

# Bulletin

U.S. Data

Advance September 2003 Retail Sales • Released October 15, 2003

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## Wow!

Consumers kicked things up a notch in September with growth that would impress most skeptics. All Stores trounced last year's retail sales by 9.2% bringing year-to-date growth to 5.3%. There were some serious contenders for top retail category this month all vying for an enviable share of the consumer's wallet.

Building Material and Garden Equipment Stores mustered the largest gain of 15.3% compared to last September. Sales were buoyed partly by advance purchases to prepare for Hurricane Isabel's approach on the east coast. In addition, the building boom brought on by low interest rates continued to fuel housing growth.

Nonstore Retailers primarily made up of home fuel deliveries and Internet sales (any type of home delivery based retailer) gained 12.5%. While the relatively higher oil and gas prices affected positive growth results, it is also true that the Internet has now come into its own. This will be the first year that Amazon.com will realize genuine profit. In addition, other Internet retailers have experienced growing revenue streams.

Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers gained 12.0%. While sales have fluctuated throughout the year, there is a strong competitive force out there to encourage people to buy. While the results of the Big Three have not been as strong as desired, foreign imports remain extremely popular.

Despite a deflationary environment, Clothing and Accessories Stores experienced one of their best months in years. Retail sales climbed 10.0% compared to last September. Comp store growth figures affirmed this figure as many retailers, such as Gap, got their groove back. In addition, back-to-school sales were being carried forward from August. A touch of colder weather was good news for fashion-based mall retailers as consumers rushed to get fall and winter gear. In addition, while some tax rebate checks were delivered in the summer, many consumers had to wait until September, which helped to boost overall sales for the month.

Given the strong month, J.C. Williams Group anticipates that GAFO will trend at 5% for the year.

## WHOA!

While September 2003 was strong, it is important to remember that the last two years (September 2001 and September 2002) were very weak in terms of retail sales. The results of this September really bring things back to a normal level of overall growth.

## INTEGRATED MULTI-CHANNEL RETAILING: A ROADMAP TO THE FUTURE

Can multi-channel retailing really help drive long-term growth in sales, customer satisfaction, and profits? Find out what other retailers have learned, and how you can get the most from call centers, kiosks, Websites, and more. Click on the link to request this report, complements of IBM.

[Integrated Multi-channel Retailing](#)

