

# Bulletin

U.S. Data

Advance November 2003 Retail Sales • Released December 11, 2003

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## NOT OPERATING ON ALL CYLINDERS – YET

While overall, Total Sales were off approximately one point compared to their year-to-date average, November came in as a relatively good month for some retailers. All Stores advanced 4.5% bringing year-to-date growth in at 5.4%. However, there isn't enough good joy to spread around to all retailers.

As a kick-off to the holiday season, Electronic and Appliance Stores got an earlier start out of the gate forcing many other retail categories to eat their dust. The category soared ahead 14.3% almost twice as fast as their nearest competitor.

Building Material and Garden Equipment Stores gained 7.7% and Health and Personal Care Stores pushed ahead 7.1% compared to last November. All of which, outperformed their year-to-date growth rates.

The other star on the block is Food Services and Drinking Places. Consumers got out of the hot kitchen, dropped those messy aprons, and increased spending by 8.0% over last November. Thanksgiving was not as big perhaps for home-cooked turkey compared to last year. Increased spending on eating and drinking is a very positive sign for the future health of the retail economy. Other indicators that consumers are feeling better about the economy include:

- A big increase in the Consumer Confidence Index
- A rise in sales of bigger ticket items such as building materials, furniture, and home furnishings

While, smaller than some other categories, Clothing and Accessories Stores should be proud of their 4.3% growth in November. This is relatively good growth given the mark down pressures that many clothing and accessory retailers face.

The Internet and mail order portion of the Nonstore Retailer growth has been growing steadily throughout the season and is projected to do well. Those retailers with a compelling multi-channel approach should fare well in capturing consumer's share of wallet.

However, the news is not win-win for everybody. As stated, some categories appear to be doing well and have gotten their inventories under control while others are struggling. Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book and Music Stores fell 4.3% compared to last November. To a large degree, Music Stores are bearing the brunt of this fallout due to the Internet and falling prices. Also, Food and Beverage Stores eked out small growth of 1.5% perhaps as a result of increased Food Services and Drinking Places sales growth.

Overall, the retail economy is moving ahead very well, but the holiday season is looking more disjointed - characterized by uneven growth rather than an across-the-board success for everyone.

## ATTRACT SHOPPERS AND KEEP THEM IN YOUR STORE WITH DIGITAL MEDIA SOLUTIONS

Learn about five key Digital Media retail solutions that can help you provide a more exciting shopping experience for your customers and increase your revenues while reducing inventory and personnel costs. Click on the link to request this report, complements of IBM. [Digital Media Solutions](#)

