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ShopRite debuts robotic carts for grocery delivery

The future has arrived at the ShopRite of Yardley and the ShopRite of Bethlehem, PA, where customers can be the first to take advantage of innovative battery-powered delivery robots for same day home grocery delivery. The remote controlled, robotic carts will make their Northeast debut at the two stores and are designed to meet growing consumer demand for faster home delivery.

Tortoise rolls out at the ShopRite of Yardley this week and the ShopRite of Bethlehem next month.

The service is available as part of a new pilot program between Wakefern Food Corp., distribution and marketing arm for ShopRite stores, and technology company Tortoise, which provides affordable and sustainable last-mile delivery options. ShopRite is among the first supermarkets on the East Coast to utilize the technology.

“We are excited to launch this revolutionary new technology. Demand for ever faster home delivery continues to increase and we believe this provides another innovative way for ShopRite customers to receive their groceries quickly and efficiently,” said Wakefern Chariman and CEO Joe Colalillo, who also serves as president of the ShopRite of Hunterdon County and operator of the Yardley and Bethlehem stores. “Tortoise’s battery-powered cart is a unique, environmentally-friendly and cost-effective delivery option for our customers who shop online.”

With an average speed of three miles per hour, the remote-controlled, zero-emissions carts typically travel on sidewalks or the side of the road, and are tele-operated by trained remote drivers. The delivery cart can hold up to 150 pounds in four lockable containers that support ambient, chilled and frozen groceries. ShopRite customers are alerted to the arrival of the order via a text message that can also be used to unlock the cart to unload groceries.

“Wakefern is our first customer on the east coast to use this innovative delivery system and we believe shoppers will love the convenience Tortoise offers,” said Dmitry Shevelenko, co-founder of Tortoise. “Our electric cart allows ShopRite associates to focus less on the delivery of products and more on helping customers to improve the shopping experience.”

Delivery Solutions, another company that specializes in helping retailers maximize online delivery services and provide same-day delivery, worked with Wakefern and Tortoise to support the new delivery robots with real-time order tracking and scheduling.

“We are excited to deliver on our promise to futureproof fulfillment for ShopRite. Tortoise is the latest in a series of fulfillment options ShopRite will orchestrate against to provide superior customer experiences,” said Manil Uppal, founder of Delivery Solutions.

The Tortoise delivery system is another contactless option for ShopRite customers looking for added layers of protection due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, ShopRite offers online grocery delivery through a variety of last mile providers. Tortoise, which offers the latest cutting-edge method for home delivery, will start providing service first at the Yardley store, followed by a roll-out at the Bethlehem store later in October.

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