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ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES, FEBRUARY 2019

Release Number: CB19-40

April 1, 2019 — The U.S. Census Bureau announced the following advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for February 2019:

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES		
February 2019	**$506.0 billion**	**-0.2%***
January 2019 (revised)	**$507.0 billion**	**0.7%**
	Next release: April 18, 2019	

* 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 1, 2019.

Percent Change in Retail and Food Services Sales from Previous Month

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 1, 2019
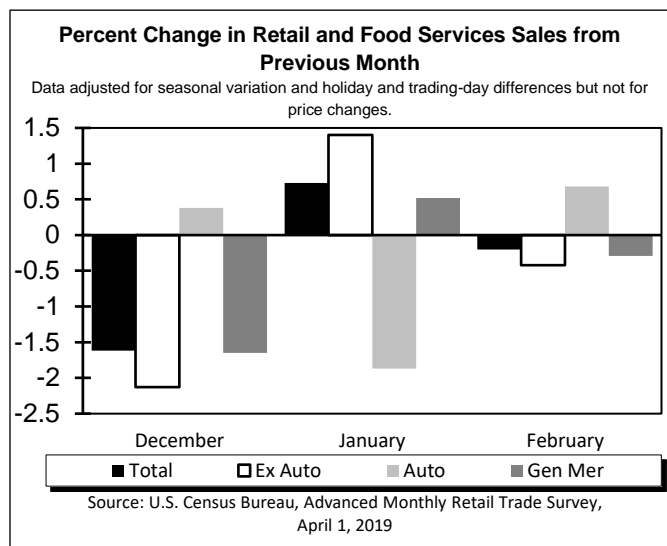
Advance Estimates of U.S. Retail and Food Services

Advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for February 2019, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were $506.0 billion, a decrease of 0.2 percent (±0.5 percent)* from the previous month, but 2.2 percent (±0.7 percent) above February 2018. Total sales for the December 2018 through February 2019 period were up 2.2 percent (±0.5 percent) from the same period a year ago. The December 2018 to January 2019 percent change was revised from up 0.2 percent (±0.5 percent)* to up 0.7 percent (±0.3 percent).

Retail trade sales were down 0.2 percent (±0.5 percent)* from January 2019, but 2.1 percent (±0.5 percent) above last year. Nonstore retailers were up 10.0 percent (±1.8 percent) from February 2018, while health and personal care stores were up 5.9 percent (±2.5 percent) from last year.

General Information

Data collection and processing were delayed for this indicator release due to the lapse in federal funding from December 22, 2018 through January 25, 2019. Processing and data quality were monitored throughout and response rates were at or above normal levels for this release.

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The U.S. Census Bureau updated its 2019 economic indicator release calendar to include January-March 2019 releases following the recent lapse in federal funding. Please refer to <www.census.gov/economic-indicators> for the latest information on the rescheduled release dates.

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 5,500 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 5,500 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

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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 ±1.753 x 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 ±1.753 x CV x (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.

RESOURCES

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/>

FRED Mobile App

Receive the latest updates on the nation's key economic indicators by downloading the FRED App <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/fred-mobile/> for both Apple and Android devices. FRED, the signature database of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, now incorporates the Census Bureau's 13 economic indicators.