## RELEASE DATE OF THE NEXT NATIONAL RETAIL BULLETIN:

January 15, 2004

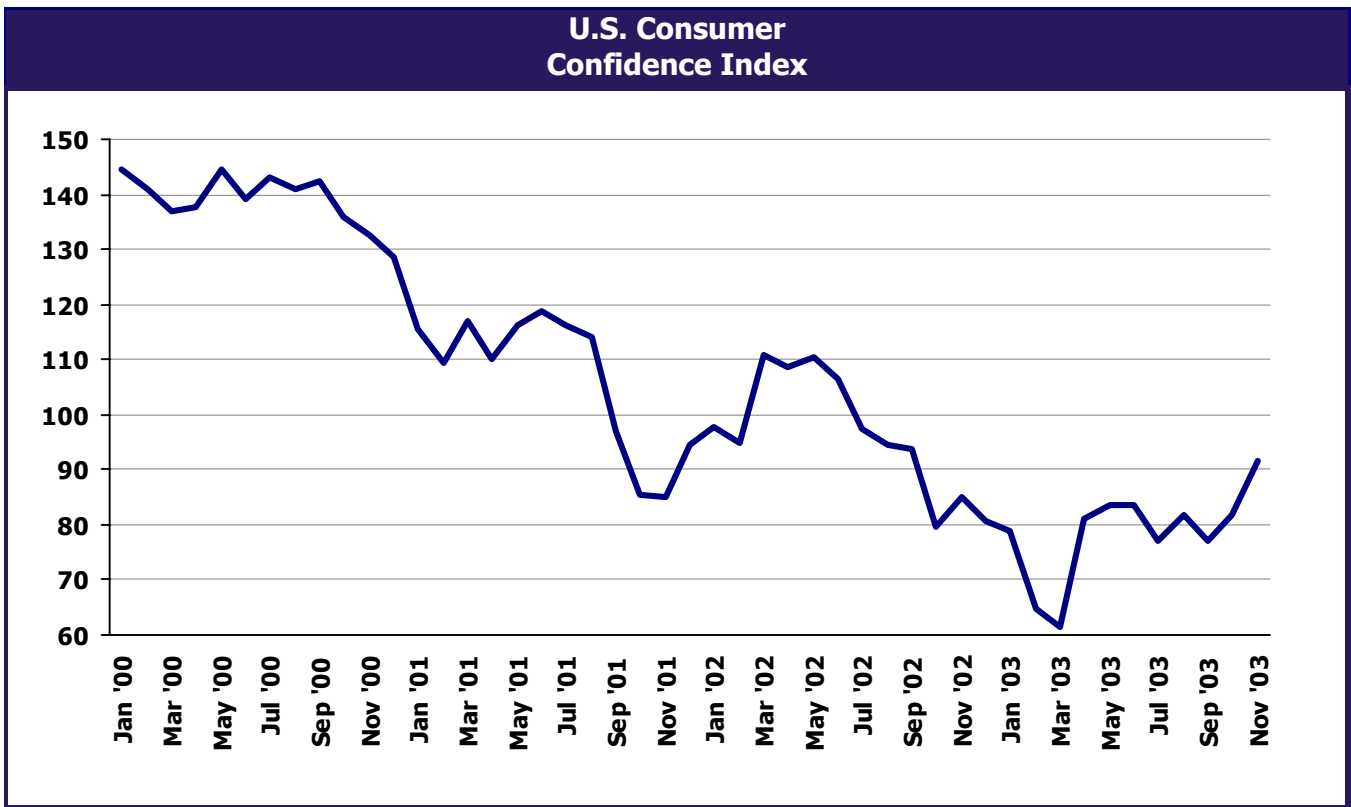
### Please note:

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:

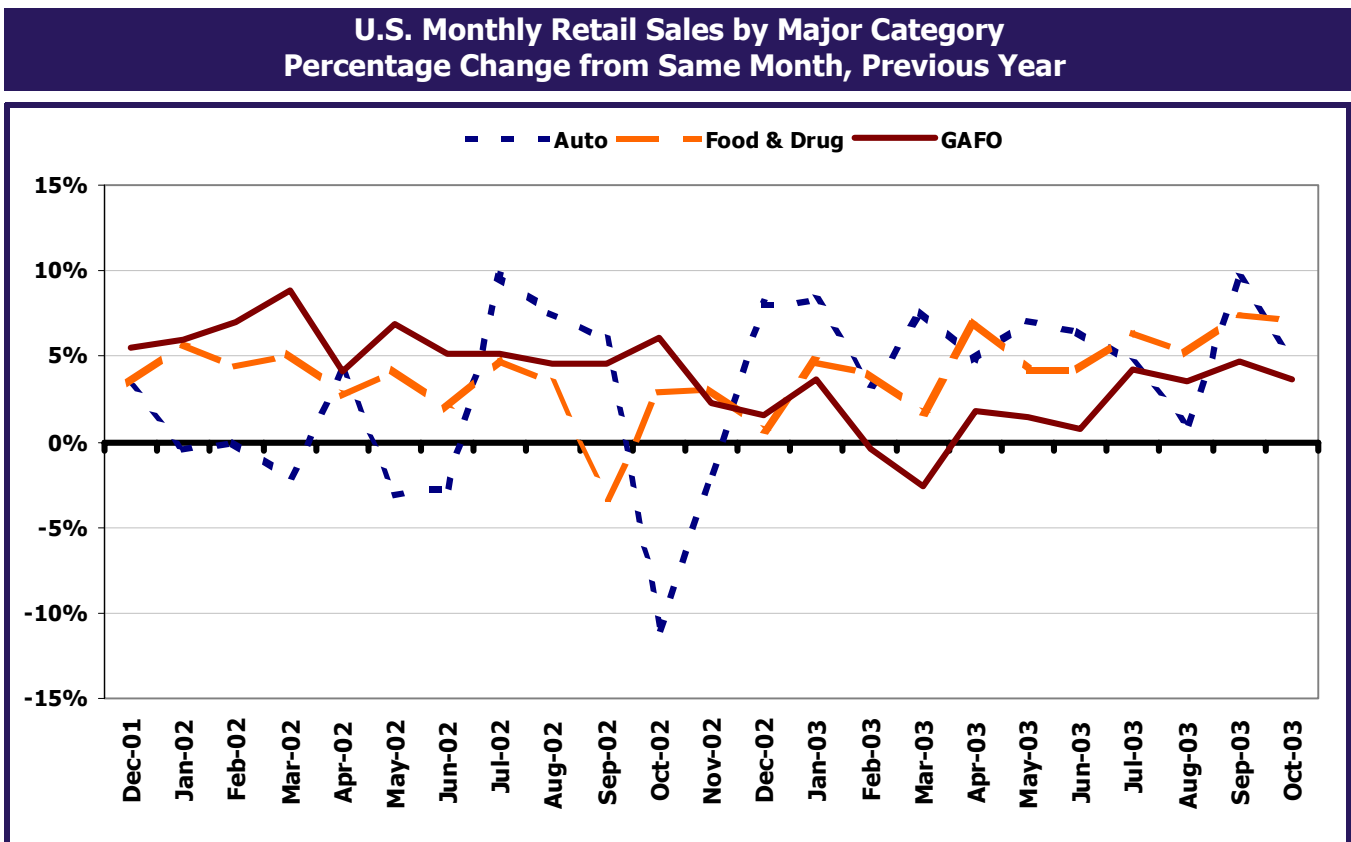
[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

