



# The Daily

Statistics Canada

**Monday, September 21, 1998**

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## MAJOR RELEASES

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- **Retail Trade, July 1998** 2  
In July, retail sales rebounded 1.4% to \$20.7 billion, following a 1.8% decline in June. July's advance was broadly based with all sectors posting advances.

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## MAJOR RELEASES

### Retail Trade

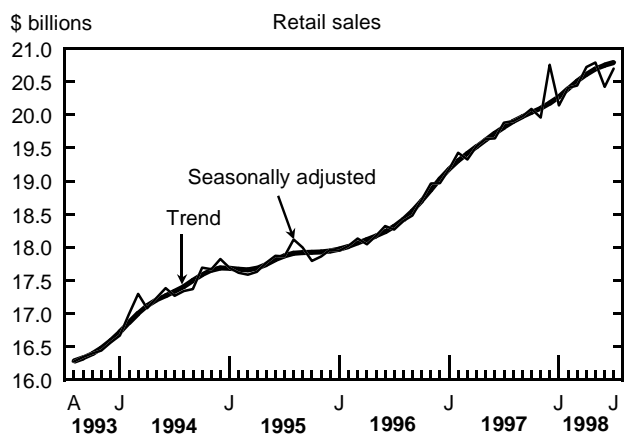
July 1998

Retail sales rebounded in July, advancing 1.4% to \$20.7 billion. This followed a 1.8% decline in June. Since the start of 1998, monthly sales have declined only in January and June. The level of retail sales in July was 4.1% higher compared with the same month in 1997. While sales have generally been rising since the spring of 1995, sales in recent months have not kept pace with the blistering gains that were posted from the fall of 1996 to the middle of 1997.

July's advance was broadly based with all sectors posting advances. With the exception of Newfoundland, all provinces and territories posted gains.

Increases in retail sales since the fall of 1996 have coincided with significant advances in consumer credit. While employment had been posting gains from February 1997 to the start of 1998, average weekly earnings have not kept pace. Advances in interest rates may make the financing of big ticket items more difficult. In addition, higher interest rates may lead to an increase in savings by consumers and a reduction in current consumption. Also, with July's decline in equity markets, consumers may put off purchases to replace lost wealth.

Sales rebound in July



#### All sectors posted higher sales

All retail sectors posted advances in July. General merchandise and clothing stores posted the largest advances, partially offsetting the large declines that these sectors experienced in June.

General merchandise stores posted the largest increase (+4.3%). This followed a 4.7% decline in June. Within the general merchandise sector, department stores ended three consecutive months of declining sales with a 5.4% increase in sales. The declines in sales observed in recent months coincided with store closings as restructuring occurred in the industry. After strong advances from the middle of 1996 to the spring of 1998, sales in general merchandise stores have been flat.

With a 3.3% increase in sales in July, clothing stores regained most of the ground they lost in June (-3.6%). Men's clothing stores and other clothing stores (which includes family clothing stores) saw increases in sales that were able to offset June's losses. Shoe stores and women's clothing stores were all unable to make up for the declines that they had suffered in June. Over the course of 1998, only the "other clothing" stores have generally been posting advances. Sales in clothing stores have been flat since the spring of 1998 after about a year of increases.

Consumers continued to spend in furniture stores. Furniture stores saw a 2.5% increase in sales in July. The furniture sector was the only sector to post an increase in sales in June (+0.4%). Sales in furniture stores in July were 11.0% higher than the same month in 1997 — the highest year-over-year increase among all retail sectors. Sales in furniture stores have generally posted strong advances since the spring of 1996.

Sales in the automotive sector advanced by 0.9% in July on the strength of gasoline service stations (+1.5%) and automotive parts, accessories and service stores (+3.3%). Sales by motor and recreational vehicle dealers rose by 0.2% in July. Sales by these vehicle dealers were only 3.6% higher than the same month in 1997. This was the lowest year-over-year increase in sales by motor vehicle dealers since December 1995. Strong gains in sales by motor vehicle dealers from the fall of 1996 to the spring of 1997 were largely responsible for the advances in retail sales during this period. Since the spring of 1997, sales in the automotive sector have been advancing at a slower rate than had been posted throughout most of 1996.

