

cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

**Sheleen Dumas,**

*Department PRA Clearance Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Commerce Department.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### Census Bureau

#### **Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Comment Request; Annual Wholesale Trade Survey**

The Department of Commerce will submit the following information collection request to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and clearance in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, on or after the date of publication of this notice. We invite the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on proposed, and continuing information collections, which helps us assess the impact of our information collection requirements and minimize the public's reporting burden. Public comments were previously requested via the **Federal Register** on June 3, 2020 during a 60-day comment period. This notice allows for an additional 30 days for public comments.

*Agency:* U.S. Census Bureau.

*Title:* Annual Wholesale Trade Survey.

*OMB Control Number:* 0607–0195.

*Form Number(s):* SA–42A, SA–42A–MSBO, SA–42A–AGBR.

*Type of Request:* Regular submission. Request for a Revision of a Currently Approved Collection.

*Number of Respondents:* 7,743.

*Average Hours per Response:* 1 hour and 16 minutes.

*Burden Hours:* 9,846.

*Needs and Uses:* The Annual Wholesale Trade Survey (AWTS) covers employer firms with establishments located in the United States and classified in the wholesale trade sector, as defined by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). There are two main types of wholesalers in the wholesale trade sector: (1) Merchant wholesalers and (2) agents, brokers, and electronic markets. Merchant wholesalers sell goods on their own account. This category includes sales offices and sales branches (except retail stores) maintained by manufacturing, refining, or mining

enterprises apart from their plants or mines for the purpose of marketing their products. Agents, brokers, and electronic markets, on the other hand, arrange sales and purchases for others (generally for a commission or fee).

Respondents are further separated into the following three type of operation categories: Merchant wholesalers, excluding manufacturers' sales branches and offices; manufacturers' sales branches and offices; and agents, brokers, and electronic markets. The firms are instructed to submit their information to the Census Bureau via Centurion, the Census Bureau's online reporting instrument. The AWTS requests data on a variety of topics. A firm's type of operation classification dictates which particular subset of data items it will receive.

In response to a request from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), the AWTS will also collect annual detailed operating expenses and annual sales tax information during survey year 2022. Respondents are only asked to provide data for these two items in years ending in "2" and "7", which coincide with the Economic Census collection. Merchant wholesalers, excluding manufacturers' sales branches and offices, will receive the detailed operating expenses and sales tax questions. Conversely, manufacturers' sales branches and offices will only see the sales tax question. Companies that fall under the agents, brokers, and electronic markets category will not be asked to provide detailed operating expenses or sales tax information.

This survey provides an official, continuous measure of wholesale activity in the United States. Government agencies, private businesses, and researchers utilize the estimates generated from the AWTS in a variety of ways, including to conduct market analysis and forecast future demand.

From survey year 2016 through survey year 2019, there were five electronic form types (SA–42, SA–42A, SA–42A–MSBO, SA–42–AGBR, and SA–42A–AGBR). Starting with survey year 2020 (which will be collected in 2021), there will only be three electronic form types (SA–42A, SA–42A–MSBO, and SA–42A–AGBR). SA–42 and SA–42–AGBR are being removed to streamline data collection operations and reduce respondent burden.

Each year, estimates generated from the AWTS are released to the public approximately 14 months after the reference period has concluded. These national-level estimates are published (for the various items collected) by

NAICS code and type of operation. (The current sample was selected on a 2012 NAICS basis, so the estimates are also released on a 2012 NAICS basis. Data will not be published on a 2017 NAICS basis until the next sample revision occurs, which will not take place during this three-year clearance window.) The data are currently disseminated through the AWTS website. In the future, however, the data will be released via the Census Bureau's dissemination platform, *data.census.gov*. The survey year 2020 data products are scheduled to be released through *data.census.gov*.

The Census Bureau issued a pre-submission notice that was published in the **Federal Register** on Wednesday, June 3, 2020 (Vol. 85, No. 107). The notice, which was located on pages 34174 and 34175, stated that the AWTS was considering the addition of questions related to the impact coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID–19) had on firms for survey year 2020. After internal discussions, the Census Bureau decided it will not include COVID–19 questions on the AWTS.

The AWTS serves as a benchmark for the estimates produced from the Census Bureau's Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey (MWTS) [OMB No. 0607–0190].

Externally, the BEA uses the data to estimate the change in the private inventories component of gross domestic product (GDP) and output in both the benchmark and annual input-output (I–O) accounts and the GDP by industry statistics. This agency also utilizes the sales tax information to prepare estimates of GDP by industry and to derive industry output for the I–O accounts. The data on detailed operating expenses are used to produce national estimates of value added, gross output, and intermediate inputs and serve as a benchmark for the annual industry accounts, which provide the control totals for the GDP by state accounts.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) utilizes the data as an input to its producer price indices and in developing productivity measurements.

Other government agencies, researchers, and businesses also use the data for a variety of reasons. For example, private businesses utilize the estimates in computing business activity indices. Additionally, the AWTS data are used to conduct economic market analysis, forecast future demand, and evaluate company performance.

