

## **This Week's Top Stories in Retail**

### **March 6, 2009**

#### **Save-A-Lot expands in New Orleans**

**New Orleans (March 5, 2009)** Extreme-value grocery chain Save-A-Lot is opening three stores in New Orleans.

#### **Ikea to open in Tampa**

**Tampa, Fla. (March 5, 2009)** Ikea announced it will open a new store and restaurant destination in Tampa, Fla., on May 6. It will be Ikea's third location in Florida and its 37th in the United States.

#### **Urban Outfitters profit down 24% in Q4**

**New York City (March 5, 2009)** Urban Outfitters said profit dropped 24% during the three months ended Jan. 31, as the company used clearance sales and markdowns to move excess inventory.

#### **Borders to cut 742 Jobs**

**Ann Arbor, Mich. (March 5, 2009)** Borders Group is cutting 742 more jobs at its Borders superstores and Waldenbooks specialty stores nationwide.

#### **Starbucks to launch coffee in France, Germany**

**New York City (March 5, 2009)** Starbucks Corp. said Thursday it will launch packaged Starbucks coffee in France and Germany. Financial terms were not disclosed.

#### **Children's Place appoints new board member**

**Secaucus, N.J. (March 5, 2009)** The Children's Place Retail Stores has appointed Norman Matthews to serve on the company's board of directors. Matthews will serve as a Class III director, and will stand for election at the 2009 annual meeting of stockholders.

#### **The Buckle, Hot Topic, Aeropostale shine in apparel category**

**New York City (March 5, 2009)** Most apparel retailers continued to struggle in February, with some notable exceptions. The Buckle posted a 21% increase in February same-store sales, far above the 9% gain expected. Hot Topic reported Wednesday that its same-store sales rose 10.8%, more than double what analysts estimated. At Aeropostale, February same-store sales rose 11%, beating analyst expectations, as shoppers purchased spring merchandise.

#### **Everything But Water files Chapter 11**

**New York City (March 5, 2009)** Citing the tough economic environment, Swimwear retailer Everything But Water has filed Chapter 11 in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Wilmington, Del.

#### **Blockbuster Q4 same-store sales up 4.4%**

**Dallas (March 5, 2009)** Blockbuster said its U.S. same-store sales rose 4.4% in the fiscal fourth quarter and that full-year earnings exceeded August's raised expectations.

#### **Barnes & Noble buys electronic bookseller**

**New York City (March 5, 2009)** Barnes & Noble said Thursday that it purchased electronic bookseller Fictionwise for \$15.7 million in cash.

#### **Luxury retailers take hit in February**

**New York City (March 5, 2009)** Luxury stores remained among the retail industry's worst

performers in February, as consumers continued to cut back on discretionary purchases. Saks suffered a 26% decline, deeper than the 20.5% drop expected by Wall Street.

### **Department store sales decline in February**

**New York City (March 5, 2009)** Macy's said Thursday its February same-store sales dropped 8.5%, a bigger decline than Wall Street anticipated, but consistent with the retailer's own expectations. One bright spot was online sales, which climbed 16.2% during the month.

### **Dunkin' Donuts announces 15 new locations**

**New York City (March 5, 2009)** Dunkin' Donuts announced a multi-unit store development with Dunkin' Development of Greater St. Louis for the development of 10 restaurants in the greater St. Louis area. The franchisee's plans call for one unit to open by 2011, and the balance within the next several years.

### **Wal-Mart leads discount category in February with 5.1% increase**

**New York City (March 5, 2009)** Americans remained focused on groceries and other necessities in February, resulting in another month of sales declines for many merchants. But the results were not as steep as Wall Street expected.

### **Hot Topic same-store sales up 10.8% in February**

**San Francisco (March 4, 2009)** Hot Topic said on Wednesday that its same-store sales rose 10.8% in February.

### **Amazon allows Kindle access from iPhone, iPod touch**

**New York City (March 4, 2009)** Amazon.com is offering a new application that lets consumers access books on its electronic reader, Kindle, from Apple's popular iPhone and iPod touch devices.

### **Kmart partners with WWE**

**Hoffman Estates, Ill. (March 4, 2009)** Kmart has partnered with World Wrestling Entertainment for a multichannel entertainment marketing promotion supporting the 25th anniversary of WrestleMania.

### **J.C. Penney honored for energy management**

**Plano, Texas (March 4, 2009)** J.C. Penney was honored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy with the Energy Star Award for Sustained Excellence in Energy Management.

### **Gottschalks extends auction date**

**Fresno, Calif. (March 4, 2009)** Gottschalks, which filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in January, said it received approval from bankruptcy court to extend its auction date until March 30 while it talks with potential buyers.

### **Zumiez same-store sales down in February**

**Everett, Wash. (March 4, 2009)** Zumiez announced that the company's same-store sales decreased 13.4% for the four-week period ended Feb. 28, vs. a comparable-store sales decrease of 2.6% in the year ago period ended March 1, 2008.

