
NEW COMMERCE NUMBERS ENCOURAGING



Retail sales and industrial production both rose more than expected during April, according to figures released by the Commerce Department on Friday. Sales increased by .4 percent in April on top of a 2.1 percent gain in March. Industrial production was up by .8 percent, its best showing in three months. Driving this growth, many economists speculate, is an improved jobs picture. The economy added 290,000 jobs in April, helping to allay consumer worries. The University of Michigan/Reuters Consumer Sentiment index rose 1.1 points to 73.3 in early May, reflecting increased consumer confidence and decreased fear of unemployment.

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