*Affected Public:* Business or other for-profit organizations.

*Frequency:* Annually.

*Respondent's Obligation:* Mandatory.

*Legal Authority:* The Census Bureau conducts this survey under the

authority of Title 13, United States Code, Sections 131 and 182. Sections 224 and 225 make this survey mandatory.

This information collection request may be viewed at [www.reginfo.gov](http://www.reginfo.gov). Follow the instructions to view the Department of Commerce collections currently under review by OMB.

Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be submitted within 30 days of the publication of this notice on the following website [www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain](http://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain). Find this particular information collection by selecting "Currently under 30-day Review—Open for Public Comments" or by using the search function and entering either the title of the collection or the OMB Control Number 0607–0195.

**Sheleen Dumas,**

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### Census Bureau

#### **Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Comment Request; Annual Capital Expenditures Survey**

**AGENCY:** U.S. Census Bureau, Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice of information collection, request for comment.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Commerce, in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on proposed, and continuing information collections, which helps us assess the impact of our information collection requirements and minimize the public's reporting burden. The purpose of this notice is to allow for 60 days of public comment on the proposed revision of the Annual Capital Expenditures Survey prior to the submission of the information collection request (ICR) to OMB for approval.

**DATES:** To ensure consideration, comments regarding this proposed information collection must be received on or before November 9, 2020.

**ADDRESSES:** Interested persons are invited to submit written comments by email to [Thomas.J.Smith@census.gov](mailto:Thomas.J.Smith@census.gov).

Please reference Annual Capital Expenditures Survey in the subject line of your comments. You may also submit comments, identified by Docket Number USBC–2020–0025, to the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. All comments received are part of the public record. No comments will be posted to <http://www.regulations.gov> for public viewing until after the comment period has closed. Comments will generally be posted without change. All Personally Identifiable Information (for example, name and address) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information. You may submit attachments to electronic comments in Microsoft Word, Excel, or Adobe PDF file formats.

#### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Requests for additional information or specific questions related to collection activities should be directed to Valerie Mastalski, Chief, Capital Expenditures Branch, Economy-Wide Statistics Division, U.S. Census Bureau, (301) 763–3317, or [Valerie.Cherry.Mastalski@census.gov](mailto:Valerie.Cherry.Mastalski@census.gov).

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

##### **I. Abstract**

The U.S. Census Bureau plans to conduct the 2020 through 2022 Annual Capital Expenditures Survey (ACES). This survey collects data on fixed assets and depreciation, sales and receipts, capitalized computer software, capitalized robotic equipment and capital expenditures for new and used structures and equipment. The ACES is the sole source of detailed comprehensive statistics on actual business spending for private non-farm companies, organizations, and associations operating in the United States. Both employer and non-employer companies are included in the survey.

The Bureau of Economic Analysis is a primary Federal user of ACES data. BEA relies on ACES data to refine and evaluate annual estimates of investment in structures and equipment in the national income and product accounts, compile annual input-output tables, and compute gross domestic product by industry. The Federal Reserve Board uses these data to improve estimates of investment indicators for monetary policy. The Bureau of Labor Statistics uses these data to improve estimates of capital stocks for productivity analysis. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services use these data for developing

estimates of investment in private health care structures and equipment as a part of the National Health Expenditure Accounts. Industry analysts use these data for market analysis, economic forecasting, identifying business opportunities, product development, and business planning.

#### **Planned changes:**

##### **A. Content related to the Coronavirus Pandemic:**

a. Add a question asking if the business received financial assistance through a federal, state, or local relief program.

i. If yes, what percent of the financial assistance was spent on payroll, rent/mortgage, utilities, capital expenditures, other.

b. Add a question seeking impact on payrolls in the absence of financial assistance (*i.e.*, reduced hours, reduced pay, reduced staff, other).

c. Add a question asking if the business experienced a change in capital expenditure plans.

d. Add a question asking if the business's capital expenditures funded safety/social distancing investments.

**B. Revisions related to integrating annual surveys:** The Census Bureau is undertaking an initiative to integrate and re-engineer select annual programs. Programs include the Annual Survey of Manufactures (ASM), Annual Retail Trade Survey (ARTS), Annual Wholesale Trade Survey (AWTS), Services Annual Survey (SAS), Annual Capital Expenditures Survey (ACES), Manufacturing Shipments Inventories and Unfilled Orders (M3UFO), and Company Organizational Survey (COS). Efforts include coordinating collection strategies/instruments/communication; integrating, changing or revising content; ensuring content is relevant; coordinating samples; and improving frame and coordinating status updates across annual surveys.

**C. Robotic equipment expenditures** were first collected from employer businesses on the 2018 ACES. Expenditures for both industrial and service robotics were collected at the company level and assigned to the company's primary industry. The U.S. Census Bureau plans to modify the 2020 ACES to collect the presence of robotic equipment and investment by industry segment. This will improve the data quality by providing researchers and other data users better information about what industries are using technology. This will enable researchers and other data users to better use this survey as a vehicle for continual monitoring of technology and the workforce.