#### Almost all provinces advance

Almost all provinces and territories posted advances in retail sales in July. Only Newfoundlanders spent less in stores in July (-1.2%). Alberta (+3.2%), Quebec (+2.3%) and Nova Scotia (+1.9%) posted the largest gains.

Retail sales in Alberta rose by 3.2% in July as all retail sectors apart from drug and furniture stores posted increases. Since the fall of 1997, weaker advances in the automotive sector have dampened increases in overall sales in Alberta. Sales in Alberta have generally been rising since the end of 1995, with a period of strong advances from the fall of 1996 to the spring of 1997.

The 2.3% increase in retail sales in Quebec was the first advance after four consecutive months of declines. Retail sales had posted a period of strong increases from the middle of 1996 to the start of 1997. With dampening sales in the auto sector since early 1997, there has been little upwards movement in retail sales in Quebec.

Despite July's 1.9% advance in retail sales in Nova Scotia, retail sales have been rising slowly since the summer of 1997. Over this period, only furniture stores have posted strong gains.

Newfoundland was the only province to see declining retail sales in July (-1.2%). Retail sales in Newfoundland have generally been rising slowly since the summer of 1997.

#### **Related indicators**

Total employment rose by 0.3% in August. The number of housing starts rose by 11.7% in August. The value of the Canadian dollar, relative to the U.S. dollar continued to fall. Sources in the automotive industry suggest that the number of new motor vehicles sold in August decreased.

#### **Available on CANSIM: matrices 2299, 2398-2417 and 2420.**

The July issue of *Retail trade* (63-005-XPB, \$21/\$206) will be available shortly. See *How to order publications*.

For further information, contact Louise G  n  reux (613-951-3549; [logener@statcan.ca](mailto:logener@statcan.ca)). For analytical information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality of this release, contact Greg Peterson (613-951-3592; [petegre@statcan.ca](mailto:petegre@statcan.ca)), Retail Trade Section, Distributive Trades Division. □

