KEYPOINTS
THE RETAIL NEWSLETTER
OCTOBER 2026 ©KEYPOINT PARTNERS, LLC BURLINGTON, MA

ACCELERATING RETAIL

Food Lion will open 6 stores by year's end, It operates 1,100+ stores in the Southeast/Mid-Atlantic...**GameStop** will re-open some shuttered locations. It has not released a list or number of locations. As of January, it had 2,086 US stores…**Primark** open its 2nd GA store this month, giving it 48 US stores…**85°C Bakery Cafe** opened its100th US location...**Rosati's Pizza** will open 11 locations in the next 90 days. Rosati's has 200+ US shops...Darden will open 13 **Yard Houses** this year. As of August, Yard House had 95 restaurants...**CardVault** by Tom Brady opened its 19th location…**Sherwin-Williams** will open 80–100 stores annually toward a 6,000-location goal…**Toys "R" Us** will open 120 standalone US stores by

Toys "R" Us will open 120 US stores by the holidays.
Photo©revorbenbrook@123RF.COM

the holidays...**CAVA** reached 500 restaurants with an opening in MN...**Birkenstock** opened stores in CO, CA and FL. It now operates 22 US locations…**Lowe's** will open a store in KY…**Trader Joe's** will open 5 TX stores in the next year...**El Pollo Loco** will open its 1st NYC first location in 2027, and has agreements for 15 more over the next 5 years. It now operates 500+ restaurants in 10 states…**Sprouts Farmers Market** will open 4 stores in 4 states...**Chicken Salad Chick** will open 25 units in NY state, its largest franchise agreement in its history. It now operates 350 locations in 26 states...**Build-A-Bear Workshop** will open multi-level retail/entertainment destination, its largest to date, in Orlando, FL…Canadian outdoor brand **Arc'teryx Equipment** opened its newest US store in CA, its 1st-ever store dedicated exclusively to climbing...Asian grocery chain **T&T Supermarket** will open its 4th US and 2nd CA store. It operates 40+ stores...**Spirit Christmas**, off-shoot of **Spirit Halloween**, will open 44 locations in 15 states...**Hawaiian Bros Island Grill** signed an agreement

Continued on Page 2

THE HALLOWEEN ISSUE

COMMENTARY

Chris Cardoni, Contributor

Don't be scared: it's The Halloween Issue, our annual look at the Halloween retail outlook. We'll check in with the **National Retail Federation**, check out **Spirit Halloween**'s expansion, and face a frightening flavor of beer!

Despite continuing economic uncertainty (and a looming and very crucial election), overall Halloween spending will be reasonably strong, the NRF says: "Consumers are expected to spend $13.5 billion this season, up slightly from a record $13.1 billion spent on Halloween last year. Per-person spending is expected to reach $115 this year, up from $114.5 last year.

According to the NRF press release, "Halloween remains a popular holiday for consumers, with 74% planning to celebrate this year. About half of consumers (49%) say they began shopping for Halloween in September or earlier. Activities like handing out candy (61%), dressing in costume (50%), decorating their home or yard (42%), carving pumpkins (42%) and watching scary movies (42%) are the top ways consumers mark the occasion".

The NRF notes that "[consumers] remain mindful of costs and are taking a strategic approach to their Halloween purchases. As part of this, consumers are planning ahead. If they encoun-

Continued on Page 2

KPP NEWS

ICSC@NEW YORK: KPP will again send a team to ICSC@ New York on December 9-10 at the Javits Center. Expanding tenants Apple Cinemas & FunCity Adventure Park will have tables in Retailer Central.

for 52 FL units over the next 6 years…**Eggs Up Grill** signed 11 commitments across 4 franchise groups, bringing it to 90+ US units in development …Ross Stores will open 41 **Ross Dress for Less** and 10 **DD's Discounts** in 17 states... **BJ's Wholesale Club** will open 5 stores in 5 states.

BJ's Wholesale Club will open 5 stores in 5 states

Photo©KeyPoint Partners, LLC

DECELERATING RETAIL

Scrubs and Beyond will close all 115+ stores in 30 states… **Cato** will close 70+ underperforming stores, bringing total closures to 120 in 2026. As of August Cato had 1,057 stores in 31 states...**Starbucks** closed 250 North American stores... **Leslie's Inc.** has filed for bankruptcy and will close 76 stores. It now has 900+ locations in 38 states... **Chip City Cookies** closed its last 22 locations.

