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New Kroger initiatives paying dividends

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Buoyed by better than expected earnings The Kroger Co., the largest supermarket chain in the



country, is primed for battle in the supermarket wars.

The Cincinnati-based retailer posted profits of 44 cents a share in the third quarter. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, "analysts polled by Thomson Reuters had expected earnings per share of 40 cents." Kroger reported a net profit of \$397 million compared with \$391 million, or 41 cents a share, a year ago. Total sales increased 4.5 percent to \$27.75 billion. Digital revenue, driven by ClickList, was up 109 percent.

"Restock Kroger is off to a great start. Customers are recognizing our efforts to redefine the customer

experience and rewarding us with their loyalty," said Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Rodney McMullen. "We continue to accelerate our digital and ecommerce offerings, to grow Our Brands, to lower prices for customers, and to invest in our associates."

Kroger recently its launched Zero Hunger | Zero Waste, an initiative that aims to end hunger in the communities Kroger calls home and eliminate waste across the company by 2025. "This quarter shows that by investing for the future, our business continues to improve and gain momentum. We remain confident in our ability to continue to grow identical supermarket store sales and market share for the balance of the year and in 2018," added McMullen.

The company introduced television and radio ads in 191 media markets across the U.S. to increase



awareness of its Zero Hunger | Zero Waste initiative.

"Millions of families came together to enjoy Thanksgiving," said Jessica Adelman, Kroger's group vice president of corporate affairs. "Kroger and our family of stores love being a part of America's Thanksgiving celebrations. At the same time, we acknowledge the absurdity that one in eight people struggle with hunger while 40 percent of the food produced in the U.S. each year goes to waste. That just doesn't make sense to us. And this season, we are grateful for our associates and trusted partners who are committed to doing something about it."

Earlier this month, Kroger launched a strategic media campaign and introduced television and radio advertisements in key markets to boost its customers' awareness and engagement with the initiative. The campaign will run through the holiday season supported by store-level customer giving programs benefiting local food banks and hunger-relief organizations and Kroger's year-round, industry-leading, fresh food donations program.

"Our Purpose is to Feed the Human Spirit by uplifting each other, our customers and our communities. Kroger is inviting everyone who is passionate about feeding people and protecting the planet to join us in helping us realize our vision of Zero Hunger | Zero Waste," Adelman said.

Kroger has partnered with Feeding America and World Wildlife Fund to achieve its vision, and is crowdsourcing for solutions and asking communities, partners and other stakeholders for ideas, feedback and best practices.

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