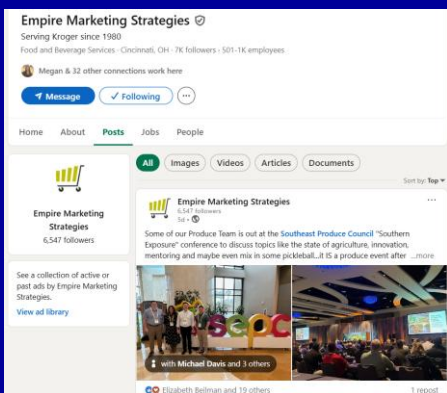


**IN THIS ISSUE**

- 1 Closing the Gap
- 2 [Trustworthy Grocers](#)
- 3 [Store & Leadership Updates](#)
- 4 [Kroger's AI Strategy](#)
- 5 [Annual Report](#)



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**The Friday Checkout: Kroger's CEO wants to close the gap with low-price retailers**

*Grocery Dive*  
*Grocery Dive Staff*

May 22, 2026

In an interview with Bloomberg, Foran indicated Kroger plans to introduce sweeping price cuts. He didn't say when this will happen or how much it will cost, but he noted that the company is preparing to test the price cuts before rolling them out widely to stores. Kroger plans to import more products directly and hone its use of technology to help fund the cuts, he noted.

Judging from the interview and other comments he's made since taking the helm, Foran's strategy seems focused on closing the distance on pricing between Kroger and low-price competitors, then speeding ahead with improvements in fresh and customer service.

"I think about our business a bit like a Formula One race. There's a lead group of cars that are doing a very good job," Foran told Bloomberg. "Our objective is to get out of the midfield and start lapping faster, make up the gap on the first-group cars and then ideally pass them."

Walmart, for one, isn't taking any of this lying down. On the same day Bloomberg's story came out, the mass merchandiser noted it had [expanded its own price cuts](#) to more than 7,000 items. Those will help the company continue to make inroads with price-sensitive customers, but the chain did note that high fuel prices could put pressure on prices later this year.

Foran, an old-school merchant who became an industry star by leading Walmart's U.S. grocery business, seems to be taking the steps that many experts expected. He's bringing discipline and efficiency to a sprawling company that's fallen behind the pace in recent years.

Most importantly, he's attacking the chain's pricing at a critical time. While many other grocers are trying to [offer better promotions and shift the conversation](#) around pricing and value, Foran is focused on building a faster, sleeker company.

## Whole Foods Leads Newsweek's Most Trustworthy Grocery Companies List

*The Shelby Report*  
*Shelby Team*

*May 6, 2026*

Newsweek released its [2026 Most Trustworthy Companies](#) in America rankings, with Whole Foods Market topping the grocery and convenience store category, followed by The Kroger Co. at second.

The list recognizes 31 grocery and convenience store operators across the country and reflects a mix of national chains, regional players and independent operators that have built lasting customer trust.

### Mix of players

Whole Foods Market and Kroger were followed by Tulsa, Oklahoma-based QuikTrip (third), Lakeland, Florida-based Publix (fourth) and Lakewood, Colorado-based Natural Grocers (fifth).

The sixth-eighth spots went to San Antonio-based H-E-B, Black Mountain, North Carolina-based Ingles and Matthews, North Carolina-based [Harris Teeter](#).

Boise, Idaho-based WinCo Foods came in at ninth, with Sheboygan, Wisconsin-based Piggly Wiggly closing out the top 10.

The Most Trustworthy Companies in America list offers a window into how consumers perceive the brands they engage with regularly. For grocery retailers, where customer relationships are built across thousands of weekly interactions, recognition on the list reinforces the role that consistency, service and community engagement play in building lasting trust.

## Kroger Ranks Second in 2026 Report



**Store and Leadership Updates**

**024 Louisville**

Store 360 Louisville, KY  
Re-Grand Opening 5/8

**016 Columbus**

Store 522 Gahanna, OH  
Re-Grand Opening 5/1

Store 864 Lambertville, MI  
Re-Grand Opening 5/15

Store 232 Reynoldsburg, OH  
Re-Grand Opening 5/8

Store 591 Pataskala, OH  
Re-Grand Opening 5/22

**Tim Massa Announces Retirement after 37 Years of Distinguished HR Leadership**

Today, Tim Massa, executive vice president and chief Associate Experience officer, announced his plans to retire after 16 years of service. Tim's last day in the office will be Sept. 18.

Tim joined Kroger in 2010 as vice president of Talent Development, bringing with him 21 years of HR leadership experience from P&G. Throughout his Kroger career, Tim was promoted to group vice president of Human Resources and Labor Relations in 2014, appointed chief people officer in 2015, elevated to senior vice president in 2018 and most recently named executive vice president.

