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## Construction, auto sales help boost first-quarter retail sales 5.3 percent

**OLYMPIA** – Aug. 21, 2017 – Steady growth in construction and auto sales helped boost taxable retail sales by 5.3 percent in the first quarter of 2017 over the same period in 2016, reaching a total of \$34.1 billion.

Retail trade sales, a subset of all taxable retail sales in the state, were up 4.1 percent to a total of \$14.5 billion.

Taxable retail sales includes transactions subject to the retail sales tax, including sales by retailers, the construction industry, manufacturing and other sectors. Retail trade includes sales of items such as clothing, furniture and automobiles, but excludes other industries, such as services and construction.

These figures are part of a quarterly report released today by the Washington State Department of Revenue (Revenue). The taxable retail sales figures compare the same quarter year-over-year to equalize any seasonal effects that would influence consumer and business spending.

### Some highlights of first-quarter 2017 taxable retail and retail trade sales:

- **Construction** rose 12.6 percent to \$6.6 billion.
- Taxable retail sales reported by **new and used auto dealers** increased 6.6 percent to \$3.2 billion.
- Taxable retail sales reported by **drug and health stores** rose 14.5 percent to \$672.1 million.
- Taxable **e-commerce and mail order** sales increased 13.9 percent to \$690.6 million.
- **Lawn and garden supplies and equipment** jumped 13.7 percent to \$163.9 million.

### Taxable retail sales dipped for several industries:

- **Department stores** sales dropped by 2.8 percent to \$602 million.
- **Grocery and convenience stores** decreased 1.2 percent to \$806.8 million.

See first-quarter 2017 taxable retail sales and retail trade sales by industry here:

[http://dor.wa.gov/docs/reports/2017/lrt117/TRS\\_Statewide\\_Table6\\_QT12017.xlsx](http://dor.wa.gov/docs/reports/2017/lrt117/TRS_Statewide_Table6_QT12017.xlsx)

Of the top 10 most populated counties in the state, Whatcom and Pierce counties enjoyed the largest overall taxable retail sales percentage increase. Bellevue and Tacoma saw the largest increase of the most populated cities.

See more details on the taxable retail sales and retail trade sales by industry for:

**Counties:** [https://dor.wa.gov/docs/reports/2017/lrt117/TRS\\_RTL\\_VS\\_TOT\\_COUNTY\\_QT12017.xlsx](https://dor.wa.gov/docs/reports/2017/lrt117/TRS_RTL_VS_TOT_COUNTY_QT12017.xlsx)

**Cities:** [https://dor.wa.gov/docs/reports/2017/lrt117/TRS\\_RTL\\_VS\\_TOT\\_CITY\\_QT12017.xlsx](https://dor.wa.gov/docs/reports/2017/lrt117/TRS_RTL_VS_TOT_CITY_QT12017.xlsx)

County	Taxable retail sales	Percent change	Retail trade	Percent change
King	\$14.1 billion	5.4	\$4.9 billion	3.9
Pierce	\$3.6 billion	7.6	\$1.8 billion	5.5
Snohomish	\$3.2 billion	5.0	\$1.7 billion	4.8
Spokane	\$2.1 billion	4.0	\$1.0 billion	1.6
Clark	\$1.5 billion	6.7	\$678 million	6.2
Thurston	\$1.2 billion	6.5	\$563 million	4.8
Kitsap	\$979 million	7.1	\$504 million	4.7
Whatcom	\$913 million	8.8	\$399 million	8.8
Yakima	\$820 million	-3.5	\$410 million	1.1
Skagit	\$624 million	5.3	\$341 million	6.2

City	Taxable retail sales	Percent change	Retail trade	Percent change
Seattle	\$5.8 billion	6.4	\$1.6 billion	3.9
Bellevue	\$1.8 billion	9.1	\$691 million	5.4
Tacoma	\$1.2 billion	8.7	\$579 million	2.5
Spokane	\$1.1 billion	3.1	\$502 million	2.0
Vancouver	\$868 million	5.1	\$397 million	6.9
Renton	\$664 million	1.1	\$335 million	1.4
Everett	\$662 million	0.9	\$327 million	1.5

Lynnwood	\$551 million	-3.2	\$358 million	-1.0
Puyallup	\$547 million	5.3	\$361 million	2.7
Spokane Valley	\$509 million	3.7	\$302 million	-0.8

**Accessing more results by city or county**

Check Revenue’s [Statistics and reports](https://dor.wa.gov/about/statistics-reports/quarterly-business-review-2016) page for additional detail about taxable retail sales: <https://dor.wa.gov/about/statistics-reports/quarterly-business-review-2016>.

**Understanding how businesses are classified**

Revenue uses business tax return data to create this quarterly report. Businesses are categorized under the U.S. Census Bureau’s classification system based on their primary taxable activity. The North American Industry Classification System – or NAICS – is the same method federal statistical agencies use for the purpose of analyzing economic data.

\*The taxable retail sales reported in the e-commerce and mail order category do not necessarily include online sales made by businesses with a brick-and-mortar presence. Businesses categorized by this NAICS code identify their primary activity as online or mail order sales.

**Highest taxable retail sales: top 10 counties**  
Q1 January - March 2017

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## Highest taxable retail sales: top 10 cities

Q1 January - March 2017

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Tacoma	\$1.2 b
Spokane	\$1.1 b
Vancouver	\$868 m
Renton	\$664 m
Everett	\$662 m
Lynnwood	\$551 m
Puyallup	\$547 m
Spokane Valley	\$509 m



## Statewide snapshot of taxable retail sales

Q1 January - March 2017



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### About Revenue

The Department of Revenue is Washington state’s primary tax agency, nationally recognized for innovation and quality customer service. Revenue administers nearly 60 categories of taxes that help fund education, social services, health care, corrections, public safety, natural resource conservation and other important services counted on by Washington residents.

For tax assistance or to request this document in an alternate format, visit <https://dor.wa.gov> or call 1-800-647-7706. Teletype (TTY) users may call (360) 705-6718.