## Retail sales

Trade group	July 1997	April 1998 <sup>r</sup>	May 1998 <sup>r</sup>	June 1998 <sup>r</sup>	July 1998 <sup>p</sup>	June 1998 to July 1998	July 1997 to July 1998
	seasonally adjusted						
	\$ millions					% change	
<b>Food</b>	<b>4,653</b>	<b>4,822</b>	<b>4,844</b>	<b>4,841</b>	<b>4,848</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>4.2</b>
Supermarkets and grocery stores	4,298	4,462	4,485	4,480	4,485	0.1	4.4
All other food stores	355	360	359	361	363	0.6	2.2
<b>Drug and patent medicine stores</b>	<b>1,026</b>	<b>1,086</b>	<b>1,106</b>	<b>1,091</b>	<b>1,104</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>7.7</b>
<b>Clothing</b>	<b>1,113</b>	<b>1,165</b>	<b>1,172</b>	<b>1,130</b>	<b>1,167</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>4.9</b>
Shoe stores	136	146	149	134	140	4.6	3.6
Men's clothing stores	133	130	128	126	128	2.2	-3.3
Women's clothing stores	360	384	377	356	370	4.1	2.9
Other clothing stores	484	505	517	514	528	2.7	9.0
<b>Furniture</b>	<b>964</b>	<b>1,021</b>	<b>1,041</b>	<b>1,045</b>	<b>1,071</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>11.0</b>
Household furniture and appliance stores	776	817	843	844	871	3.2	12.3
Household furnishings stores	189	203	198	201	200	-0.7	5.7
<b>Automotive</b>	<b>7,785</b>	<b>8,022</b>	<b>8,021</b>	<b>7,875</b>	<b>7,945</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>2.1</b>
Motor vehicle and recreational vehicle dealers	5,272	5,478	5,498	5,450	5,463	0.2	3.6
Gasoline service stations	1,317	1,291	1,303	1,263	1,282	1.5	-2.7
Automotive parts, accessories and services	1,195	1,253	1,219	1,162	1,201	3.3	0.5
<b>General merchandise stores</b>	<b>2,210</b>	<b>2,361</b>	<b>2,363</b>	<b>2,251</b>	<b>2,347</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>6.2</b>
<b>Retail stores not elsewhere classified</b>	<b>2,127</b>	<b>2,241</b>	<b>2,239</b>	<b>2,184</b>	<b>2,213</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>4.0</b>
Other semi-durable goods stores	692	684	686	650	669	2.9	-3.4
Other durable goods stores	510	569	576	572	578	1.0	13.4
All other retail stores not elsewhere classified	925	988	978	962	966	0.4	4.4
<b>Total, retail sales</b>	<b>19,878</b>	<b>20,718</b>	<b>20,785</b>	<b>20,417</b>	<b>20,695</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>4.1</b>
<b>Total excluding motor vehicle and recreational vehicle dealers</b>	<b>14,605</b>	<b>15,240</b>	<b>15,287</b>	<b>14,967</b>	<b>15,232</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>4.3</b>
<b>Provinces and territories</b>							
Newfoundland	316	312	321	320	316	-1.2	0.1
Prince Edward Island	87	87	88	88	88	0.4	1.6
Nova Scotia	642	629	627	626	638	1.9	-0.7
New Brunswick	457	504	501	494	501	1.3	9.6
Quebec	4,695	4,791	4,756	4,644	4,752	2.3	1.2
Ontario	7,251	7,785	7,920	7,726	7,773	0.6	7.2
Manitoba	715	743	720	731	731	0.1	2.3
Saskatchewan	637	638	630	627	637	1.6	0.0
Alberta	2,230	2,353	2,373	2,322	2,396	3.2	7.4
British Columbia	2,782	2,805	2,783	2,773	2,794	0.8	0.5
Yukon	25	25	25	26	26	2.6	5.2
Northwest Territories	41	46	42	40	43	6.0	3.3

<sup>p</sup> Preliminary figures.

<sup>r</sup> Revised figures.

## Retail sales

Trade group	July 1997	June 1998 <sup>r</sup>	July 1998 <sup>p</sup>	July 1997 to July 1998
	unadjusted			
	\$ millions			% change
<b>Food</b>	<b>4,886</b>	<b>4,832</b>	<b>5,195</b>	<b>6.3</b>
Supermarkets and grocery stores	4,513	4,460	4,811	6.6
All other food stores	373	372	385	3.2
<b>Drug and patent medicine stores</b>	<b>996</b>	<b>1,065</b>	<b>1,089</b>	<b>9.4</b>
<b>Clothing</b>	<b>1,011</b>	<b>1,118</b>	<b>1,073</b>	<b>6.2</b>
Shoe stores	124	146	131	5.7
Men's clothing stores	114	132	112	-2.4
Women's clothing stores	349	363	359	3.0
Other clothing stores	424	478	471	11.2
<b>Furniture</b>	<b>957</b>	<b>1,030</b>	<b>1,073</b>	<b>12.1</b>
Household furniture and appliance stores	760	816	864	13.8
Household furnishings stores	197	214	209	5.8
<b>Automotive</b>	<b>8,520</b>	<b>9,280</b>	<b>8,676</b>	<b>1.8</b>
Motor vehicle and recreational vehicle dealers	5,764	6,639	5,928	2.8
Gasoline service stations	1,456	1,338	1,420	-2.5
Automotive parts, accessories and services	1,301	1,303	1,329	2.2
<b>General merchandise stores</b>	<b>2,025</b>	<b>2,161</b>	<b>2,183</b>	<b>7.8</b>
<b>Retail stores not elsewhere classified</b>	<b>2,273</b>	<b>2,262</b>	<b>2,413</b>	<b>6.1</b>
Other semi-durable goods stores	724	707	697	-3.7
Other durable goods stores	513	556	594	15.8
All other retail stores not elsewhere classified	1,036	999	1,121	8.2
<b>Total, retail sales</b>	<b>20,668</b>	<b>21,747</b>	<b>21,703</b>	<b>5.0</b>
<b>Total excluding motor vehicle and recreational vehicle dealers</b>	<b>14,904</b>	<b>15,108</b>	<b>15,775</b>	<b>5.8</b>
<b>Provinces and territories</b>				
Newfoundland	340	342	343	0.9
Prince Edward Island	102	97	104	2.0
Nova Scotia	676	668	686	1.5
New Brunswick	486	535	535	10.2
Quebec	4,959	4,992	5,064	2.1
Ontario	7,431	8,256	8,060	8.5
Manitoba	731	773	757	3.7
Saskatchewan	658	662	662	0.6
Alberta	2,276	2,471	2,459	8.1
British Columbia	2,934	2,877	2,592	0.6
Yukon	31	31	33	6.9
Northwest Territories	45	43	47	3.9

