



For more information, contact:

Kim Schmanke

Desk 360-534-1602 | Cell 360-688-6102

Follow us on Twitter: @WASstateDOR

## Holiday shopping helps boost fourth quarter 2016 sales

**OLYMPIA** – May 10, 2017 – Shoppers in a spending mood during the holidays helped boost the state’s taxable retail sales by 6.4 percent in the fourth quarter of 2016 over the same period in 2015, reaching \$38.2 billion.

That same holiday spirit also contributed to a 5.9 percent bump in retail trade sales, which totaled \$17.1 billion for the fourth quarter of 2016.

Taxable retail sales includes transactions subject to the retail sales tax, including sales by retailers, the construction industry, manufacturing and other sectors.

Retail trade is a subset of all taxable retail sales in the state and 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 decisions.

### The holidays showed strong positive sales for these retail industries:

- Taxable retail sales reported by **new and used auto dealers** increased 10 percent, reaching \$3.31 billion.
- **Lawn and garden supplies and equipment** sales rose by 13.0 percent to \$161.6 million.
- **Drug and health stores’** sales rose 18.8 percent, reaching \$739.9 million.
- Taxable **e-commerce and mail order** sales increased 11.0 percent to \$872.6 million.\*
- **RV, boat and motorcycle dealers’** sales rose 18.7 percent, to \$292 million.

See **statewide** fourth-quarter taxable retail sales and retail trade sales by industry here.

[http://dor.wa.gov/docs/reports/2016/lrt416/TRS\\_Statewide\\_Table6\\_QT42016.xlsx](http://dor.wa.gov/docs/reports/2016/lrt416/TRS_Statewide_Table6_QT42016.xlsx).

Of the top 10 most populated counties in the state, **Pierce and Skagit counties** enjoyed the largest overall taxable retail sales percentage increase. **Tacoma and Spokane Valley** saw the largest increase of the most populous cities.

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

- **Counties:** <http://dor.wa.gov/docs/reports/2016/qbr416/t3Q416.xlsx>.

- **Cities:** <http://dor.wa.gov/docs/reports/2016/qbr416/t4Q416.xlsx>.

### Highest taxable retail sales – top 10 counties

County	Taxable retail sales	Percent change	Retail trade	Percent change
King	\$15.47 billion	5.0	\$5.92 billion	4.9
Pierce	\$3.97 billion	8.9	\$2.03 billion	7.0
Snohomish	\$3.63 billion	6.1	\$1.97 billion	6.7
Spokane	\$2.42 billion	7.3	\$1.22 billion	6.2
Clark	\$1.72 billion	7.3	\$804 million	7.9
Thurston	\$1.29 billion	8.1	\$660 million	5.7
Kitsap	\$1.10 billion	6.7	\$586 million	5.9
Whatcom	\$1.05 billion	8.4	\$476 million	6.4
Yakima	\$976 million	4.7	\$481 million	5.5
Skagit	\$705 million	9.6	\$388 million	9.6

### Highest taxable retail sales – top 10 cities

City	Taxable retail sales	Percent change	Retail trade	Percent change
Seattle	\$6.29 billion	5.4	\$1.89 billion	3.6
Bellevue	\$1.91 billion	3.3	\$875 million	7.5
Tacoma	\$1.38 billion	12.8	\$664 million	5.9
Spokane	\$1.27 billion	4.1	\$614 million	4.7
Vancouver	\$956 million	3.8	\$465 million	5.4
Renton	\$743 million	8.9	\$380 million	3.4
Everett	\$736 million	1.0	\$376 million	5.2
Lynnwood	\$678 million	6.0	\$459 million	5.2
Spokane Valley	\$608 million	11.9	\$363 million	3.7
Puyallup	\$600 million	6.6	\$412 million	4.3

### **Accessing more results by city or county**

Check Revenue's [Statistics and Reports](#) page for additional detail about taxable retail sales:  
[http://dor.wa.gov/Content/AboutUs/StatisticsAndReports/stats\\_qbr2016.aspx](http://dor.wa.gov/Content/AboutUs/StatisticsAndReports/stats_qbr2016.aspx).

### **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 bricks-and-mortar presence. Businesses categorized by this NAICS code identify their primary activity as online or mail order sales.

###

### **About Revenue**

The Department of Revenue is Washington state's primary tax administration agency, nationally recognized for innovation and service quality. Revenue collected \$22.4 billion in tax revenues in Fiscal Year 2016. These funds support education, social services, health care, corrections, public safety, natural resources conservation and other public services.