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## **Wakefern sales up 10% to \$18 billion**

October 27, 2020

Wakefern Food Corp. reported retail sales of \$18.3 billion for the 53-week fiscal year ending Oct. 3, a 9.75 percent increase from the prior year. One of the largest retailer-owned cooperatives in the United States, Wakefern opened four new ShopRite stores, welcomed a new banner, Manhattan-based Fairway Market, and added a new member, the Maniaci family, during the same period. Nicholas Supermarkets, founded by the Maniaci family in 1943, now operates four new Fresh Grocer supermarkets in northern New Jersey.

Hundreds of associates from across the cooperative tuned into the annual meeting, which was broadcast live. Leadership reported on the 2020 fiscal year and how Wakefern and its family-owned supermarkets rose to every challenge and supported their communities during the unprecedented

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COVID-19 public health emergency. In addition to the cooperative-wide effort to keep stores stocked and running smoothly during the crisis, Wakefern members also incorporated the latest safety protocols across all stores.

“Our store associates embraced their roles. Their courage and commitment was amazing; their teamwork energizing. Throughout the last seven months, I’ve witnessed our entire organization live our purpose of caring deeply about people, helping them to eat well and be happy. It never had to be said, it’s just what we did,” said Wakefern Chairman and CEO Joseph S. Colalillo.

Wakefern President and COO Joe Sheridan said 2020 created a new customer with new expectations that include cooking more at home and shopping more online. To accommodate this new customer, Wakefern added capacity to its popular online shopping offerings, including ShopRite from Home. Sheridan said the company continues to innovate, improve and expand the digital shopping experience.

“Our customers turned to us for reassurance and for the things they wanted and needed for their families during this challenging time, and we were there for our customers, our neighbors, our friends and our families,” said Sheridan. “There have been a lot of changes to how we operate and how people shop, but our goal is always to provide the best and safest possible shopping experience for our customers. And that’s exactly what we are doing.”

Chris Lane, Wakefern executive vice president, reported on the company’s successful initiatives and the focus the cooperative maintained even during a year of remarkable change and challenges.

Those accomplishments included the continued rollout of ShopRite’s award-winning flagship store brands, Bowl & Basket and Paperbird, and recent expansion and rebrand of its other award-winning store brand, Wholesome Pantry and Wholesome Pantry Organic. The popular Wholesome Pantry brand of accessible foods, free-from additives and artificial ingredients, was re-introduced this month with an updated look and feel, select new and innovative products, and a fresh tagline, “Food Set Free.”

Wakefern also opened its second stand-alone micro-fulfillment center, which uses advanced robotics to quickly assemble ShopRite from Home grocery orders and expands the reach and capacity of online shopping service for stores. Lane said the cooperative plans to open additional micro-fulfillment centers over the next few years.

Lane also detailed Wakefern’s innovative plans to deliver wholesome and affordable fresh foods and meal solutions to customers. Fresh to Table, unveiled this month at three ShopRite stores, features a convenient store-within-a-store format that gives customers a whole new way to access fresh meal solutions and on-trend foods. The Fresh to Table experience provides a “One Stop Dinner Shop,” showcasing five ingredient chef and dietitian inspired meals that change weekly, as well as “Prep & Eat,” “Grab & Eat,” and “Heat & Eat” sections.

The Fresh to Table experience also offers a digital component with the newly redesigned ShopRite Order Express app and integrated recipe shopping lists available through in-store QR codes and online, at ShopRite’s Recipe Shop available at [shoprite.com](https://shoprite.com).

“Step by step, we persevered and chipped away at our goals during 2020, even as we simultaneously responded to a global pandemic. And for that, we can only thank each and every one of you,” said Lane.

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Colalillo also presented this year's Chairman's Award to Doug Wille, Wakefern's recently retired Chief Financial Officer, thanking Doug for his more than four decades of service to the cooperative. Neil Falcone, Wakefern's former Vice President of ShopRite Financial Services (SFS) and Corporate Finance, has been named Wakefern's new Chief Financial Officer.

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