

Bulletin

U.S. Data

Advance March 2010 Retail Sales • Released April 14, 2010

GETTING SUNNY, BUT NOT OUT OF THE WOODS JUST YET

As the weather heated up in March, so too did consumer confidence. Reaching comparable levels last seen over the December holiday season, consumer confidence settled in at 53 points for the month of March.

It came as no surprise that retail sales also picked up considerably, with all categories experiencing positive sales growth when compared to softer results from 2009. All Stores sales grew by 10% this month and 5.8% year-to-date.

While many categories are still not seeing the same gross sales figures from March 2008, General Merchandise Stores exceeded its 2008 results and a few other categories are on par. These categories and their March 2008 sales results in billions are: Clothing and Accessories Stores (\$17.8), Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book and Music Stores (\$7.0), General Merchandise Stores (\$49.7), Food and Beverage Stores (\$49.2) and Electronics and Appliance Stores (\$8.3).

Overall, Clothing and Accessories Stores have been trending upwards, gaining some momentum with March's unusually warmer weather in some parts of the country. Sales were up 9.9% this month, compared to the same time last year. Retailers providing monthly results, such as the Gap Inc. and Saks, also reported double-digit sales growth for their comparable same-store sales.

Retail sales of Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book and Music Stores went up considerably by 9.0%, boosted by the good weather.

General Merchandise Stores grew by 6.2% in March, while Department Stores (excluding leased departments) grew 5.2%.

Food and Beverage Stores and Grocery Stores continued to remain strong, growing its March retail sales, on average, by 5.6% over the same time last year. This category got some lift through Easter's early arrival in April this year.

Electronics and Appliance Stores picked up retail sales by 4.9% this month. The effects of government rebates for energy efficient home appliances, as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, will also play a role in further stimulating this category this year, along with the iPad and other electronic gadgets.

In other categories, Nonstore Retailers were the biggest winners for the month, with a growth in sales of 14.8%. Even afflicted Building Material and Garden Equipment Stores got some respite this month with sales growing by 3.3%. The growth can be attributed to the weather and pent-up demand; however, the sector still has some catching up to do to reach its March 2008 sales levels of \$27.1 billion, from its current \$24.3 billion in sales.

As consumer confidence picks up and jobs are added to the U.S. economy, retailers will be looking to snap up new consumer dollars, and those who made an investment during the downturn will hold high expectations for 2010. Join us next month to see which categories will get a return on their investment.

RELEASE DATE OF THE NEXT NATIONAL RETAIL BULLETIN:
May 14, 2010

Please note:

