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Washington sees 7.6 percent increase in taxable sales

OLYMPIA – Feb. 4, 2014 – An increase in business and consumer spending boosted the state’s taxable retail sales by 7.6 percent for the third quarter of 2013. Taxable retail sales between July 1 and Sept. 30, 2013 reached \$31 billion – a \$2.2 billion increase over the same period in 2012, according to the Washington State Department of Revenue’s (Revenue) quarterly analysis.

“The increase in taxable retail sales was driven by auto sales and new construction,” Revenue Director Carol K. Nelson said. “This increase in spending shows that consumer confidence in Washington continues to improve and is at its highest level since the Great Recession.”

Third quarter retail trade purchases increased by 5.4 percent over the same time the year before.

Retail trade is a subset of total taxable retail sales and includes purchases of clothes, home furnishings, books, cars and general merchandise but excludes sales in industries such as manufacturing and construction.

Largest gains in taxable sales

Most categories saw increases in third quarter taxable sales:

- E-commerce grew by 22.8 percent
- New and used car sales up by 11.4 percent
- Construction improved by 16.1 percent
- Manufacturing was up 10.6 percent
- Home furnishings rose 8.9 percent
- Health and drug stores increased 7.2 percent

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Third quarter 2013 figures | Sales in the five most populous counties

	Taxable retail sales	Percent change	Retail trade	Percent change
King	\$12.1 billion	7.4	\$4.8 billion	4.2
Pierce	\$3.2 billion	10.8	\$1.6 billion	8.9
Snohomish	\$2.9 billion	7.9	\$1.6 billion	6.7
Spokane	\$2 billion	4.6	\$984.6 million	5.5
Clark	\$1.3 billion	8.8	\$576.8 million	6.7

Third quarter 2013 figures | Cities with the most sales

	Taxable retail sales	Percent change	Retail trade	Percent change
Seattle	\$4.8 billion	6.3	\$1.5 billion	5.6
Bellevue	\$1.4 billion	8.3	\$672 million	3.8
Tacoma	\$1.1 billion	7.0	\$559 million	6.3
Spokane	\$1.1 billion	4.6	\$492 million	2.6
Vancouver	\$719.8 million	8.2	\$334 million	13.5

Taxable retail sales and retail trade by county and city, and a breakdown of sales statewide by industries are [available here](#). Results for all counties and selected cities, including breakdowns of sales by industry sector, are available [here](#).

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About Revenue

The Department of Revenue is Washington state's primary tax administration agency, nationally recognized for innovation and service quality. In fiscal year 2013, Revenue collected more than \$18 billion in tax revenues that support public schools, social services, health care, corrections, public safety and natural resources conservation.