WEEKLY ECONOMIC DIGEST



JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE UNITED STATES CONGRESS SENATOR ROBERT P. CASEY, JR., CHAIRMAN

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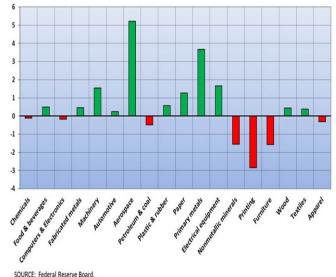
Retail Sales Rose Modestly While Production Edged Down in November

- Retail sales rose modestly in November. Sales at retail establishments and food services rose by 0.2 percent last month, following a 0.6 percent gain in October, according to the Census Bureau's advance estimates (see top chart). November sales came in below market expectations but sales for October were revised up. Motor vehicle and parts retailers reported an increase in sales of 0.5 percent in November, following a 0.8 percent gain in October. Gasoline stations reported a 0.1 percent decrease in sales volumes last month, following a 0.4 percent drop in October. Apart from vehicles, parts and gasoline dealers, retailers reported sales growth of 0.2 percent in November, the smallest rise since May and down from October's 0.7 percent gain.
- Industrial production edged down last month. Output at the nation's factories, utilities, and mines fell by 0.2 percent in November, following a sizeable 0.7 percent gain decline in October and no change in September. Manufacturing output declined by 0.4 percent last month, following increases of 0.5 percent in October and 0.4 percent in September; manufacturing production remains 3.8 percent above the year-ago level. Durable goods manufacturing declined by 0.1 percent in November, led by a 3.4 drop in the production of motor vehicles and parts; even so, durable goods production remains a robust 7.1 percent above the year-ago level. Production of nondurable manufactured goods declined by 0.4 percent in November to a level that is 1.3 percent above the level a year ago. Even so, nearly two-thirds of manufacturing sectors have posted increases in production over the past three months (see bottom chart).



SOURCE: Staff calculations using data from the Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce.

Manufacturing Production by Industry, November 2011 Three-month percent change



NOTE: Industries are listed in order of their shares of total factory output, in descending order from the left.

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THE WEEK AHEAD

DAY SELECTED UPCOMING DATA RELEASES

Wednesday, Dec 21 Existing-Home Sales (November)

Thursday, Dec 22 Gross Domestic Product (Q3, 3rd estimate) and Corporate Profits (Q3, revised)

Friday, Dec 23 Personal Income and Outlays (November)

Advance Report on Durable Goods Manufacturers' Shipments, Inventories and Orders (November)

New Residential Sales (November)

THE ECONOMY AT A GLANCE

	MONTH			QUARTER			YEAR	
KEY INDICATORS	Nov	Oct	Sep	2011 Q3	2011 Q2	2011 Q1	2010	2009
Economic Activity								
Real gross domestic product	_	_	_	2.0	1.3	0.4	3.0	-3.5
Manufacturing production	-0.4	0.5	0.4	4.9	0.1	7.2	5.4	-13.5
Factory utilization rate (percent of capacity)	75.3	75.6	75.3	75.1	74.4	74.5	71.7	66.2
Civilian unemployment rate (percent of labor force)	8.6	9.0	9.1	9.1	9.1	8.9	9.6	9.3
Housing starts (thousands of units, annual rates)	685	627	646	615	572	582	585	554
Light vehicle sales, domestic (millions of units, annual rates)	10.544	10.289	10.181	9.777	9.406	9.907	8.812	7.680
Retail & food service sales	0.2	0.6	1.3	4.7	4.7	10.8	6.4	-7.0
Real disposable personal income	n.a.	0.3	-0.1	-2.1	-0.5	1.2	1.8	-2.3
Personal saving rate (percent of disposable income)	n.a.	3.5	3.3	3.8	4.8	5.0	5.3	5.1
Inflation & Productivity								
CPI-U inflation	0	-0.1	0.3	3.1	4.1	5.2	1.6	-0.3
Core CPI-U inflation	0.2	0.1	0.1	2.7	2.5	1.7	1.0	1.7
Output per hour, nonfarm bus.	_	_	_	2.3	-0.1	-0.6	4.1	2.3
Unit labor costs, nonfarm bus.	_	_	_	-2.5	-0.1	6.2	-2.0	-0.7
Employment Cost Index	_	_	_	1.2	2.8	2.4	1.9	1.7

Sources: Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce; Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce; and Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor.

Notes: Except where otherwise noted, values in the table represent simple percent changes for monthly data and percent changes at annual rates for quarterly data. Core CPI-U inflation is the percentage change in the CPI-U excluding food and energy prices as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The Employment Cost Index covers all civilian workers and the quarterly change is measured from the last month of the previous quarter to the last month of the indicated quarter. 'n.a.' denotes that data are not yet available. '—' denotes that data are not available monthly.