

Bulletin

U.S. Data

Advance April 2004 Retail Sales • Released May 13, 2004

THIS ISSUE SPONSORED BY IBM



SPRINGING SALES

T.S. Elliot said that April was the cruelest month. This year, retailers would disagree. Sales growth has rebounded in April and all of 2004 with tremendous vigor.

Retail sales in April expanded at the same pace compared to the first three months of 2004. April's retail sales matched the impressive first quarter growth rate of 9.2%.

A rebounding Consumer Confidence had many consumers thinking about their homes and gardens. Sales at Building Material and Garden Equipment Stores hammered away to gain almost 20% over last year. Investment into home equity through renovations and upkeep remains a top spending priority. An examination of the Revised Year-to-Date Sales Ending March for the complete listing of store categories revealed that it is primarily the big box retailers (18.1%) that are benefiting as opposed to the smaller, traditional hardware stores (4.0%). In addition, Furniture, Home Furnishings, Electronics, and Appliance Stores garnered 11.2% higher sales in April compared to last April. There was strong growth across all categories including Furniture Stores (12.3%), Home Furnishings Stores (12.1%), Household Appliance Stores (19.3%), Radio, TV and Other Electronics Stores (12.6%), and Computer and Software Stores (10.6%).

While consumers are continuing to invest in their homes, they are not forgetting about themselves. The Clothing and Accessories Stores, victims of a decline in fashion felt throughout the past few years, are experiencing a very good spring. Fun, colorful product lines coordinate well with rebounding consumer attitudes. Clothing and Accessories Stores sashayed to another month of double-digit growth (10.3%) bringing year-to-date growth to 10.8%. In addition, the growth is across a broad range of categories. Not only are Family Clothing Stores (12.3%), such as Guess, doing well, but Men's Clothing Stores (13.8%), Women's Clothing Stores (10.9%), Shoe Stores (7.9%), and Jewelry Stores (10.6%) are growing in step as well. Other interesting statistics include the price of gas. With prices well over \$3.00 in California and rising above the \$2.00 mark elsewhere, there is noticeable concern of the effect on consumer spending.

The negative growth experienced by the Discount Department Stores is more likely the result of store closures and reconfigurations to Superstores.

The Electronic Shopping and Mail-Order Houses category continues to punch up sales growing by 13.7% in the first quarter.

Despite the Internet, Book Stores were able to gain 4.7%.

RETAIL ON DEMAND

What is this new strategy? Learn how it can help you deliver a superior customer experience, operate stores more efficiently, and increase speed to market. Click here to receive an executive brochure.

[Retail On Demand](#)

RELEASE DATE OF THE NEXT NATIONAL RETAIL BULLETIN:

June 14, 2004

Please note:

