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Retail sales up 7.7 percent in last quarter of 2015

OLYMPIA – April 27, 2016 - Washington state's taxable retail sales grew 7.7 percent in the fourth quarter of 2015, reaching just over \$35.9 billion. Retail trade, which is a portion of all taxable retail sales, rose 4.7 percent to a total of \$16.2 billion in that same time period of Oct. 1 – Dec. 31, 2015.

The data comes from a quarterly analysis of tax return data by industry provided by the Washington State Department of Revenue (Revenue). The reports compare the same quarter year-over-year to equalize any seasonal effects that would influence consumer and business spending decisions.

Revenue categorizes the state's taxable retail sales using the North American Industry Classification System, the same method federal statistical agencies use to classify businesses for the purpose of analyzing data related to the economy.

The taxable retail sales recap for Calendar Year 2015 will be available from Revenue in the next few days.

Snapshot of Fourth Quarter 2015

- Sales reported by **new and used auto dealers** increased 9.5 percent, reaching \$3 billion.
- Sales of **apparel and accessories** only rose 0.65 percent, reaching \$1.3 billion for the quarter.
- **Drug and health stores'** sales grew 19.8 percent, reaching \$623 million.
- Taxable **e-commerce and mail order** sales increased 10.3 percent, to \$786 million.

Most Populous Counties

	Taxable retail sales	Percent change	Retail trade	Percent change
King	\$14.74 billion	10.0	\$5.64 billion	3.3
Pierce	\$3.64 billion	9.4	\$1.90 billion	7.1
Snohomish	\$3.42 billion	7.7	\$1.84 billion	3.9

Spokane	\$2.25 billion	5.3	\$1.15 billion	5.8
Clark	\$1.60 billion	12.6	\$745 million	10.2
Thurston	\$1.19 billion	6.9	\$624 million	4.8
Kitsap	\$1.03 billion	10.4	\$554 million	7.7
Whatcom	\$970 million	2.9	\$448 million	-5.2
Yakima	\$933 million	0.7	\$456 million	4.1
Skagit	\$643 million	4.2	\$354 million	1.8

Cities with the most sales

	Taxable retail sales	Percent change	Retail trade	Percent change
Seattle	\$5.96 billion	10.4	\$1.8 billion	4.1
Bellevue	\$1.85 billion	9.0	\$814 million	0.2
Tacoma	\$1.23 billion	6.8	\$627 million	2.6
Spokane	\$1.22 billion	2.8	\$586 million	3.3
Vancouver	\$921 million	12.8	\$441 million	8.9

Check Revenue’s Statistics and Reports page for additional detail about taxable retail sales by city, county and industry: http://dor.wa.gov/Content/AboutUs/StatisticsAndReports/stats_lrs2015.aspx.

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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. Revenue collected \$20.8 billion in tax revenues in Fiscal Year 2015. These funds support education, social services, health care, corrections, public safety, natural resources conservation and other public services.