## RELEASE DATE OF THE NEXT NATIONAL RETAIL BULLETIN:

November 13, 2003

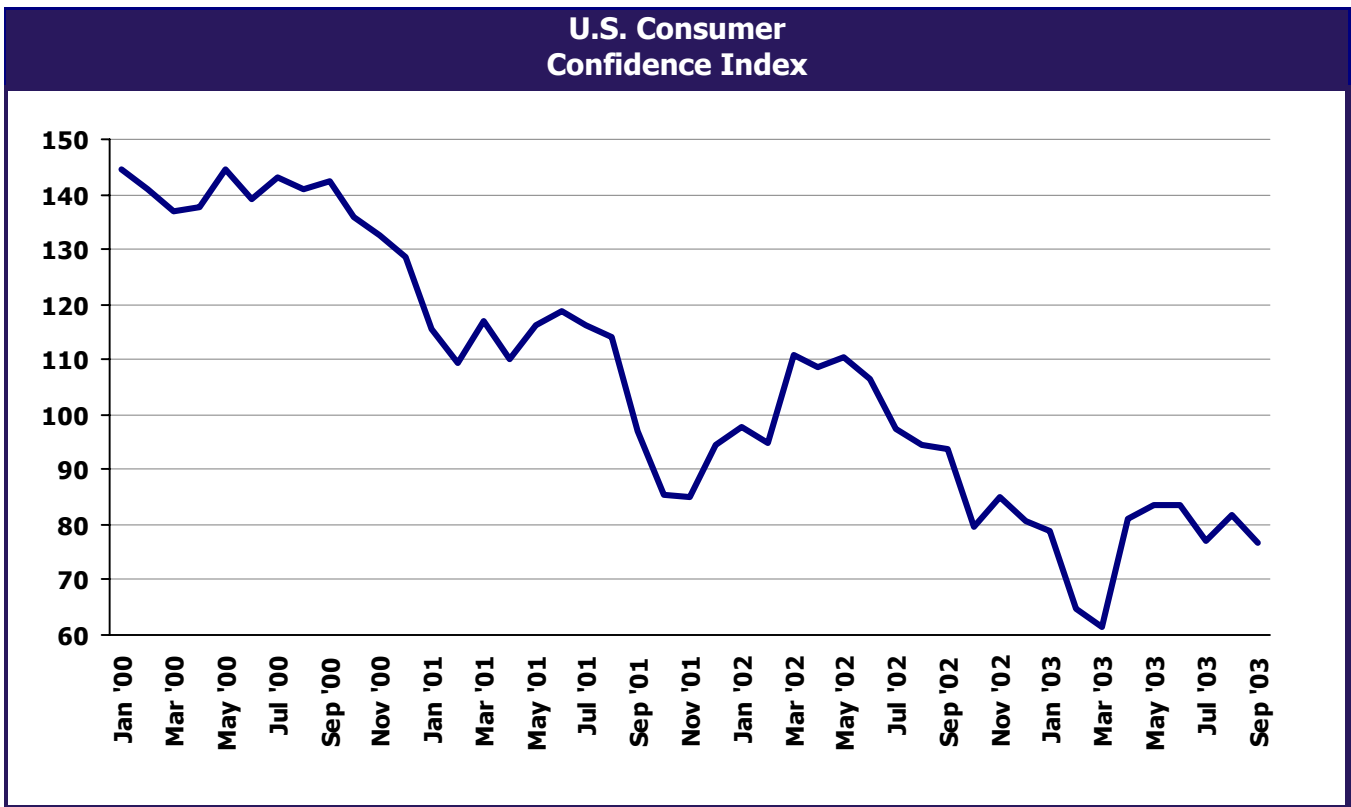
### Please note:

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:

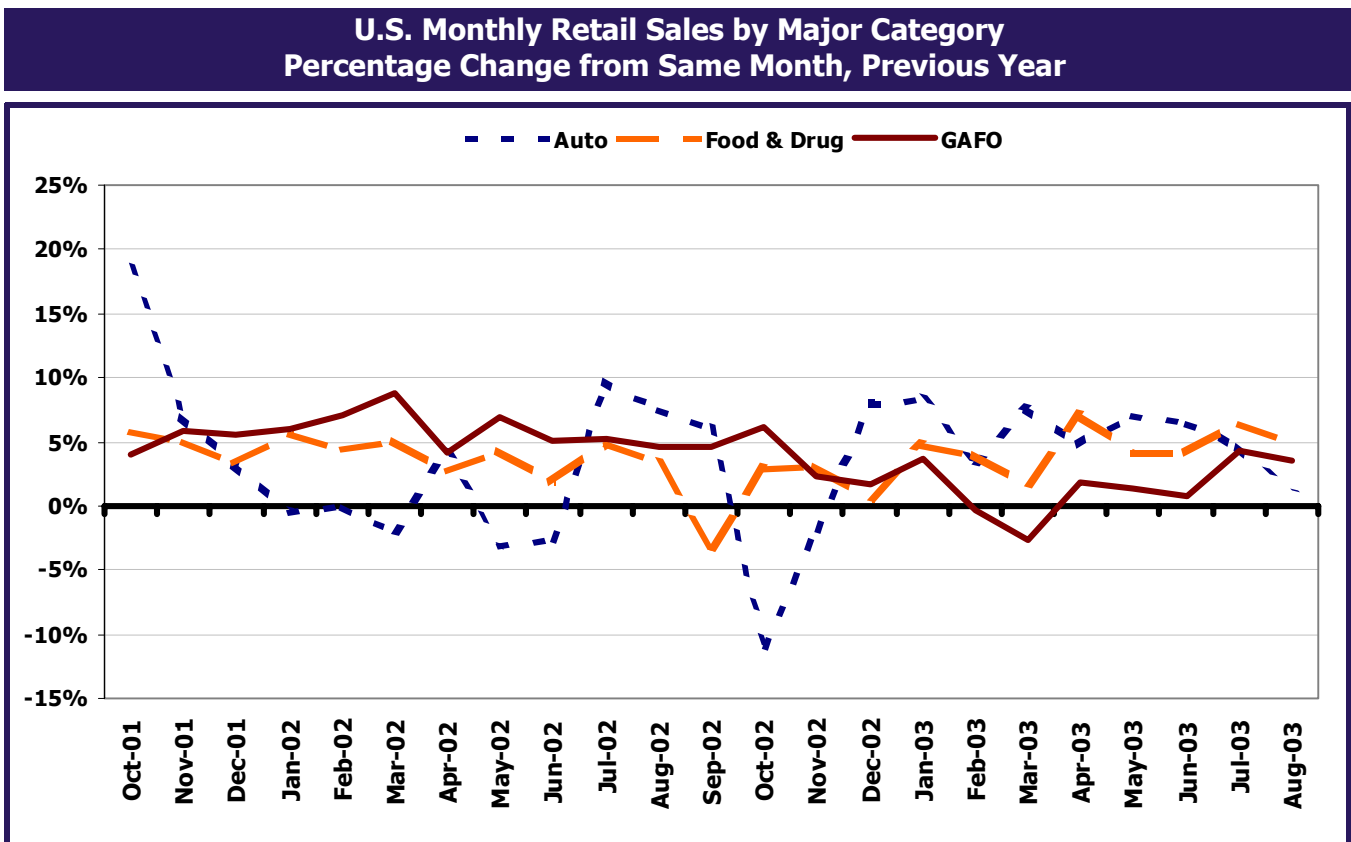
[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