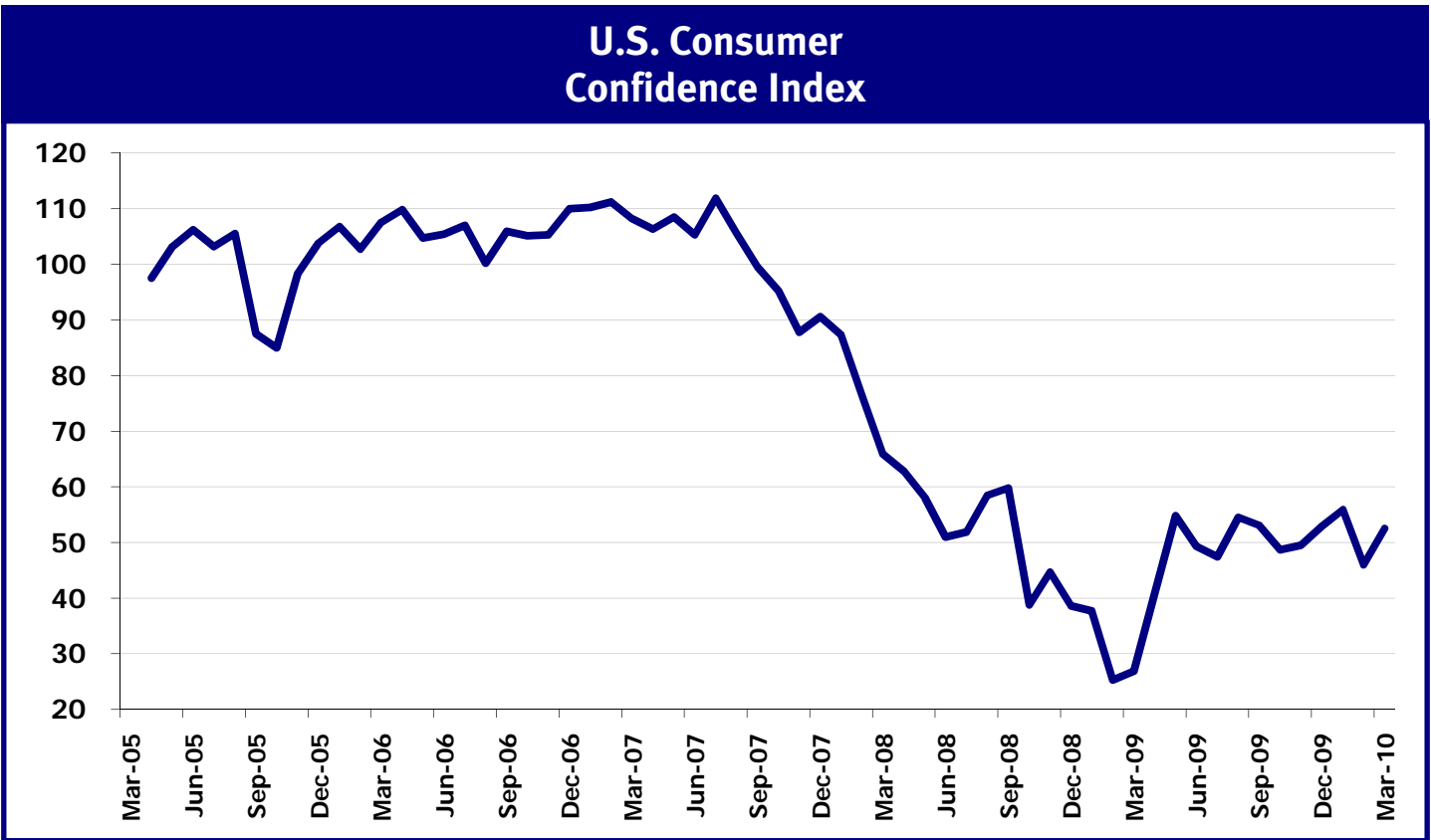
The J.C. Williams Group National Retail Bulletin compares the latest monthly release of "raw" (i.e., unadjusted for seasonality, holiday, and trading day) retail sales figures to those in the *same calendar month of the previous year*. The U.S. Census Bureau also reports seasonally adjusted sales that 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.

