



# Research Brief

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## Pennsylvania Retail Trade Ready for the Holiday Season

MIDDLETOWN, Pa—Shoppers in Pennsylvania should have no trouble finding holiday gifts or places to buy gifts this year. The Pennsylvania State Data Center at Penn State Harrisburg reports that according to the 1997 Economic Census, there were 50,208 retail trade establishments in Pennsylvania in 1997 with 650,144 paid employees and generating nearly \$110 billion in sales.

## Allegheny County Leads Pennsylvania in Number of Establishments and Retail Sales

At the county level, Allegheny County led all counties in both number of retail establishments (5,353) and sales from retail trade (\$12.9 billion) (see Table 1). Philadelphia County is second in number of establishments (4,782), but Montgomery County is second in sales (\$9.6 billion).

**Table 1**

1997 Economic Census: Top Five Counties in Pennsylvania			
County	Number of Retail Establishments	County	Retail Sales (\$1,000)
Allegheny	5,353	Allegheny	12,929,651
Philadelphia	4,782	Montgomery	9,607,375
Montgomery	3,689	Philadelphia	8,118,245
Bucks	2,549	Bucks	7,217,380
Delaware	2,080	Chester	5,879,582



## Gift Ideas From Pennsylvania's Retail Industries

Can't find the perfect gift for that special someone? How about a new or used car for the holidays? There were 1,526 new car dealers and 1,055 used car dealers in Pennsylvania in 1997 with combined sales of \$24.6 billion and 55,998 paid employees. Bedford County, where they have 15 auto dealerships, would be a nice place to pick up that new vehicle. Or how about a recreational vehicle (RV)? There were 118 RV dealers in Pennsylvania in 1997 with sales of \$282.9 million and over 900 paid employees. Your best chance to find an RV dealer would be in Bucks or York counties where they have 8 RV dealerships from which to choose. Of course, you'll need tires for all these vehicles. There were 798 tire dealers in 1997 with sales of over \$873 million and over 6,500 paid employees.

Electronics and appliances are popular gift items. There were 1,839 of these types of stores in Pennsylvania in 1997 with 12,781 paid employees. They generated more than \$2 billion in sales. Of these establishments, 734 were radio, television and other electronic stores; 421 were computer and software stores; and 179 were camera and photographic supplies stores. If you were doing your shopping in Lehigh County, you would have 58 electronic and appliance stores to choose from.

Maybe you are looking for a sports-related item or perhaps a new hobby to pursue. Sporting good stores accounted for 1,023 shops in the commonwealth in 1997 with a workforce of 6,833 paid employees and sales of \$749 million. You would have a nice selection in Philadelphia where they have 52 sporting good stores. The 512 hobby, toy and game stores in Pennsylvania generated more than \$704 million in sales and had 5,169 paid employees.

If your special someone likes to read or listen to music, again, Pennsylvania will not disappoint. The 537 bookstores in Pennsylvania generated more than \$545 million in sales. Nearly 4,900 paid employees worked in bookstores. Pennsylvania was also home to 389 music stores (CDs, tapes and records) that had 2,599 paid employees and \$307 million in sales. If you were shopping in Dauphin County, you would find 11 bookstores as well as 11 music stores.

Looking for a new outfit this holiday season? There were 4,007 clothing stores, 1,523 shoe stores and 1,319 jewelry stores in Pennsylvania in 1997. Combined sales generated nearly \$6 billion and 55,894 paid employees.

For the person who likes to putter around the house, you can buy him or her gifts at the over 4,200 building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers in Pennsylvania. In 1997, these establishments employed 49,552 persons and had sales of over \$9.3 billion.

If you cannot take the holiday crowds and would rather shop from home, the 412 electronic shopping and mail order establishments in Pennsylvania can help. These Pennsylvania establishments in 1997 had 15,192 paid employees and generated \$6.6 billion in sales.

Other retail establishments can provide supplies for a party. There were 2,957 supermarkets and grocery stores, 1,374 specialty food stores and 1,561 beer, wine and liquor stores in Pennsylvania in 1997. More than 1,300 convenience stores were available for those last-minute items. In total, food and beverage establishments had 152,042 paid employees and generated more than \$19 billion in annual sales.

The holiday is not complete without flowers. The 1,272 Pennsylvania florists generated more than \$307 million in sales with 6,264 paid employees in 1997. Delaware County is home to 70 florists. This and other data about Pennsylvania's industries is available from the 1997 Economic Census.

The Pennsylvania State Data Center is the commonwealth's official source of population and economic statistics. It is based at Penn State Harrisburg's Institute of State and Regional Affairs. The Pennsylvania State Data Center is part of the U.S. Census Bureau's National State Data Center Program.

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Editors: For additional data, contact the Pennsylvania State Data Center's State Capital Office at 717.772.2710 or for faculty comment on this topic, contact Penn State Harrisburg's Public Information Office at 717.948.6029.

Source: 1997 Economic Census

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