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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		2019		2018		2019		2018		
		2019	% Chg. 2018	Feb.[3] (a)	Jan. (p)	Dec. (r)	Feb.	Jan.	Feb.[3] (a)	Jan. (p)	Dec. (r)	Feb. (r)	Jan. (r)
	Retail & food services, total	**906,432**	**2.7**	**446,952**	**459,480**	**565,553**	**437,520**	**444,738**	**505,969**	**506,977**	**503,327**	**494,879**	**493,099**
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	723,610	3.1	354,145	369,465	461,852	346,573	355,463	402,973	404,681	399,081	394,274	391,482
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	835,108	3.3	412,092	423,016	527,384	401,543	406,915	465,101	466,506	462,373	452,652	450,933
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	652,286	3.8	319,285	333,001	423,683	310,596	317,640	362,105	364,210	358,127	352,047	349,316
	Retail	795,507	2.6	391,712	403,795	503,812	384,117	391,584	445,663	446,712	443,092	436,642	435,386
	GAFO[4]	(*)	(*)	(*)	92,813	149,947	93,912	91,395	(*)	109,303	108,787	109,172	108,410
441	**Motor vehicle & parts dealers**	**182,822**	**1.4**	**92,807**	**90,015**	**103,701**	**90,947**	**89,275**	**102,996**	**102,296**	**104,246**	**100,605**	**101,617**
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	168,859	1.4	85,914	82,945	96,700	84,227	82,350	95,354	94,686	96,603	93,171	94,114
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	69,313	83,590	68,993	69,088	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores............	(*)	(*)	(*)	7,070	7,001	6,720	6,925	(*)	7,610	7,643	7,434	7,503
442	**Furniture & home furn. stores**	**17,497**	**-1.9**	**8,579**	**8,918**	**11,324**	**8,816**	**9,016**	**9,816**	**9,865**	**9,890**	**10,052**	**10,018**
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,752	5,592	4,908	4,808	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,166	5,732	3,908	4,208	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	**Electronics & appliance stores**	**14,559**	**-2.4**	**7,011**	**7,548**	**11,775**	**7,288**	**7,632**	**7,994**	**8,099**	**8,054**	**8,254**	**8,242**
444	**Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers**.....................................	**54,125**	**6.7**	**25,719**	**28,406**	**29,398**	**25,351**	**25,391**	**32,951**	**34,471**	**33,014**	**32,498**	**31,400**
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	25,097	25,758	22,283	22,624	(*)	29,771	28,844	28,278	27,258
445	**Food & beverage stores**........................	**119,036**	**3.2**	**56,848**	**62,188**	**67,491**	**55,807**	**59,562**	**62,526**	**63,278**	**62,425**	**61,336**	**61,091**
4451	Grocery stores	107,475	3.5	51,117	56,358	58,316	50,047	53,836	55,744	56,414	55,592	54,577	54,325
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,094	6,386	3,967	3,965	(*)	4,862	4,849	4,728	4,737
446	**Health & personal care stores**	**56,518**	**4.6**	**27,579**	**28,939**	**31,378**	**26,083**	**27,939**	**29,528**	**29,350**	**28,656**	**27,896**	**28,250**
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	24,303	25,176	21,730	23,742	(*)	24,110	23,639	23,290	23,484
447	**Gasoline stations**	**71,324**	**-3.4**	**34,860**	**36,464**	**38,169**	**35,977**	**37,823**	**40,868**	**40,471**	**40,954**	**42,227**	**42,166**
448	**Clothing & clothing accessories stores**	**35,430**	**1.1**	**18,809**	**16,621**	**35,302**	**18,908**	**16,143**	**22,700**	**22,791**	**22,920**	**22,524**	**22,367**
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	707	1,088	646	608	(*)	864	821	796	764
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,542	4,544	2,718	2,378	(*)	3,477	3,378	3,398	3,303
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,760	13,912	7,125	6,377	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,226	4,445	2,641	2,044	(*)	3,185	3,226	2,957	2,954
451	**Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores**	**10,602**	**-6.3**	**5,050**	**5,552**	**8,900**	**5,501**	**5,813**	**6,313**	**6,281**	**5,969**	**6,919**	**6,583**
452	**General merchandise stores**..................	**104,115**	**1.9**	**51,989**	**52,126**	**79,569**	**51,414**	**50,715**	**59,739**	**59,914**	**59,606**	**59,021**	**58,814**
4521	Department stores	18,684	-3.7	9,581	9,103	20,679	10,023	9,374	12,032	12,096	12,117	12,534	12,532
4529	Other general merch. stores....	(*)	(*)	(*)	43,023	58,890	41,391	41,341	(*)	47,818	47,489	46,487	46,282
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters................................	(*)	(*)	(*)	36,735	49,929	35,365	35,456	(*)	40,681	40,428	39,647	39,439
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores............	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,288	8,961	6,026	5,885	(*)	7,137	7,061	6,840	6,843
453	**Miscellaneous store retailers**	**18,164**	**-5.2**	**8,970**	**9,194**	**11,480**	**9,458**	**9,699**	**10,464**	**10,639**	**10,635**	**10,965**	**11,290**
454	**Nonstore retailers**	**111,315**	**10.1**	**53,491**	**57,824**	**75,325**	**48,567**	**52,576**	**59,768**	**59,257**	**56,723**	**54,345**	**53,548**
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	49,696	67,632	41,704	44,176	(*)	52,533	49,913	48,046	46,846
722	**Food services & drinking places**	**110,925**	**4.1**	**55,240**	**55,685**	**61,741**	**53,403**	**53,154**	**60,306**	**60,265**	**60,235**	**58,237**	**57,713**