### **Sales fall 6.2% for week ending Feb. 28**

**Chicago (March 4, 2009)** ShopperTrak's National Retail Sales Estimate reported that retail sales for the week ending Feb. 28 declined 6.2%, compared with the same period in 2008, while week-over-week sales decreased 9.3%, vs. the previous week ending Feb. 21.

### **Report: Blockbuster denies bankruptcy rumors**

**Dallas (March 4, 2009)** Blockbuster has denied news reports suggesting that the chain hired an outside party to help it put together strategic alternatives, including a possible filing for bankruptcy protection, according to the St. Louis Business Journal.

### **PetSmart Q4 profit up**

**Phoenix (March 4, 2009)** PetSmart reported net income of \$78.4 million for the fourth quarter of 2008, compared with \$75.4 million for same period from the year before, which included a fourteenth week, as fiscal 2007 was a 53-week year.

### **Barnes & Noble to open in Asheville, N.C.**

**New York City (March 4, 2009)** Barnes & Noble plans to open a new bookstore on March 18 at the Asheville Mall in Asheville, N.C. Concurrently, the existing nearby Barnes & Noble location will close.

### **Costco Q2 Profit Drops on Stronger Dollar, Discounting**

**New York City (March 4, 2009)** Costco Wholesale Corp. said Wednesday that its fiscal second-quarter profit fell 27% partly on lower non-food sales and some deeper discounting, while the stronger dollar and falling gas prices took a toll on same-store sales.

### **BJ's Q4 Profit Up 5%**

**Natick, Mass. (March 4, 2009)** BJ's Wholesale Club Inc. on Wednesday reported better-than-expected results with the news that its fiscal fourth-quarter profit rose 5% partly on favorable state income tax audit settlements.

### **Big Lots Profit Falls 14%**

**Columbus, Ohio (March 4, 2009)** Big Lots Inc. on Wednesday reported a decline in sales and profit in its fourth quarter and full year.

### **All U.S. Virgin Megastores to Close**

**New York City (March 4, 2009)** Struggling under the weight of declining music sales and a sinking economy, the remaining six Virgin Megastores in the United States will shut their doors this summer, the Associated Press reported.

### **Report: Best Buy and Carphone Warehouse Delay U.K. Launch**

**London (March 4, 2009)** Best Buy Co. and joint-venture partner Carphone Warehouse Group have postponed the launch of their first U.K. store until the first quarter of 2010, the Financial Times reported. The joint venture had planned to open its first U.K. store this summer.

### **Build-A-Bear Names Board Member**

**St. Louis (March 3, 2009)** Build-A-Bear Workshop, Inc. announced Tuesday that Kathy Savitt has been elected to the company's board of directors, effective immediately.

### **NRF: Consumers Cutting Back on St. Patrick's Day**

**Washington, D.C. (March 3, 2009)** The National Retail Federation in its "St. Patrick's Day Consumer Intentions and Actions" survey released Tuesday, found that people celebrating the Irish holiday will spend an average of \$32.80 on decorations, festive attire and food and beverage, compared to an average of \$35.04 in 2008. Total spending is expected to reach \$3.29 billion.

### **AutoZone Q2 Profit Up 8.6%**

**Memphis, Tenn. (March 3, 2009)** AutoZone reported on Tuesday net sales of \$1.4 billion for its second quarter ended Feb. 14, an increase of 8.1% from fiscal second quarter 2008.

### **Blockbuster Said to Be Exploring Bankruptcy**

**New York City (March 3, 2009)** A Reuters report on Tuesday revealed that Blockbuster Inc. has hired lawyers to explore a possible bankruptcy filing, according to a source familiar with the matter.

### **Target to Open 27 Stores on March 8**

**Minneapolis (March 3, 2009)** Target Corp. announced Tuesday the opening of 27 stores, including its first two locations in the state of Hawaii.

### **Circuit City to Sell Canadian Stores**

**Richmond, Va. (March 3, 2009)** Circuit City Stores Inc. said Tuesday it has agreed to sell its 756 Canadian stores to Bell Canada Enterprises Inc. as the liquidating chain spins off its last valuable pieces before going out of business.

### **Talbots Finalizes \$200M Loan**

**Hingham, Mass. (March 3, 2009)** The Talbots, Inc. announced Monday it had finalized the terms of the previously announced \$200 million unsecured term loan facility from Aeon Co., Ltd., which through its wholly owned subsidiary is Talbots' majority shareholder.

### **Chico Reports Q4 Loss of \$40.5 Million**

**Fort Myers, Fla. (March 3, 2009)** Chico's FAS Inc. reported on Tuesday a loss of \$40.5 million in the fourth quarter, but still managed to beat Wall Street expectations.