NEW ENGLAND RETAIL

Frugal Fannie's, the discount clothing warehouse in Westwood, MA, is closing after 40+ years...**Chipotle Mexican Grill** opened in Braintree, MA and Durham, NH...The original **Wahlburgers** location in Hingham, MA closed after 15 years...Boylston Properties has put **Arsenal Yards**, Watertown up for sale…**Paris Baguette** will open 20 Boston-area locations…**Starbucks** has permanently closed 2 Boston locations. It had previously closed 12+ Greater Boston cafes...**Chase Bank** and **Leader Bank** will both open new MA branches... **Cambridge Savings Bank,** received approval to merge with **First Seacoast Bank**. First Seacoast will begin changing signage and branding immediately.

MONTHLY RETAIL SALES: COMMERCE DEPT.

Retail sales increased 0.8% last month, the Commerce Department said. Excluding gas stations, sales rose 0.2%.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce - commerce.gov

CONSUMER CONFIDENCE INDEX

The Conference Board Consumer Confidence Index® fell to 81.9 in September, down from 88.6 in August.

Source: The Conference Board - www.conference-board.org

Halloween spending will reach $13.5 billion, up from a record high last year

ter higher-than-expected prices on Halloween items, nearly one-third (31%) say they will comparative shop, while 26% say they will look for coupons or sales. Another 34% plan to look for items they can reuse in future years or repurpose for other occasions or settings, as consumers focus on maximizing value"

In a new twist, "Nearly half (47%) of consumers are using AI platforms and tools to support their Halloween shopping this year...including...asking for recommendations or ideas during product research".

Photo©mblach@123RF.COM

"Shoppers are expected to spend $4.4 billion on costumes", the NRF says, and a pumpkin-sized chunk of that will likely be spent at Spirit Halloween, which the folks at **BizNow** report will open a record 1,550 pop-up shops.

(*How Spirit Halloween Opened More Pop-Ups Than Ever In A Tight Retail Market*, Ryan Wangman, BizNow.com, September 22, 2026): "The retail powerhouse ....opened a record number of stores…in a national retail landscape without much availability. It pulled it off because, like a kid with an indiscriminate sweet tooth, the company isn't picky about the size and location of its pop-up shops…Spirit is willing to fill a wide range of store sizes, with its preferred floor plates ranging from 5K to 50K SF…Spirit can get locations up and running very quickly…as little as 30 days to go from raw space to ready for customers."

Spirit Halloween has made another interesting move this year. It has partnered with craft brew brand **Shock Top** to create a Halloween beverage based on the most ubiquitous and controversial of candies: Candy Corn (*Shock Top Made A Candy Corn Wheat Beer—And I Regret To Inform Haters It Works*, Sean Abrams, Delish.com Sep 20, 2026): "Shock Top has now made…Candy Corn Wheat, a limited-edition beer created with Spirit Halloween".

Photos©themess@123RF.COM

Abrams writes. "I tried it myself...The candy corn flavor is definitely present, but it hangs around more as a little Halloween flourish than something beating you over the head… turning Halloween's most divisive candy into a beer has done absolutely nothing to calm the annual discourse…there were a handful of grimacing and vomiting GIFs that made it abundantly clear where the dissenting camp stood….Somehow, candy corn gets even more polarizing once it lands in a beer bottle...this one earns its stripes".

Sorry, Shock Top, but that sounds like more of a trick than a treat. I think I'll pass.

HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

Sources: National Retail Federation, BizNow, Delish.com)

All material in KeyPoints is provided solely for your private information, and we are not soliciting or recommending any action based upon it. This material is based upon information from a variety of news sources that we consider to be reliable, but we do not represent that such information is accurate or complete, and it should not be relied upon as such. Opinions expressed herein are our current opinions as of the date appearing on this material only, and are subject to change without notice. **Copyright KeyPoint Partners, LLC, Burlington, MA, 2026.**

Comments or questions: **KP@KeyPointPartners.com**