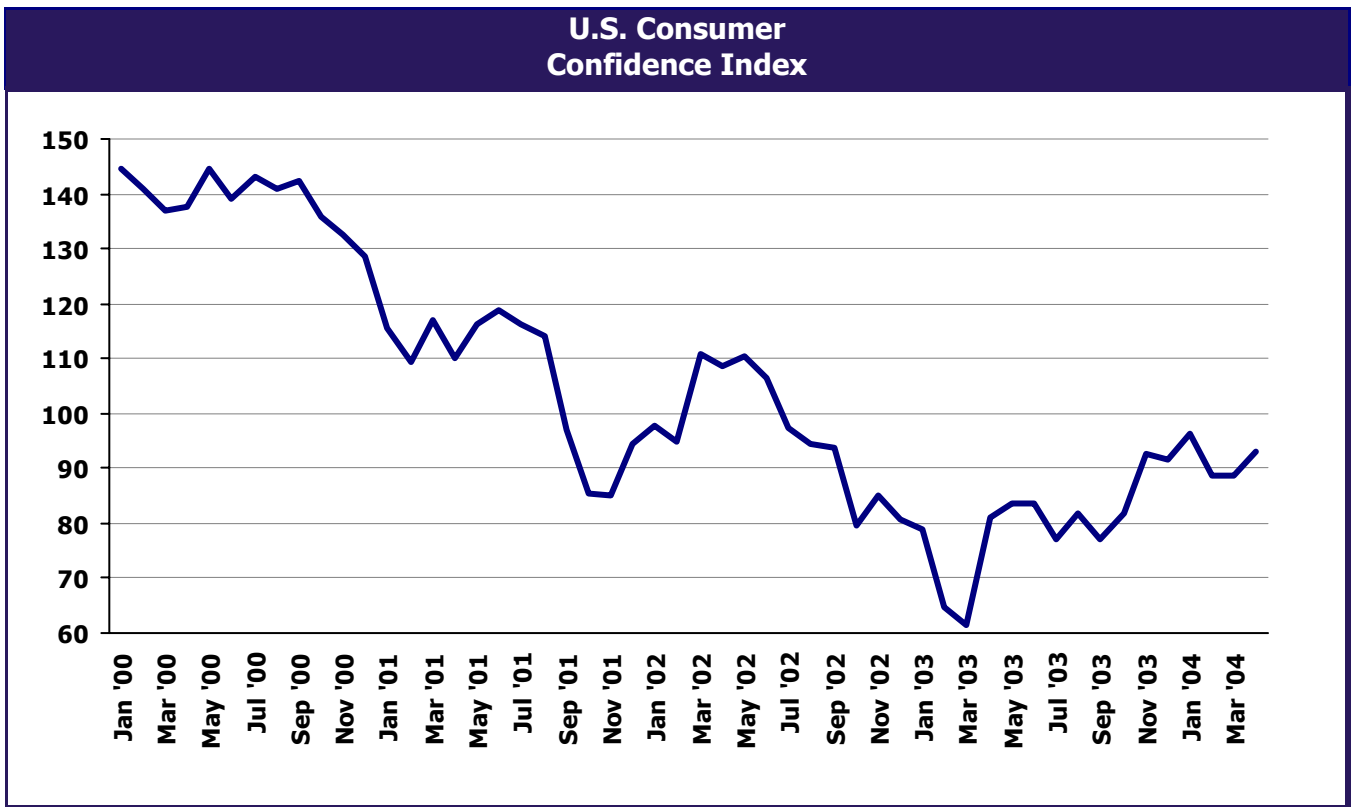
The J.C. Williams Group National Retail Bulletin compares the latest monthly release of "raw" (i.e., unadjusted for seasonality, holiday, and trading day) retail sales figures to those in the *same calendar month of the previous year*. The U.S. Census Bureau also reports seasonally adjusted sales that are compared to the *previous month within the current calendar year* to measure change in Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Although other sources use seasonally adjusted figures, J.C. Williams Group believes that using raw figures and making comparisons to the previous year's performance more accurately reflects the seasonality of the retail industry, and therefore, are more useful in analysis. Definitions can be found on the U.S. Census Website: www.census.gov.

