,229	28,318	28,595	26,559	29,013	28,998	28,749	27,442	27,129
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	23,013	24,221	23,976	22,346	(*)	24,482	24,245	23,076	22,802
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	100,494	14.8	35,895	31,487	33,112	31,342	27,096	36,516	36,870	36,997	31,949	30,686
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	54,123	-2.6	20,728	17,760	15,635	21,264	18,712	21,212	21,003	21,596	21,153	21,432
44811	Men's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	617	597	701	617	(*)	736	766	705	719
44812	Women's clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,743	2,454	3,722	2,978	(*)	3,349	3,437	3,488	3,533
44814	Family clothing stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,343	5,848	8,291	6,726	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,529	2,023	3,064	2,764	(*)	2,798	2,898	2,848	2,950
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	19,649	-4.5	7,034	5,958	6,657	7,382	6,288	7,539	7,599	7,565	7,837	7,782
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	153,843	-0.8	55,291	49,658	48,894	55,303	50,661	56,260	56,113	56,317	55,753	55,549
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	31,825	-6.6	11,992	10,222	9,611	12,648	11,208	12,597	12,574	12,704	13,186	13,330
4521	Department stores (incl. L.D.) <sup>5</sup> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	10,379	9,760	13,038	11,406	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4529	Other general merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	39,436	39,283	42,655	39,453	(*)	43,539	43,613	42,567	42,219
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	34,053	34,073	36,720	34,060	(*)	37,545	37,484	36,794	36,389
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,383	5,210	5,935	5,393	(*)	5,994	6,129	5,773	5,830
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	29,544	5.4	10,915	9,383	9,246	10,197	9,094	11,099	10,907	10,862	10,425	10,249
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	141,421	11.2	50,168	44,079	47,174	45,017	41,094	49,851	49,549	49,255	44,553	44,202
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses ....	(*)	(*)	(*)	37,904	40,436	38,894	34,821	(*)	43,820	43,386	39,129	38,647
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ...	162,626	3.0	58,341	51,951	52,334	56,081	51,676	55,722	56,042	56,213	54,185	54,168

(\*) 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, April 14, 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](http://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 <sup>1</sup>					
		Mar. 2017 Advance from --		Feb. 2017 Preliminary from --		Jan. 2017 through Mar. 2017 from --	
		Feb. 2017 (p)	Mar. 2016 (r)	Jan. 2017 (r)	Feb. 2016 (r)	Oct. 2016 through Dec. 2016	Jan. 2016 through Mar. 2016
	<b>Retail &amp; food services,</b>						
	<b>total</b> .....	-0.2	5.2	-0.3	5.1	1.0	5.4
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	0.0	5.0	0.0	5.5	1.5	5.4
	Retail .....	-0.2	5.5	-0.3	5.3	1.0	5.6
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers</b> .....	-1.2	5.6	-1.5	3.6	-1.1	5.2
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ..	-1.5	6.1	-1.3	4.2	-1.0	5.8
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores</b> .....	-0.3	2.9	0.2	3.8	1.2	3.4
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores</b> .....	2.6	-0.7	-1.9	-4.2	0.8	-1.7
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp; supplies dealers</b> .....	-1.5	6.3	2.6	8.1	3.9	6.7
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores</b> .....	0.5	3.6	0.0	2.3	0.6	2.8
4451	Grocery stores .....	0.5	3.4	0.1	2.2	0.5	2.6
446	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores</b> .....	0.1	5.7	0.9	6.9	1.6	6.9
447	<b>Gasoline stations</b> .....	-1.0	14.3	-0.3	20.2	3.5	16.1
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores</b> .....	1.0	0.3	-2.7	-2.0	-0.9	0.3
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores</b> .....	-0.8	-3.8	0.4	-2.4	0.1	-2.4
452	<b>General merchandise stores</b> .....	0.3	0.9	-0.4	1.0	1.4	1.1
4521	Department stores (ex. L.D.).....	0.2	-4.5	-1.0	-5.7	0.0	-4.6
453	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers</b> .....	1.8	6.5	0.4	6.4	1.3	6.0
454	<b>Nonstore retailers</b> .....	0.6	11.9	0.6	12.1	2.1	12.0
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places</b> ....	-0.6	2.8	-0.3	3.5	1.0	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, April 14, 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](http://www.census.gov/retail/how_surveys_are_collected.html)>

**Table 3. Estimated Measures of Sampling Variability and Revision to Advance Estimates Mar. 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 <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, total .....</b>	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	0.1
	<b>Retail .....</b>	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.2
441	<b>Motor vehicle &amp; parts dealers .....</b>	1.3	0.9	0.4	1.2	0.0	0.6
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	1.4	1.0	0.4	1.3	0.0	0.6
442	<b>Furniture &amp; home furn. stores.....</b>	2.6	1.0	0.8	1.3	0.1	0.6
443	<b>Electronics &amp; appliance stores .....</b>	2.9	0.6	0.6	2.2	-0.2	0.3
444	<b>Building material &amp; garden eq. &amp;....</b>						
	supplies dealers.....	2.1	0.8	0.7	1.0	0.0	0.7
445	<b>Food &amp; beverage stores.....</b>	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	<b>Health &amp; personal care stores .....</b>	2.9	0.4	0.6	2.9	0.2	0.3
447	<b>Gasoline stations .....</b>	1.8	0.5	0.3	0.8	0.4	0.3
448	<b>Clothing &amp; clothing accessories stores .....</b>	2.4	0.6	0.4	0.7	-0.2	0.2
451	<b>Sporting goods, hobby, book &amp; music stores.....</b>	2.5	1.2	0.7	1.2	-0.1	0.4
452	<b>General merchandise stores.....</b>	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	<b>Miscellaneous store retailers .....</b>	3.0	2.6	1.4	3.1	0.3	0.7
454	<b>Nonstore retailers .....</b>	1.6	0.4	0.4	1.0	0.2	0.4
722	<b>Food services &amp; drinking places ..</b>	2.2	1.1	0.7	1.5	0.1	0.3

(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, April 14, 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](http://www.census.gov/retail/how_surveys_are_collected.html)>.