

The Holiday Season

Happy holidays from the U.S. Census Bureau and the District of Columbia State Data Center. As the holiday season is here again, it is a time most people gather and celebrate with friends and family, exchange gifts, and general cheer and rejoicing. To commemorate this time of year the U.S. Census Bureau presents holiday related facts and figures on U.S. residents.

It's in the Mail

- The U.S. Postal Service expects to deliver over 20 billion letters, packages and cards between Thanksgiving and Christmas this year.
- About 12 million packages will be delivered by the U.S. Postal Service every day through Christmas Eve.
- The busiest mailing day is expected to be December 18, with more than twice as many cards and letters being processed as the average on any given day.
- The busiest delivery day is expected to be December 20.

The December Rush to the Stores – Last Year

- Retail sales by the nation's department stores were \$31.7 billion in December 2005. This represented a 47 percent jump from the previous month (when retail sales, many Christmas-related, registered \$21.7 billion). No other month-to-month increase in department store sales last year was as large.
- Other U.S. retailers with sizable jumps in sales between November and December 2005 were book stores (96 percent); clothing stores (49 percent); jewelry stores (174 percent); radio, TV and other electronics stores (54 percent); and sporting goods stores (67 percent).
- Fourteen percent of total 2005 sales for department stores took place in December. For jewelry stores, the percentage was 24 percent.
- The proportion of growth in inventories by the nation's department stores was 23 percent between the end of August and the end of November 2005. Thanks to the holiday crowds, inventories

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plummeted by 23 percent in December.

- Department stores employed 1.8 million people in December 2005.
- Retail employment typically swells during the holiday season, last year rising by an estimated 46,600 from November and 186,400 from October.
- The value of retail sales by electronic shopping and mail-order houses in December 2005 was \$19.4 billion – easily the highest total for any month last year.
- The value of total retail e-commerce sales for the fourth quarter of 2005 was \$27.1 billion.
- There were 15,626 electronic shopping and mail-order houses in business in 2004. These businesses, which employed 261,646 workers, are a popular source of holiday gifts. Their sales: \$147 billion, of which 35 percent were attributable to e-commerce. California led the nation in the number of these establishments and their employees, with 2,322 and 30,619, respectively.

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- If you're not sure where to do your shopping, choices of retail establishments abound: In 2004, there were 149,831 clothing and clothing accessories stores; 9,360 department stores; 10,345 hobby, toy and game shops; 33,956 gift, novelty and souvenir shops; 22,902 sporting goods stores; 28,772 jewelry stores; and 11,218 book stores across the nation.
- In 2005, there were 48,695 malls and shopping centers dotting the U.S. landscape, a total that increased by approximately 12,000 since 1990.

Christmas Trees and Decorations

- The nation's Christmas tree farmers received \$485 million from tree sales in 2005. Oregon was the top state in tree sales (\$126 million), followed by North Carolina, Washington and Michigan.
- The value of U.S. imports of Christmas tree ornaments from China between January and August 2006 was \$605 million. China was the leading country of origin for such items. Similarly, China was the leading foreign source of artificial Christmas trees shipped to the United States (\$65 million worth) during the same period.

Where the Toys Are ... Made

- There were 116 establishments around the country that primarily manufactured dolls and stuffed toys in 2004; they employed 2,386 people. California led the nation with 17 such locations.

- Seven hundred twenty three locations primarily produced games, toys and children's vehicles in 2004; they employed 16,465 workers. California led the nation with 117 establishments.
- Total value of shipments for dolls, toys and games by manufacturers in 2004 was \$3.2 billion.
- The value of U.S. imports of stuffed toys (excluding dolls) from China between January and August 2006 was \$639 million. China was the leading country of origin for stuffed toys coming into this country, as well as for a number of other popular holiday gifts that were imported. These include electric trains (\$65 million), puzzles (\$49 million), roller skates (\$82 million), sports footwear (\$215 million), golf equipment (\$47 million) and basketballs (\$30 million). China barely edged out Canada as the leading supplier of ice skates (\$6.7 million versus \$6.6 million), with Thailand ranking third (\$4.9 million).

Holiday Names

- Places whose names are associated with the holiday season include North Pole, Alaska (population 1,778 in 2005); Santa Claus, Indiana (2,283); Santa Claus, Georgia (242); Noel, Missouri (1,515); and — if you know about reindeer — the village of Rudolph, Wisconsin (422). On top of that there is Snowflake, Arizona (4,958); Dasher, Georgia (807); and a dozen places named Holly, including Holly Springs, Mississippi, and Mount Holly, North Carolina.