

## Fulfilling Immediate Needs

Grocer Tom Thumb introduces its first Tom Thumb Express convenience store, highlighting fresh and convenient grab-and-go offers By Danielle Romano



**The Tom Thumb and Dallas Cowboys mascots helped celebrate the opening of the first Tom Thumb Express c-store.**



**TODAY'S SUPERMARKETS AND CONVENIENCE STORES ARE INTERSECTING**, as grocers and other traditional brick-and-mortar retailers break into the "convenience" scene.

Tom Thumb, a division of Boise, Idaho-based Albertsons LLC, is the latest retailer to journey into this new territory with its first-ever Tom Thumb Express convenience store.

Located at 2720 Live Oak Street in Dallas, the 2,500-square-foot store is the result of company executives' desire to fulfill the immediate needs of the Dallas community while a new, full-size Tom Thumb is being constructed. The grocery store is set to open across the street from Tom Thumb Express in 2020 within the Gabriella development, a 10-story apartment building.

"The new Tom Thumb is part of a mixed-use development, which takes longer to construct than a typical store," explained Doug Campbell, senior vice president, marketing and merchandising, Albertsons Cos., Southern Division. "We wanted to begin serving the needs of that community as soon as possible, so we're delighted to open our very first Tom Thumb Express, [which] offers savings at the pump and a great assortment of grab-and-go items."

### Convenient & Fresh Offers

According to Campbell, Dallas was the perfect location and this was the perfect time to introduce the Express concept, as Tom

Thumb was founded in the heart of Dallas in 1948 and has since served the community for 70 years. Today, 64 Tom Thumb full-size grocery stores operate across the Lone Star State.

"We want our customers to know that Tom Thumb Express delivers the same superior shopping experience at a convenience store that they have come to know and expect from Tom Thumb for 70 years," Campbell said. "They expect a clean, neat, well-stocked store, with a full, fresh assortment of offerings, quality products and excellence in customer service."

Wanting to give customers a "wow" experience inside the store, Tom Thumb Express features informative digital screens that highlight its offers and educate customers. The retailer also installed dual flatscreen monitors describing its hot beverage and foodservice options.

In the store's warmer case, customers will find Tom Thumb Express' heated food choices, such as breakfast sandwiches, chicken sandwiches and hamburgers, in addition to rotisserie hot dogs, brats and taquitos.

The cold case is kept stocked with made-fresh-daily sandwiches and salads, fresh-cut fruit and vegetables, yogurt parfaits and snacker trays. Doughnuts, bagels and other assorted pastries make up the store's baked goods offering. All fresh items are delivered from a nearby full-size Tom Thumb grocery store two to three times a day.

### At a Glance Tom Thumb Express

**Location:** 2720 Live Oak Street, Dallas

**Size:** 2,500 square feet

**Unique features:**

Informative digital screens highlighting offers; fresh grab-and-go items delivered from a nearby Tom Thumb grocery store two to three times daily; beer cave

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To quench thirsts in the Dallas heat, customers have their choice of an array of cold dispensed beverages, in addition to ICEE and f'real milkshake machines. Meanwhile, hot beverage fare includes cappuccino and fresh-brewed coffee.

“Our soda machine looks like a sci-fi fan’s dream come true and can dispense hundreds of flavor combinations. Even the ICEE machine has a digital screen,” Campbell noted.

Other amenities available at Tom Thumb Express are:

- A beer cave offering domestic, imported and craft brews;
- Six self-service fuel pumps offering 12 fueling positions, available 24 hours a day;
- Bread, eggs, cheese, milk and other essentials;
- Redbox movie rental;
- Propane exchange;
- Ice merchandiser; and
- Air/vacuum station.

Enhancing the customer experience outside the store, the retailer is currently working with the owner of the adjoining building — a former 7UP bottling plant — to create a vintage mural on the side of the building that celebrates the significance of both 7UP and Tom Thumb in the community. Planning for the mural was slated to wrap up in late September.

### Full Speed Ahead

To celebrate the opening of Tom Thumb Express — which



**Among Tom Thumb Express’ convenient and fresh offers are made-fresh-daily sandwiches and salads, and a fully stocked beer cave.**

operates 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily — the retailer held a “Fuel Frenzy” on June 27, offering the first 100 customers \$1 off per gallon of gas, up to 25 gallons. Tom Thumb and Dallas Cowboys mascots pumped gas for customers.

When asked about the future of Tom Thumb Express, Campbell told *Convenience Store News* that the concept will be part of the company’s business plan moving forward; however, he could not disclose when and where the next opening will occur.

“At Tom Thumb, our promise is to make every day a better day for our customers. One way we deliver on this promise is by providing a quick, fun and convenient shopping experience. We plan on expanding the Express concept where we can to complement our existing stores,” he concluded. **CSN**

**A “Fuel Frenzy” event was held as part of the grand-opening festivities.**