During his tenure, Tim drove Kroger's business-led, people-enabled strategy to create real ownership of talent through all levels of the business, building one of the most respected people organizations in retail. He guided the company's approach to talent, leadership development, labor relations, total rewards, associate well-being and culture. Tim championed the idea that Kroger should be a place where associates come for a job and discover a career they love – operationalizing the belief that every associate is an Experience Maker.

"Tim has been a relatable and trusted leader throughout his time at Kroger," says Greg Foran, CEO of Kroger. "He cares deeply about our associates and built a people organization that supports and respects them. We appreciate Tim's many contributions over the years and wish him all the best in his retirement."

In retirement, Tim and his wife Lisa look forward to traveling and spending time with his family and friends in Dallas; Pompano Beach, Fla.; Northern California; and Catawba Island, Ohio. He also plans to continue his passion for developing leaders by joining private and public boards focused on principles- and values-based leadership development, executive coaching, CEO succession planning and building cultures that support collaborative ways of working in today's ever-changing environment.

Tim will remain in his role through Sept. 18. His successor will be named at a later date.



**Re-Grand Opening at Store 360**



**Tim Massa**

## Leadership Updates Continued

### Role Changes



**Rick Kathman**



**Michael Marx**

#### **Rick Kathman Promoted to Director, Direct Sourcing Fresh Produce & KMP**

Rick Kathman, previously senior Strategic Sourcing category management manager, has been promoted to director, Direct Sourcing Fresh Produce & KMP. He will report to Patrick Haines, vice president of Fresh Sourcing & KMP.

Rick will lead the Fresh Produce & Floral Sourcing team, driving cost reduction through strategic supplier negotiations and end-to-end supply chain analysis to unlock incremental value across the produce and floral value chain in support of retail pricing investments. He will also focus on building and expanding direct import relationships, partnering cross functionally with all necessary lines of business across fruits, vegetables and floral to strengthen Kroger's fresh sourcing capabilities.

Across his 12-year career at Kroger, Rick has played a key role in standing up and continuously evolving the Fresh Produce Sourcing team, originally launched as the Produce Value Chain initiative. He has also been instrumental in the development and implementation of Kroger's Category Manager Negotiation Training program, helping elevate sourcing capabilities across the enterprise.

Rick holds a bachelor's degree in education with a focus on mathematics from Northern Kentucky University.

#### **Kroger Announces Retail Operations Leadership Updates**

As a result of Valerie Jabbar's upcoming retirement, beginning May 1, Michael Marx will support the Cincinnati, Columbus, Fry's, Harris Teeter and Texas divisions as well as M&A activity on an interim basis. He will remain the president of the Mariano's and Roundy's Divisions. Michael will report to Kroger CEO Greg Foran.

Michael joined Kroger in 1975 as a stocker for the former Highland Village store in Houston. After completing the management development program, he served in numerous leadership positions through the years, including store and district management and Produce, Floral and Natural Foods merchandiser. He was promoted to director of Regional Operations for the Southwest Division in 2006 and to vice president of Operations in 2007. He was named vice president of Transition at the Store Support Center in Cincinnati in 2011 and took on his role as vice president of People Operations in 2015, before being named president of Roundy's and Mariano's in 2016.

In addition, Paula Kash, group vice president of Retail Operations, will report to Victor Smith, senior vice president of Retail Operations.

The Dillons, Food4Less, Fred Meyer, King Soopers and City Market, QFC, Ralphs, Roundy's and Smith's divisions will continue to report to Greg Foran on an interim basis.

## Leadership Updates Continued

### Role Changes



**Jody Kalmbach**

#### **Jody Kalmbach Announces Her Retirement after 12 Years of Service**

Jody Kalmbach announced today that she will be retiring from her role as group vice president, Digital Experience and eCommerce at the end of May.

Jody began her career with the company in 2014 leading customer experience for Vitacost.com. In 2016, she was named vice president of Digital Experience at Kroger and later was promoted to group vice president of Product Experience before assuming her current role in 2025. Jody worked cross-functionally to bring business goals, customer experience and technical execution into alignment, helping lead digital transformation and drive measurable impact and growth.

“Jody has been instrumental in shaping a more seamless, intuitive customer experience,” says Yael Cosset, executive vice president and chief digital officer. “Over the past decade, she has been a passionate and trusted leader, pushing our teams to think differently, innovate boldly and stay relentlessly customer centric. We are grateful for her impact and wish her the very best as she begins this next chapter focusing on her family.”

Throughout her career, Jody has been recognized for her leadership and impact in digital commerce and customer experience. She was inducted into the Path to Purchase Institute’s Hall of Fame in 2019 and named a Senior-level Executive on Progressive Grocer’s Top Women in Grocery list in 2020. Jody has also been an active leader across Kroger and the broader community, serving on the boards of the Kroger Foundation and the Kroger Personal Finance business. She also served on Kroger’s Senior Executive Advisory Board, supporting the company’s DEI Advisory Council and Associate Resource Group Steering Committee. In all these roles, she has provided executive-level perspective and guidance.