<sup>r</sup> Revised figures.

<sup>p</sup> Preliminary figures.



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## OTHER RELEASES

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### Crushing statistics

August 1998

Oilseed processors crushed 223 067 metric tonnes of canola in August. Oil production totalled 93 165 tonnes while meal production amounted to 137 383 tonnes.

The August crush volume increased 7.5% over the August 1997 crush of 207 588 tonnes.

**Available on CANSIM: matrix 5687.**

The August issue of *Cereals and oilseeds review* (22-007-XPB, \$15/\$149) will be released in early November. See *How to order publications*.

For further information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality of this release, contact Rick Burroughs (613-951-2890; [burriric@statcan.ca](mailto:burriric@statcan.ca)) or Les Macartney (613-951-8714; [macales@statcan.ca](mailto:macales@statcan.ca)), Grain Marketing Unit, Agriculture Division. ■

### Deliveries of major grains

August 1998

Data on August grain deliveries are now available.

**Available on CANSIM: matrix 976-981.**

The delivery data are contained in the August issue of *Cereals and oilseeds review* (22-007-XPB, \$15/\$149), which will be available in November. See *How to order publications*.

For further information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality of this release, contact Rick Burroughs (613-951-2890; [burriric@statcan.ca](mailto:burriric@statcan.ca)) or Susan Anderson (613-951-3859), Grain Marketing Unit, Agriculture Division. ■

### Domestic travel

First quarter 1998

Canadians made 26.1 million trips within Canada in the first quarter and spent \$3.4 billion while on these trips. Compared with the same quarter last year the number of trips was up 6% while expenditures increased 16%.

For further information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality of this release, contact Lizette Gervais-Simard (613-951-1672; fax: 613-951-2909; [gervliz@statcan.ca](mailto:gervliz@statcan.ca)), Travel, Tourism and Recreation Section. For data requests, contact Michèle Lanoue (613-951-6321; fax: 613-951-2909; [lanomic@statcan.ca](mailto:lanomic@statcan.ca)), Travel, Tourism and Recreation Section. ■

## PUBLICATIONS RELEASED

**Monthly Survey of Manufacturing, July 1998**  
**Catalogue number 31-001-XPB**  
(Canada: \$20/\$196; outside Canada: US\$20/US\$196).

**Retail chain and department stores, 1996**  
**Catalogue number 63-210-XPB**  
(Canada: \$39; outside Canada: US\$39).

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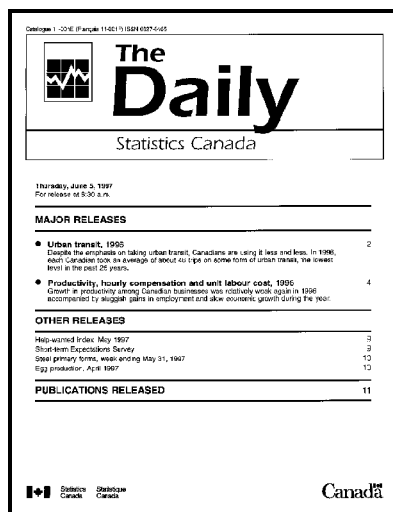
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