Reports for the Second Week of the Month

1. Manufacturing and Trade: Inventories and Sales
2. Unemployment Claims
3. Merchandise Trade Balance
4. PPI
5. Retail Sales
6. CPI

Manufacturing and Trade Inventories and Sales Report

Announces sales and inventory data for 2 months prior.

Released mid-month by the US Bureau of the Census (US Department of Commerce).

Used as a leading indicator to help gauge the direction and strength of the economy, and what the Federal Reserve might do next with short-term interest rates. The ratio of inventory-to-sales is considered a lagging indicator.

This monthly indicator is not as comprehensive and meaningful as the quarterly gross domestic product report (GDP), but it is more timely. When economic growth is thought to be near a turning point—up or down—this data can provide a monthly heads-up while quarterly data is awaited.

In general, it has an inverse relationship with the market. A rising inventory-to-sales ratio can depict economic weakness. A declining ratio can reflect economic strength.

Unemployment Claims - application for unemployment benefits

The information comes from the Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims Report, which is released every Thursday at 8:30 am EST.

Produced by the Employment and Training Administration, US Department of Labor.

Provides information on initial claims, which in is considered a leading indicator, but this data is highly volatile.

Most important data is change in initial claims. Also, provides data on continuing
unemployment insurance claims.

**Merchandise Trade Balance** - U.S. International Trade in Goods and Services

Provides data on the overall trade gap and the monthly percent changes for exports and imports.

Released mid-month by Census Bureau and Bureau of Economic Analysis (US Department of Commerce).

Viewed primarily as a **coincident indicator**.

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**PPI** - Producer Price Index

The PPI is based on revenues received by producers. Key data is the overall index for finished goods, index for goods excluding food and energy, and monthly percent changes of these indices.


Provides information regarding future inflation.

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**Retail Sales**: provides a good look at the health of consumer spending.

In the middle of each month the US Bureau of the Census (US Department of Commerce) releases the Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services.

The monthly percentage changes and total sales. Considered a **leading indicator**, but this data is highly volatile.

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**CPI** - Consumer Price Index

The CPI is based on prices paid for goods and services. Key data is the monthly percent changes in the overall index and of the index, excluding food and energy.


Provides information regarding future inflation.