

KROGER CO
Form 8-K
October 29, 2018

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 8-K

CURRENT REPORT

Pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934

Date of Report: **October 29, 2018**

(Date of earliest event reported)

THE KROGER CO.

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Ohio
(State or other jurisdiction
of incorporation)

No. 1-303
(Commission File Number)

31-0345740
(IRS Employer
Identification No.)

1014 Vine Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202

(Address of principal executive offices, including zip code)

Registrant's telephone number, including area code: **(513) 762-4000**

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Check the appropriate box below if the Form 8-K filing is intended to simultaneously satisfy the filing obligation of the registrant under any of the following provisions:

- Written communications pursuant to Rule 425 under the Securities Act (17 CFR 230.425)

- Soliciting material pursuant to Rule 14a-12 under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14a-12)

- Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 14d-2(b) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14d-2(b))

- Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 13e-4(c) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.13e-4(c))

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is an emerging growth company as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act of 1933 (§230.405 of this chapter) or Rule 12b-2 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (§240.12b-2 of this chapter).

Emerging growth company

If an emerging growth company, indicate by check mark if the registrant has elected not to use the extended transition period for complying with any new or revised financial accounting standards provided pursuant to Section 13(a) of the Exchange Act.

Item 7.01

Regulation FD Disclosure.

On October 29, 2018, The Kroger Co. issued a press release in connection with its annual investor conference to be held on October 29 and 30, 2018. The release is attached hereto as Exhibit 99.1, and is furnished herewith.

Fiscal 2018 Guidance

The company continues to expect capital investments, excluding mergers, acquisitions, and purchases of leased facilities, to be approximately \$3.0 billion in 2018.

Kroger expects its 2018 tax rate to be approximately 22%. Excluding the 2018 first and second quarter adjustment items, Kroger expects its 2018 tax rate to be approximately 20%. The adjustment items include adjustments for pension plan agreements, the gain on the sale of the convenience store business, the mark-to-market gain on Ocado securities, and depreciation related to held for sale assets, all of which are described in the Company's Form 8-K filed September 13, 2018.

Forward Looking Statements

This Current Report contains certain statements that constitute forward-looking statements about the future performance of the company. These statements are based on management's assumptions and beliefs in light of the information currently available to it. These statements are indicated by words such as expectation, intend, committed, expect, guidance, goal, will, aim, continue, predict, target, strategy, range. Various uncertainties and other factors could cause actual results to differ materially from those contained in the forward-looking statements. These include the specific risk factors identified in Risk Factors and Outlook in Kroger's annual report on Form 10-K for the last fiscal year and any subsequent filings, as well as the following:

- Kroger's ability to achieve sales, earnings, incremental FIFO operating profit, and Restock free cash flow goals may be affected by: labor negotiations or disputes; changes in the types and numbers of businesses that compete with Kroger; pricing and promotional activities of existing and new competitors, including non-traditional competitors, and the aggressiveness of that competition; Kroger's response to these actions; the state of the economy, including interest rates, the inflationary and deflationary trends in certain commodities, and the unemployment rate; the effect that fuel costs have on consumer spending; volatility of fuel margins; changes in government-funded benefit programs; manufacturing commodity costs; diesel fuel costs related to Kroger's logistics operations; trends in consumer spending; the extent to which Kroger's customers exercise caution in their purchasing in response to economic conditions; the uncertain pace of economic growth; changes in inflation or deflation in product and operating costs; stock repurchases; Kroger's ability to retain pharmacy sales from third party payors; consolidation in the healthcare industry, including pharmacy benefit managers; Kroger's ability to negotiate modifications to multi-employer pension plans; natural disasters or adverse weather conditions; the potential costs and risks associated with potential cyber-attacks or data security breaches; the success of Kroger's future growth plans; the ability to execute on Restock Kroger; and the successful integration of merged companies and new partnerships. Kroger's ability to achieve these goals may also be affected by Kroger's ability to manage the factors identified above. Kroger's ability

to execute its financial strategy may be affected by its ability to generate cash flow.

- Kroger's capital investments may differ from expectations if the Company cannot identify or execute suitable store projects or investments in digital, technology, logistics, merchandising systems or infrastructure to support its business strategy. Kroger's effective tax rate may differ from the expected rate due to changes in laws, the status of pending items with various taxing authorities, and the deductibility of certain expenses.

Kroger assumes no obligation to update the information contained herein. Please refer to Kroger's reports and filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission for a further discussion of these risks and uncertainties.

Item 9.01

Financial Statement and Exhibits

(d) Exhibits

| Exhibit No. | Description |
|--------------------|---|
| 99.1 | <u>Press Release dated October 29, 2018</u> |

SIGNATURE

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the Registrant has duly caused this report to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned hereunto duly authorized.

THE KROGER CO.

October 29, 2018

By:

/s/ Christine S. Wheatley
Christine S. Wheatley
Group Vice President, Secretary and General Counsel