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SALISBURY, N.C. • Bottom Dollar, [Delhaize](#)'s nascent discount chain, last week announced it would open 21 stores in the greater Philadelphia market.

The new stores would join a field of established competitors already suffering from the economy and recent arrivals of [Wal-Mart](#) and [Wegmans](#). For Delhaize, the stores would also begin to bridge the gap between its Food Lion territory in the Mid-Atlantic and Southeast and its New England-based Hannaford chain. The company earlier this year began to combine operations of all of its banners.

Christy Phillips-Brown, a spokeswoman for Delhaize, told *SN* that the expansion would account for all of the Bottom Dollar stores it planned to open in 2010. The company, which operated 28 stores at the beginning the year, had previously said it would • nearly double • its locations this year.

Phillips-Brown said she expected 15 to 20 stores would open by year-end, with the first locations opening in the fall.

• Bottom Dollar Food has great potential in the market as we believe it is underserved in the soft-discount grocer arena, • said Meg Ham, president of Bottom Dollar Food, said in a statement. • We are very excited to expand Bottom Dollar Food and deliver the best price and value in grocery products to customers. •

Bottom Dollar, developed by Food Lion five years ago, calls itself a • soft discount • store with a mix of private- and national-brand products along with quality produce and meats. It runs stores of around 20,000 square feet and focuses on a • lighthearted • atmosphere.

In Philadelphia, it enters a market where established players including Acme, Pathmark, Superfresh and Genuardi's are reeling but where price has become paramount, said Matt Casey, president of Matthew P. Casey & Associates, a Clark, N.J.-based site-selection company.

• Philadelphia is a very competitive market, but on the positive side for Delhaize the existing discounters here are doing very well, • he said, noting that Giant of Carlisle and Wegmans have made strides in recent years on an EDLP offering, ShopRite has gained strength through strong promotions and area Save-A-Lot stores do relatively high volumes. • Delhaize is going after its own piece of that discount market. •

Planned locations include three in Philadelphia with other locations as far as Allentown and two sites in southern New Jersey.

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