Advance Sales for the Month of April	2004	2003	% Change
All Stores	333,473	305,435	9.2%
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	80,081	76,586	4.6%
Gasoline Stations	25,190	22,294	13.0%
Food and Beverage Stores	43,223	40,915	5.6%
Grocery Stores	38,800	36,993	4.9%
Health and Personal Care Stores	16,808	15,674	7.2%
Building Material and Garden Equipment Stores	34,916	29,129	19.9%
General Merchandise Stores	39,446	36,201	9.0%
Department Stores (excluding leased departments)	16,592	16,380	1.3%
Clothing and Accessories Stores	15,052	13,650	10.3%
Furniture, Home Furnishings, Electronics and Appliance Stores	15,479	13,915	11.2%
Furniture and Home Furnishing Stores	8,235	7,467	10.3%
Electronics and Appliance Stores	7,244	6,448	12.3%
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book and Music Stores	5,958	5,679	4.9%
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	8,678	8,148	6.5%
Nonstore Retailers	16,332	14,542	12.3%
Food Services and Drinking Places	32,310	28,702	12.6%
Year-to-Date Sales Ending April	2004	2003	% Change
All Stores	1,260,567	1,154,709	9.2%
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	301,857	282,017	7.0%
Gasoline Stations	93,828	86,638	8.3%
Food and Beverage Stores	168,690	160,676	5.0%
Grocery Stores	152,512	146,176	4.3%
Health and Personal Care Stores	66,658	61,673	8.1%
Building Material and Garden Equipment Stores	110,585	93,462	18.3%
General Merchandise Stores	149,299	136,788	9.1%
Department Stores (excluding leased departments)	62,050	61,153	1.5%
Clothing and Accessories Stores	54,863	49,521	10.8%
Furniture, Home Furnishings, Electronics and Appliance Stores	63,058	56,275	12.1%
Furniture and Home Furnishing Stores	32,456	29,151	11.3%
Electronics and Appliance Stores	30,602	27,124	12.8%
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book and Music Stores	24,029	22,803	5.4%
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	34,108	32,174	6.0%
Nonstore Retailers	69,017	62,139	11.1%
Food Services and Drinking Places	124,575	110,543	12.7%

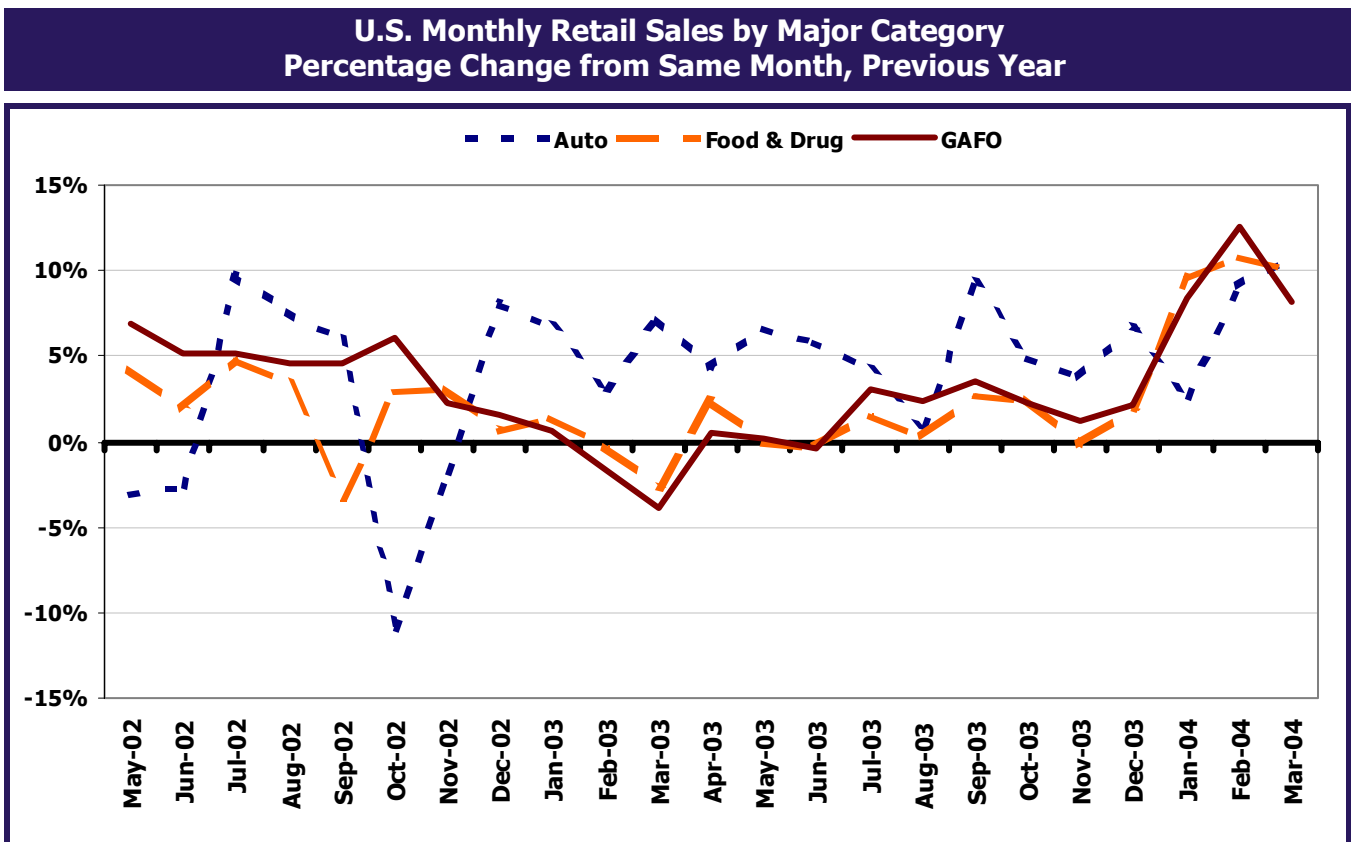
Source: US Census Bureau. All values are expressed in millions of US dollars and are not seasonally adjusted.

