Retailers add 28.6 million square feet as industry returns to growth

Store openings surpass closings, led by dollar stores, Aldi, Ross



Aldi has announced it will have a net increase of 173 stores this year, representing 3.5 million square feet of retail space. (CoStar)

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So far this year, U.S. store openings have surged, marking a net increase of 28.6 million square feet of retail space, driven in part by the expansion of discounters, according to Coresight Research.

The 3,389 announced store openings through Aug. 28 represent 64.5 million square feet of new retail space compared with 3,262 announced store closings with 35.9 million square feet of retail space, resulting in a net addition of 28.6 million square feet, the data firm said.

Overall, 127 net store openings have been announced, compared with 1,954 net store closings in the comparable period of 2025, according to Coresight. Years ago, some analysts maintained that the United States had too many stores for its population, leading to a shakeout for some retailers. The latest data could represent a kind of turning point, or at least the start of one, according to John Harmon, a Coresight senior analyst.

“Those closings are really kind of plummeting,” he told CoStar News, adding that perhaps “the correction has leveled off.”

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> — Brandon Svec, CoStar

With Americans financially strained and watching their budgets, it may come as no surprise who is expanding the most to meet consumer demand for lower prices: discounters and off-price chains. Dollar General expects to see a net gain of 392 stores this year, while Dollar Tree expects a net gain of about 300 locations, according to Coresight. German discount grocer Aldi plans a net increase of 173 stores, while off-price retailer Ross Stores expects to add 103 locations, according to Coresight.

On the flip side, some chains have been aggressively downsizing their store fleets, weeding out dozens of underperforming locations. That includes drugstore chain Walgreens, footwear seller Foot Locker, children's apparel retailer Carter's and Petsense pet shops, according to Coresight.



A retailer shift toward adding more space than they are cutting doesn't come as a big surprise to Brandon Svec, national director of U.S. retail analytics for CoStar Group.

"The retail market has shaken off higher diesel prices, tariffs, and slower population growth, remaining firmly in growth mode in 2026," Svec said in an email. "Performance has largely aligned with our expectations for another positive year of demand growth, as store closures pulled back due to fewer bankruptcies and openings picked up modestly, supported in part by the backfilling of vacant space. While this year has brought more than its share of uncertainty, retailer balance sheets remain healthy, and profitability has held up well."

That has "allowed many retailers to look past near-term headwinds and focus on securing space in an increasingly supply-constrained environment," according to Svec.

Aldi, Ross fuel retail's growth spurt

Aldi's store growth represents roughly 3.5 million square feet of retail space, Coresight said. "Aldi is accelerating growth because its low-price model keeps drawing more shoppers," according to the research report.

Ross' expansion adds up to 2.1 million square feet, according to Coresight. "Ross is leaning into a format that continues to perform well in both new and existing markets," Coresight said.

Department store chain Nordstrom has announced a net increase of 18 stores so far this year, representing an estimated 1.3 million square feet of net retail space, according to Coresight. “Nordstrom is driving most of this growth through Nordstrom Rack, using the off-price banner to enter more suburban trade areas and bring new shoppers into the brand,” Coresight said.

The retailers with the most announced store closings year to date, according to Coresight, include pharmacy chain Walgreens, with a net decrease of 94 stores; Foot Locker, owned by Dick’s Sporting Goods, seeing a net decrease of 87 stores; and Petsense, owned by Tractor Supply Co., with a net decrease of 72 stores.

Of course, the retail landscape is always changing.

Scrubs & Beyond, a retailer of nursing scrubs and medical uniforms, announced this month that it will close its roughly 115 stores across 30 states and transition to an online-only business.

“Scrubs & Beyond has made the strategic decision to wind down our brick-and-mortar retail locations as we transition our business toward serving customers primarily online,” a spokesperson said in an email.

The company is based in St. Louis while its parent, Kindthread, is headquartered in Scottsdale, Arizona.

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