



ABILENE CHAMBER

DAILY BUSINESS BRIEF

Skimming the daily updates for your business so you don't have to.

ABILENE AREA CRACKS THE TOP 50 PLACES ON THE BEST HOUSING MARKETS FOR GROWTH AND STABILITY

Homeownership often represents a foundation to build on as well as long-term stability. This applies not only to the lifestyle a homeowner envisions when making a purchase, but also to the value of the property. Ideally, a home you purchase will steadily grow in value and not fluctuate too much in price. To that end, SmartAsset analyzed the data to uncover which metro areas in America are the best housing markets for growth and stability, and Abilene, Texas makes the list at number 30.

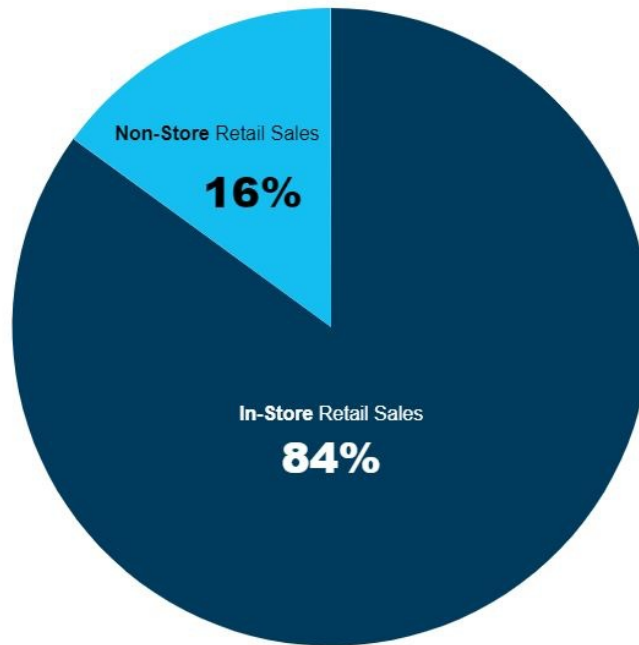
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COVID-19'S IMPACT ON THE EVOLUTION OF ONLINE SALES

Last week we reported that retail sales had recovered fully from the pandemic. In fact, they exceeded their pre-pandemic high in July. As part of tracking [retail](#) sales' recovery, it continues to be interesting to examine how the COVID-19 shock has affected the evolution of online sales.

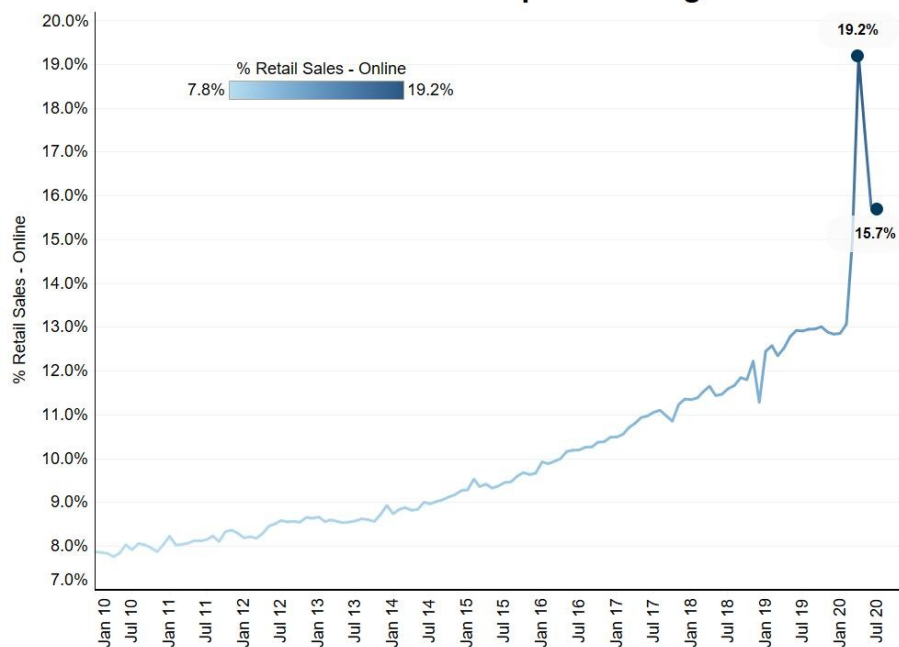
In July, in-store retail sales remained the vast majority of all retail sales at 84%. Non-store sales, which are mostly online sales, accounted for the remaining 16% of sales.