Retail Sales by Store Category

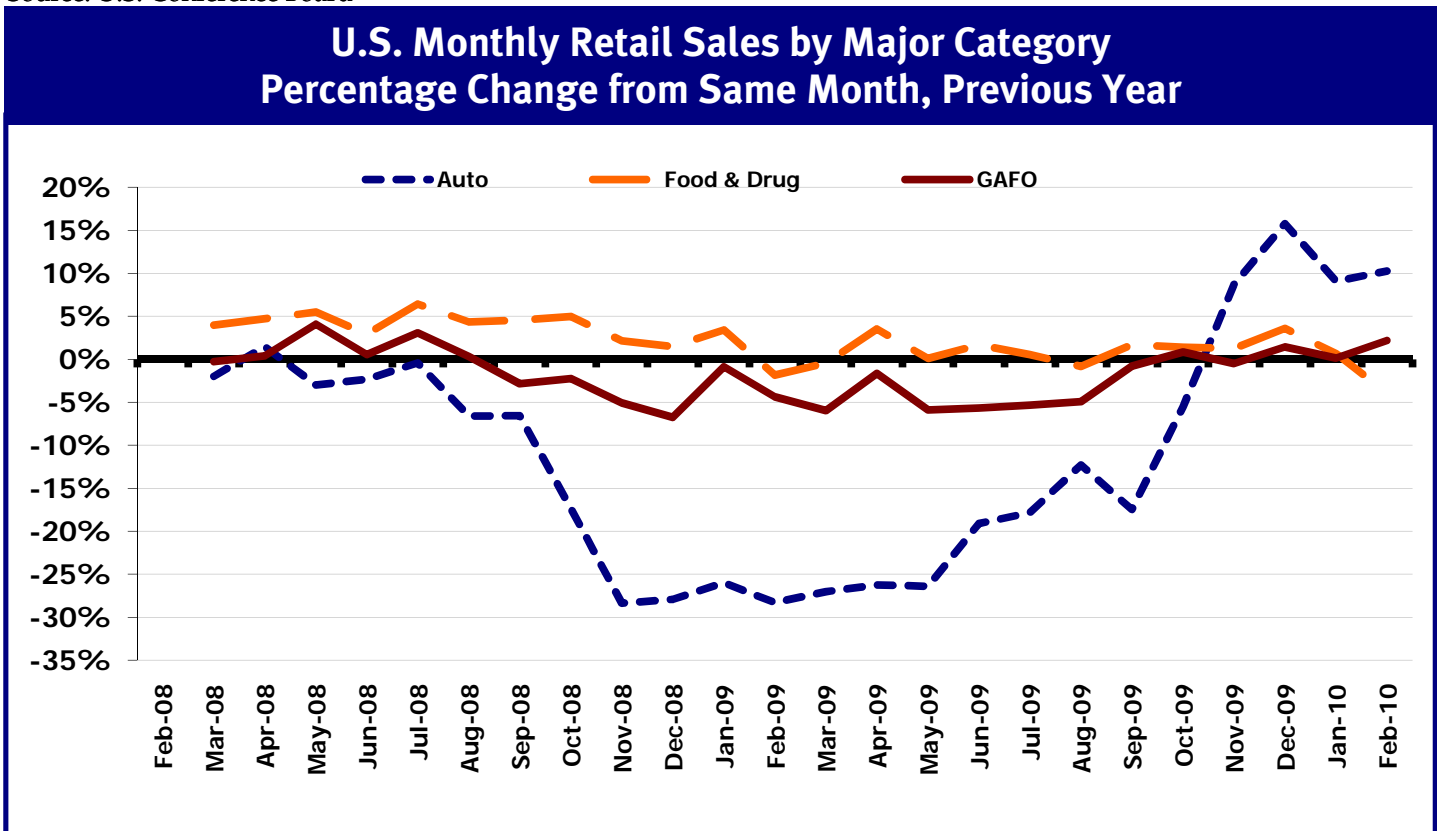
Sales for the Month of March	2010	2009	2010/2009
All Stores	367,616	334,149	10.0%
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	69,861	59,149	18.1%
Gasoline Stations	33,716	26,342	28.0%
Food and Beverage Stores	49,954	47,273	5.7%
Grocery Stores	44,830	42,501	5.5%
Health and Personal Care Stores	22,535	21,531	4.7%
Building Material and Garden Equipment Stores	24,251	23,469	3.3%
General Merchandise Stores	49,667	46,753	6.2%
Department Stores (excluding leased departments)	15,050	14,306	5.2%
Clothing and Accessories Stores	17,457	15,890	9.9%
Furniture, Home Furnishings, Electronics and Appliance Stores	16,412	15,530	5.7%
Furniture and Home Furnishing Stores	8,097	7,601	6.5%
Electronics and Appliance Stores	8,315	7,929	4.9%
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book and Music Stores	7,015	6,433	9.0%
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	9,332	9,072	2.9%
Nonstore Retailers	27,637	24,078	14.8%
Food Services and Drinking Places	39,779	38,629	3.0%

Year to Date Sales Ending March	2010	2009	2010/2009
All Stores	1,007,359	951,798	5.8%
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	174,534	162,001	7.7%
Gasoline Stations	95,005	74,824	27.0%
Food and Beverage Stores	144,511	140,103	3.1%
Grocery Stores	130,398	126,478	3.1%
Health and Personal Care Stores	63,830	62,038	2.9%
Building Material and Garden Equipment Stores	58,905	60,844	-3.2%
General Merchandise Stores	139,413	133,817	4.2%
Department Stores (excluding leased departments)	40,713	40,086	1.6%
Clothing and Accessories Stores	46,154	44,425	3.9%
Furniture, Home Furnishings, Electronics and Appliance Stores	47,229	47,299	-0.1%
Furniture and Home Furnishing Stores	22,466	22,248	1.0%
Electronics and Appliance Stores	24,763	25,051	-1.1%
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book and Music Stores	20,178	19,257	4.8%
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	26,169	25,973	0.8%
Nonstore Retailers	80,115	71,356	12.3%
Food Services and Drinking Places	111,316	109,861	1.3%

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