Revised Year-to-Date Sales Ending March	2004	2003	% Change
All Stores	927,094	849,274	9.2%
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	221,776	205,431	8.0%
Gasoline Stations	68,638	64,344	6.7%
Food and Beverage Stores	125,467	119,761	4.8%
Grocery Stores	113,712	109,183	4.1%
Beer, Wine and Liquor Stores	7,246	6,776	6.9%
Health and Personal Care Stores	49,850	45,999	8.4%
Pharmacies and Drug Stores	42,426	39,392	7.7%
Building Material and Garden Equipment Stores	75,669	64,333	17.6%
Building Material and Supplies Stores	68,310	57,838	18.1%
Hardware Stores	3,313	3,187	4.0%
GAFO (general merchandise, apparel, furniture, and other)	224,921	205,145	9.6%
General Merchandise Stores	109,853	100,587	9.2%
Department Stores (excluding leased departments)	45,458	44,773	1.5%
<i>Discount Department Stores (excluding leased departments)</i>	27,398	27,717	-1.2%
<i>Conventional and National Dept. Stores (ex. leased depts.)</i>	18,060	17,056	5.9%
Warehouse Clubs and Superstores	55,141	47,672	15.7%
All Other General Merchandise Stores	9,254	8,142	13.7%
Clothing and Accessories Stores	39,811	35,871	11.0%
Men's Clothing Stores	2,343	2,059	13.8%
Women's Clothing Stores	7,832	7,064	10.9%
Family Clothing Stores	13,466	11,988	12.3%
Shoe Stores	5,149	4,771	7.9%
Jewelry Stores	5,735	5,132	11.7%
Furniture, Home Furnishings, Electronics and Appliance Stores	47,579	42,360	12.3%
Furniture Stores	13,552	12,164	11.4%
Home Furnishing Stores	10,669	9,520	12.1%
Household Appliance Stores	3,501	2,934	19.3%
Radio, TV and Other Electronics Stores	12,395	11,012	12.6%
Computer and Software Stores	6,909	6,247	10.6%
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book and Music Stores	18,071	17,124	5.5%
Sporting Goods Stores	6,028	5,647	6.7%
Book Stores	4,373	4,178	4.7%
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	25,430	24,026	5.8%
Nonstore Retailers	52,685	47,597	10.7%
Electronic Shopping and Mail-Order Houses	31,498	27,940	12.7%
Fuel Dealers	11,058	10,675	3.6%
Food Services and Drinking Places	92,265	81,841	12.7%

Source: US Census Bureau. All values are expressed in millions of US dollars and are not seasonally adjusted.



Source: U.S. Conference Board



Source: U.S. Census Bureau