### **Walgreen February Total Sales Up, Same-Store Sales Down**

**Deerfield, Ill. (March 3, 2009)** Walgreen Co. announced Tuesday its February same-store sales slid 1.9%, crediting the fall to the prior year's leap day, along with declines in the pharmacy products.

### **Wal-Mart Plans 'Twilight' Events**

**Bentonville, Ark. (March 2, 2009)** Walmart Stores Inc. plans to host midnight events and giveaways in its 24-hour stores upon the DVD release of the recent cult film "Twilight."

### **Publix Sales Up 2.6% in Q4**

**Lakeland, Fla. (March 2, 2009)** Publix's sales for the fourth quarter of 2008 were \$6 billion, a 2.6% increase from last year's \$5.9 billion.

### **Kohl's, Candies Partners With Britney Spears**

**New York City (March 2, 2009)** Iconix Brand Group announced that its junior brand, Candie's, which is exclusive at Kohl's Department Stores, signed an exclusive partnership with pop star Britney Spears.

### **Sport Chalet Enters Into New Loan Amendment**

**Los Angeles (March 2, 2009)** Sport Chalet Inc. has amended its credit facility with Bank of America, N.A.

### **NRF: Americans Filing Taxes Early**

**Washington, D.C. (March 2, 2009)** Americans will file taxes earlier this year and adopt e-filing in greater numbers to get their refunds earlier, according to a survey by the National Retail Federation.

### **Walgreens Announces Executive Changes**

**Deerfield, Ill. (March 2, 2009)** Walgreen Co. announced several executive changes on Monday.

## **Consumer Spending Up in January, Unlikely to Last**

**Washington, D.C. (March 2, 2009)** Consumer spending rose in January after falling for a record six straight months, pushed higher by purchases of food and other non durable items. However, the increase is expected to be fleeting given all the problems facing the economy.

## **Staples to Offer PC Tune-Ups**

**Framingham, Mass. (March 2, 2009)** Staples Inc. announced it will be performing free PC tune-ups (a \$29.99 value) at all 1,500 U.S. locations through April 4 in response to the surging demand from customers to improve the performance of their aging PCs.

## **Oahu's Windward Mall Gets New Stores**

**Honolulu (February 27, 2009)** Hawaiian retailer Price Busters will debut a new concept, and Aeropostale will open one of its first Hawaii stores this year at Windward Mall in Kaneohe.

## **Netflix To Offer 'Streaming Only' Plans**

**Los Angeles (February 27, 2009)** Netflix Inc. CEO Barry McCarthy said it plans to offer its online streaming service on a stand-alone basis.

## **Meijer to Install Wind Turbines**

**Grand Rapids, Mich. (February 27, 2009)** Meijer is expanding its green initiatives to include the use of wind power.

## **Safeway Puts Pressure on Private-Label Brands**

**Pleasanton, Calif. (February 27, 2009)** Safeway plans to push its private-label brands harder if branded-food makers don't start lowering prices on their products, according to The Wall Street Journal.

## **J. Crew Cuts Jobs**

**New York City (February 27, 2009)** J. Crew Group has initiated a cost-reduction program that is expected to generate approximately \$40 million in annualized pre-tax savings. The program is being implemented in response to the challenging economic environment.

## **Sears Wants More Time to Meet Federal Pension Requirements**

**New York City (February 27, 2009)** Sears Holdings chairman Eddie Lampert called on Congress to ease pension plan regulations in order to give companies additional time to make required cash contributions to make up losses caused by the current financial crisis.

## **Management Transition Continues at Sam's Club**

**Bentonville, Ark. (February 27, 2009)** Longtime Wal-Mart International executive Ignacio Perez has been named executive VP, operations, at Sam's Club following the retirement of Greg Johnston, according to an internal announcement this morning from Wal-Mart president and CEO Mike Duke.

## **Profit Drop 42% at Big 5 Sporting Goods**

**El Segundo, Calif. (February 27, 2009)** Big 5 Sporting Goods Corp. said Thursday that its fourth-quarter profit dropped 42%, but beat Wall Street's expectations as the retailer cut expenses to help cushion a sales decline.

## **Hedge Fund in Talks With Target on Board Seats**

**New York City (February 27, 2009)** Activist hedge fund manager William Ackman is in talks with Target Corp. about naming potential directors to the discount retailer's board, according to a Securities and Exchange Commission filing on Thursday.

## **Wal-Mart Canada to Close Sam's Clubs Division, Will Focus on Supercenter Format**

**Toronto (February 27, 2009)** Wal-Mart Canada Corp. is closing its six Sam's Club stores, which employ about 1,200 people, the company said Thursday.

## **Gap Q4 Profit Drops 8.3%, Will Shutter 100 Stores**

**San Francisco (February 27, 2009)** Gap Inc. on Thursday reported an 8.3% decline in fourth-quarter profit, and said it would close additional stores, especially at its namesake chain, as it tries to weather a recession.