#### **Jamie Lancaster Announces Plans to Retire After 18 Years of Service**

Jamie Lancaster, vice president of Kroger Capability Center and Contact Centers of Excellence, has announced his retirement from Kroger, effective May 15, following 18 years of dedicated service to the company. Samatha Bock, director of Contact Centers of Excellence will service as interim leader of the Contact Centers of Excellence. Erin Sanchez will serve as interim leader of the Kroger Capability Center work. Jamie's successor will be named at a later date.

Jamie began his Kroger career in Technology and went on to expand his leadership across Associate Experience and Finance. Throughout his tenure, he held several key leadership roles, ultimately serving as leader of both the Kroger Contact Centers and the Kroger Capability Center, where he played an instrumental role in advancing Kroger’s service, capability and operational excellence strategies.

In retirement, Jamie plans to split his time between Northern Kentucky and Marco Island, Florida, with his wife, Lori, and their dog, Stella.



**Jamie Lancaster**

## Kroger CIO Reveals Multi-Layered AI Strategy

*Progressive Grocer*  
*Marian Zboraj*

May 19, 2026

"I think that everyone hears about AI, but few people really understand what it means," said [Kroger](#) CIO Jim Clendenen during his session last week at [GroceryTech](#) with Editor-in-Chief Emily Crowe.

To better navigate the world of AI, Clendenen said that the national grocer recently named Milen Mahadevan, president of its 84.51° analytics unit, to be its chief data and AI officer. It's only been a few months and under his leadership, Kroger has already launched an "AI driver's license" training program for associates that ensures responsible adoption and upskilling.

"The AI driver's license is intended to give some baseline understanding of what AI is, how we leverage it in a safe and productive way, and some of the dangers and risks that AI can introduce," Clendenen explained. "It's designed as a four-module course, and takes less than eight hours to complete all four modules. This is going to be the starting point of a lot of training and upskilling to come, because we all know that AI is going to be a bigger part of what we do day to day, so Kroger acknowledges that we have to give people a baseline understanding."

Kroger's multi-layered AI tech strategy also involves proactively managing operations and preventing disruptions to the customer experience.

"Without a consistent experience, customers have many options to go somewhere else," Clendenen pointed out, "so we really place a high priority on reliability, and that's tough to do at our scale – 2,700 stores is a huge scale to manage – but reliability is critically important. We have a number of processes that we leverage to make sure that the store is up and running and we're using AI more than ever to help us get ahead."

This starts with ensuring a frictionless experience for customers.

"We've done a lot of work around forecasting so that we have in-stock products that you are after [on a] given trip," Clendenen noted.

Kroger is also creating a personalized experiences for its customers.

[Read the Full Article Here](#)

## Kroger has Launched An "AI Driver's License"



**CIO Jim Clendenen at  
Grocery Tech**

## Kroger Makes Progress on Boosting Sales



### 3 key figures from Kroger's annual report

The retailer's 2025 fiscal year highlights the company's improvements to not only its financial performance but also its labor efforts.

*Grocery Dive*  
*Catherine Douglas Moran*

*May 20, 2026*

After weathering the fallout from its failed bid to merge with Albertsons, Kroger is regaining its financial footing.

Information in the grocer's [newly released annual report](#) for its latest fiscal year, which ended on Jan. 31, 2026, shows that the company has made progress on boosting its sales.

Kroger's private brands, growing e-commerce operations, data insights and store experiences have created a strong foundation for the company, CEO Greg Foran, [who arrived in February](#), noted in a shareholder letter in the report. However, the grocer still has room to improve, including becoming more efficient, boosting the quality of its private brands, investing in affordability efforts and growing its brick-and-mortar and online footprints, Foran wrote.

Here's a look at some notable numbers from the retailer's fiscal year 2025 filing:

### **2.9%**

Year-over-year increase in identical store sales without fuel

Kroger's same-store sales growth nearly doubled in fiscal 2025 from the 1.5% increase that the grocer recorded in fiscal 2024. Kroger also saw modest identical store sales without fuel growth before the COVID-19 pandemic. The grocer recorded 2% and 1.8% increases in the financial metric for its 2019 and 2018 fiscal years, respectively.

### **\$16 billion**

E-commerce sales in fiscal 2025

The grocer's e-commerce business crossed \$16 billion in sales in fiscal 2025, up from the more than \$13 billion it recorded in the prior fiscal year. Kroger noted that "strong" customer demand for delivery helped fuel its online sales growth.

This growth comes even as Kroger has made significant adjustments to its e-commerce network, including [shuttering three automated fulfillment centers](#) and focusing more on store-based fulfillment.

[Read the Full Article Here](#)