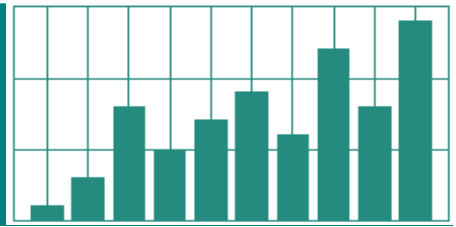


Weekly Chain Store Sales Snapshot



The Retail Economist, LLC

FOR PUBLIC RELEASE AT 7:45 AM (ET)

January 6, 2015

NOTICE: The Weekly Chain-Store Sales Index is jointly compiled by Goldman Sachs and The Retail Economist, LLC. This is the successor index to the ICSC-GS index. Subscribe at TheRetailEconomist.com.

Latest Week's Sales Snapshot

Week-to-Week Change:	-3.8% from prior week
Year-over-Year Change for the Week:	3.9% from prior year

The **Weekly Chain-Store Sales Index** tumbled by 3.8% for the latest week ending on January 3 as the post-holiday period was characterized by gift-card redemption (following a record 24.6% share of total holiday-gift expenditures in the form of a gift card), returns, and bargain hunting. Despite the sequential week's drop, sales growth on a year-over-year basis rose by a solid 3.9% during the past week compared with its comparable period of 2013. That was the strongest year-over-year pace since the week of October 4, 2014 when sales rose by a similar amount. This week's performance was led by a very strong gain at dollar stores--which may be getting a lift from the plunging gasoline prices that has freed up discretionary purchasing power for consumers. Following the strength at dollar stores and over the last week, the other segments showing strong performance (in order of strength) were department stores, discounters, apparel stores, drug stores, wholesale clubs, electronic stores, and the online-only retailers. Meanwhile, grocery store business was weak, according to the weekly consumer tracking survey. According to **Weather Trends International (WTI)**, the U.S. average national temperature for the week ending Saturday was 1.1°F warmer than last year, but 2.1°F colder than its long-term normal average (see www.wt360.com). Despite the averages, WTI observed that weather was especially cold in the Southwest, noting that "a compact Arctic storm traveled straight south into the desert Southwest bringing the coldest end of December in more than 24 years to much of the West. Heavy snow blanketed the mountains with 12-24 inches, while even elevations as low as 1500 feet very near San Diego and Phoenix saw accumulating snow. [However,] generally cold weather with a lack of significant snowfall across most areas in the East will have resulted in another week of favorable store traffic." Consumer budgets continued to benefit from lower gasoline prices, according to the **U.S. Energy Information Administration**. The nationwide average price of a gallon of regular-grade unleaded gasoline at the pump on January 5 was down 33.6% from the same week of the prior year. Regular-grade gasoline prices were the lowest since May 4, 2009 (\$2.078). Since the end of June, the average price of regular-grade gasoline has receded by \$1.49 per gallon and saved consumers about \$95 billion (at an annual rate).

Expectations for December 2014

Total U.S. monthly sales for the four-week period ending November 29, 2014 were \$21.4 billion, a 6.2% increase from comparable period of the prior year, based on a tally compiled by **The Retail Economist, LLC** (www.TheRetailEconomist.com) from a small sample of publicly-reporting firms. Comparable-store sales for the same period increased by 5.0%. During the third fiscal quarter, those monthly reporting firms posted an aggregate comparable-store sales gain of 4.7% from the prior year's quarter. Overall, December same-store sales growth is expected to increase in the 4%-4.5% range, on a year-over-year basis, as compared with growth of 3.4% in December 2013. **The majority of company's reporting monthly sales will be released on January 8, 2015.**

Fiscal Month Sales Tracking (Based on Weekly Index)

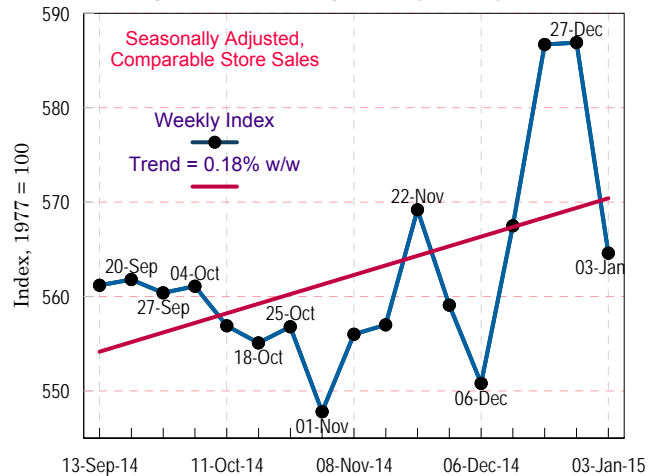
Year/Year % Change Current Fiscal Month (MTD) =	2.7%
Month/Month % Change Current Fiscal Month (MTD)	2.0%

Selected Monthly Comparable-Store Sales Tracking Estimates

COST = +4.0%	WAG = +4.5%
GPS = +2.0%	LB = +5.0%

r=revised; (-) or (+) indicate the direction of the change in monthly sales expectations from the previous week.

Chart 1
U.S. Weekly Chain-Store Sales Index
Through the Week Ending Saturday January 3, 2015



Week Ending	Index 1977=100	Year/Year Chg.	Weekly Chg.
03-Jan-15	564.6	3.9%	-3.8%
27-Dec-14	586.9	2.2%	0.0%
20-Dec-14	586.7	3.1%	3.4%
13-Dec-14	567.5	1.1%	3.0%
06-Dec-14	550.8	2.9%	-1.5%
29-Nov-14	559.1	2.8%	-1.8%
22-Nov-14	569.2	1.7%	2.2%
15-Nov-14	557.0	2.2%	0.2%
08-Nov-14	556.0	2.1%	1.5%

Chart 2

Monthly Retail Chain Store Index January 2003 - December 2014



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