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Isaac M. O'Bannon • Mar. 14, 2024



Monthly data released by the U.S. Census Bureau shows retail sales expanded in February after a strong but flat January, National Retail Federation Chief Economist Jack Kleinhenz said.

"Retail sales rebounded in a solid fashion in February, showing the consumer is still spending and pointing to underlying strength in the economy," Kleinhenz said. "These results indicate that the economy is continuing to expand in the first quarter despite tight credit conditions and still-elevated inflation. Jobs gains, wage increases, and continued GDP growth are supporting household spending. Spending

on services remains elevated while spending on goods has softened, but both sectors

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seasonally adjusted from January and up 5.5% unadjusted year over year. Core retail sales were up 3.5% unadjusted year over year on a three-month moving average as of February.

On Tuesday, the CNBC/NRF Retail Monitor, powered by Affinity Solutions, reported that February sales showed continued momentum on the part of consumers. The Retail Monitor found core February retail sales were up 0.95% seasonally adjusted from January and up 6.69% unadjusted year over year. Those numbers softened, however, to gains of 0.27% and 2.99% when adjusted for the leap year effect of the extra day in February this year. That compared with a decrease of 0.04% month over month and an increase of 3.24% year over year in January.

As the leading authority and voice for the retail industry, NRF provides data on retail sales each month and also forecasts annual retail sales and spending for key periods such as the holiday season each year.

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