<b>Advance Sales for the Month of September</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>% Change</b>
All Stores	309,877	283,660	9.2%
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	76,511	68,296	12.0%
Gasoline Stations	22,420	20,413	9.8%
Food and Beverage Stores	41,331	39,234	5.3%
Grocery Stores	37,264	35,546	4.8%
Health and Personal Care Stores	15,689	14,434	8.7%
Building Material and Garden Equipment Stores	28,550	24,760	15.3%
General Merchandise Stores	35,817	33,847	5.8%
Department Stores (excluding leased departments)	15,912	16,231	-2.0%
Clothing and Accessories Stores	13,664	12,418	10.0%
Furniture, Home Furnishings, Electronics and Appliance Stores	15,649	14,368	8.9%
Furniture and Home Furnishing Stores	8,192	7,547	8.5%
Electronics and Appliance Stores	7,457	6,821	9.3%
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book and Music Stores	6,465	6,322	2.3%
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	8,567	8,373	2.3%
Nonstore Retailers	15,769	14,014	12.5%
Food Services and Drinking Places	29,445	27,181	8.3%
<b>Year-to-Date Sales Ending September</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>% Change</b>
All Stores	2,771,258	2,631,403	5.3%
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	691,686	652,278	6.0%
Gasoline Stations	198,625	179,552	10.6%
Food and Beverage Stores	376,026	363,452	3.5%
Grocery Stores	340,195	329,276	3.3%
Health and Personal Care Stores	140,411	132,870	5.7%
Building Material and Garden Equipment Stores	242,405	228,660	6.0%
General Merchandise Stores	329,935	316,241	4.3%
Department Stores (excluding leased departments)	148,032	154,500	-4.2%
Clothing and Accessories Stores	120,708	116,823	3.3%
Furniture, Home Furnishings, Electronics and Appliance Stores	136,481	131,230	4.0%
Furniture and Home Furnishing Stores	71,573	68,620	4.3%
Electronics and Appliance Stores	64,912	62,610	3.7%
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book and Music Stores	55,597	55,738	-0.3%
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	76,000	76,114	-0.1%
Nonstore Retailers	136,804	127,796	7.0%
Food Services and Drinking Places	266,576	250,649	6.4%

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