In-Store Retail Sales Still Make Up Vast Majority of Retail Sales - July 2020



The long-term trend has been to online sales, but consumers still do most of their shopping at traditional brick-and-mortar stores. Prior to the pandemic, online sales accounted for around 13% of all sales, but that spiked to over 19% in April at the height of the pandemic as consumers stayed home and ordered more online.

Online Sales' Share of Total Retail Spiked During the Pandemic



Since April, online sales' share of all retail sales has fallen for three consecutive months and is now at 15.7%. That is elevated from pre-pandemic levels, but considerably lower than the April high. The decline was slight in July compared to June.

The question is whether online sales will continue to decline closer to the pre-pandemic level and resume their long-term increase from that level, or whether they will remain elevated and continue to grow. They will continue to grow, but it remains to be seen how large a one-time shift, if any, occurs because of the pandemic.

Why it matters: Aside from being an interesting behavioral change to observe, this shift matters for brick-and-mortar sellers that do not also have an online presence. They could

permanently lose customers and see revenues decline. It also matters for the financiers of these retailers if the shift is large enough that the viability of the businesses becomes questionable.

–Curtis Dubay, Senior Economist, U.S. Chamber of Commerce

AISSD ADJUSTS PLANS FOR ONLINE LEARNING OPTIONS

Abilene Independent School District is still developing new remote learning options for families with the start of school only days away. The last minute changes come after a survey of families from 13,000 of the district's students. AISSD is responding to parents requesting asynchronous remote learning by rearranging faculty and developing more technological resources. Asynchronous learning allows students to complete assignments on their own schedule from the online platform. Superintendent David Young says a narrow segment of families want to monitor online safety and can't do that if their children are participating in remote learning during the work day. "We had some families that felt strongly enough about that they might even choose to do homeschool or something like that," Young says. "And they didn't really want to do that. And if that's a need, we want to meet our kids where they need us to be."

District officials spent the last three days focused on this and will dedicate one teacher at each elementary grade level to an asynchronous environment for the whole district. The options for secondary schools will look a little different, but those plans are still being developed. Young doesn't want any parent to struggle. "This is hard enough. No parent needs to do it in isolation, so if we can reach out in a different way, we're happy to do that."

Those students choosing synchronous learning will attend in real-time with their assigned teacher and classroom from their home or other remote location. Approximately 26%, or 3,100 students, will participate in one of the remote learning options this fall in AISSD schools. (Source: KACU)

ELBOW BUMPS REPLACE HANDSHAKES AT 2020 BUSINESS EXPO IN ABILENE

It was not Business Expo as usual Wednesday, but it was a chance for vendors and visitors to have a public activity during a pandemic year when not much is normal.

"Everybody's just thrilled to have this opportunity," said Darrin Black, owner of Black Plumbing and chairman of the Abilene Chamber of Commerce, which organizes the annual event.

"A 100% of everybody here I've talked to has been elated to be out – to see one another, to be able to communicate, to have fellowship," Black said. "It's just been good."

[Read more.](#)

WHAT WE'RE READING

Staying Healthy at Home: How COVID-19 Is Changing the Wellness Industry

The pandemic is remaking the \$4.5 trillion business, fueling the rise of telemedicine, at-home fitness and digital therapy, while redefining consumers' definition of health and well-being, too.

[Read more.](#)

Fed Cattle Recap | The South rises

The cash market for fed cattle was mostly \$3-\$4 higher and the cash sales volume was higher than the previous week.

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You don't want to miss these upcoming event for your business.

8/24 WOMEN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESS CERTIFICATION As of July 15, the certification process for Women-Owned Small Businesses (WOSBs) and Economically Disadvantaged WOSBs (EDWOSBs) has changed. Supervisor Business Opportunity Specialist with the SBA Dallas/Fort Worth District Office will facilitate the workshop and will be available to answer specific questions on the certification eligibility and process. Learn how you can take advantage of these opportunities for Women-Owned Small Businesses in this one hour informative session. [Register here.](#)

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