(*) 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, musical instrument, and book (451), general merchandise (452), office supply, stationery, and gift stores (4532).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, April 1, 2019. 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. 2019 Advance from --		Jan. 2019 Preliminary from --		Dec. 2018 through Feb. 2019 from --	
		Jan. 2019 (p)	Feb. 2018 (r)	Dec. 2018 (r)	Jan. 2018 (r)	Sep. 2018 through Nov. 2018	Dec. 2017 through Feb. 2018
	Retail & food services, total	**-0.2**	**2.2**	**0.7**	**2.8**	**-0.9**	**2.2**
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	-0.4	2.2	1.4	3.4	-1.1	2.3
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	-0.3	2.8	0.9	3.5	-0.2	2.7
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	-0.6	2.9	1.7	4.3	-0.3	2.9
	Retail	-0.2	2.1	0.8	2.6	-1.0	2.0
441	**Motor vehicle & parts dealers**	**0.7**	**2.4**	**-1.9**	**0.7**	**0.1**	**1.8**
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ...	0.7	2.3	-2.0	0.6	0.2	1.9
442	**Furniture & home furn. stores**	**-0.5**	**-2.3**	**-0.3**	**-1.5**	**-2.4**	**-1.7**
443	**Electronics & appliance stores**	**-1.3**	**-3.1**	**0.6**	**-1.7**	**-1.9**	**-2.2**
444	**Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers**...............................	**-4.4**	**1.4**	**4.4**	**9.8**	**1.2**	**4.0**
445	**Food & beverage stores**...........................	**-1.2**	**1.9**	**1.4**	**3.6**	**0.5**	**2.4**
4451	Grocery stores	-1.2	2.1	1.5	3.8	0.7	2.5
446	**Health & personal care stores**	**0.6**	**5.9**	**2.4**	**3.9**	**0.3**	**3.7**
447	**Gasoline stations**	**1.0**	**-3.2**	**-1.2**	**-4.0**	**-7.8**	**-2.8**
448	**Clothing & clothing accessories stores**	**-0.4**	**0.8**	**-0.6**	**1.9**	**-1.3**	**2.2**
451	**Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores**	**0.5**	**-8.8**	**5.2**	**-4.6**	**-3.2**	**-9.2**
452	**General merchandise stores**....................	**-0.3**	**1.2**	**0.5**	**1.9**	**-0.8**	**1.5**
4521	Department stores	-0.5	-4.0	-0.2	-3.5	-2.8	-3.5
453	**Miscellaneous store retailers**	**-1.6**	**-4.6**	**0.0**	**-5.8**	**-4.1**	**-4.4**
454	**Nonstore retailers**	**0.9**	**10.0**	**4.5**	**10.7**	**0.1**	**7.7**
722	**Food services & drinking places**	**0.1**	**3.6**	**0.0**	**4.4**	**-0.3**	**4.3**

(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 1, 2019. 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. 2019

(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	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.3
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.2
	Retail, total	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.2
441	**Motor vehicle & parts dealers**	1.1	0.9	0.4	0.9	0.0	0.4
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers	1.1	1.0	0.4	0.9	0.0	0.4
442	**Furniture & home furn. stores**.................	2.1	1.3	0.8	2.5	0.2	0.5
443	**Electronics & appliance stores**	1.3	0.6	0.6	0.8	-0.2	0.9
444	**Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers**....................................	1.5	0.9	0.5	1.2	0.0	0.4
445	**Food & beverage stores**...........................	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.2
4451	Grocery stores	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.1	0.2
446	**Health & personal care stores**	1.7	0.4	0.5	1.4	0.1	0.4
447	**Gasoline stations**	1.6	0.4	0.3	0.5	-0.1	0.6
448	**Clothing & clothing accessories stores**	1.9	0.6	0.7	1.2	0.4	0.8
451	**Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores**	3.2	0.8	0.9	1.3	-0.2	0.8
452	**General merchandise stores**...................	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.3	-0.1	0.3
4521	Department stores	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
453	**Miscellaneous store retailers**	3.5	2.6	1.4	2.0	-0.3	1.2
454	**Nonstore retailers**	1.2	0.6	0.3	1.0	0.2	0.5
722	**Food services & drinking places**	3.4	1.0	0.8	2.5	0.4	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 with exception to the following: Total (excl. gasoline stations), Total (excl. motor vehicles & parts & gasoline stations), Electronics & appliance stores, and Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores which are based on estimates from April 2018 to present until we have 12 months of revisions.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, April 1, 2019. 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>.