<b>Advance Sales for the Month of November</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>% Change</b>
All Stores	315,101	301,391	4.5%
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	66,654	63,817	4.4%
Gasoline Stations	20,707	19,993	3.6%
Food and Beverage Stores	42,530	41,917	1.5%
Grocery Stores	38,181	37,784	1.1%
Health and Personal Care Stores	15,927	14,875	7.1%
Building Material and Garden Equipment Stores	25,609	23,771	7.7%
General Merchandise Stores	45,327	43,428	4.4%
Department Stores (excluding leased departments)	20,850	21,598	-3.5%
Clothing and Accessories Stores	16,498	15,816	4.3%
Furniture, Home Furnishings, Electronics and Appliance Stores	19,006	17,219	10.4%
Furniture and Home Furnishing Stores	9,507	8,909	6.7%
Electronics and Appliance Stores	9,499	8,310	14.3%
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book and Music Stores	7,563	7,901	-4.3%
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	8,436	8,567	-1.5%
Nonstore Retailers	17,265	16,710	3.3%
Food Services and Drinking Places	29,579	27,377	8.0%
<b>Year-to-Date Sales Ending November</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>% Change</b>
All Stores	3,405,165	3,231,567	5.4%
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	831,601	785,747	5.8%
Gasoline Stations	241,741	220,843	9.5%
Food and Beverage Stores	461,438	446,102	3.4%
Grocery Stores	416,911	403,972	3.2%
Health and Personal Care Stores	172,893	163,060	6.0%
Building Material and Garden Equipment Stores	297,428	279,118	6.6%
General Merchandise Stores	414,530	396,791	4.5%
Department Stores (excluding leased departments)	186,387	194,058	-4.0%
Clothing and Accessories Stores	151,743	146,578	3.5%
Furniture, Home Furnishings, Electronics and Appliance Stores	172,268	163,449	5.4%
Furniture and Home Furnishing Stores	89,969	85,497	5.2%
Electronics and Appliance Stores	82,299	77,952	5.6%
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book and Music Stores	69,144	69,772	-0.9%
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	93,420	93,563	-0.2%
Nonstore Retailers	171,636	160,569	6.9%
Food Services and Drinking Places	327,323	305,975	7.0%

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