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Wal-Mart plans small-format store in northeast Rohnert Park

65-employee store set to open in fall 2014

ROHNERT PARK — Wal-Mart, which has been trying to expand grocery selections at its existing west Rohnert Park store, plans to open one of its smaller-format stores in the northeast part of the city.

A 33,000-square-foot “Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market” store is targeted to open in fall 2014 in the former Pacific Market space in the Mountain Shadows Shopping Plaza at Golf Course and Country Club drives, according to a company announcement Wednesday. The store would employ 65 full- and part-time.

“The community has long needed a grocery option again in Mountain Shadows Plaza,” said Rohnert Park Mayor Pam Stafford in a statement. “With the Neighborhood Market as an anchor store, the current businesses will better thrive and families in Rohnert Park can once again shop right in their own neighborhood.”

Pacific Market closed about two years ago and was the anchor tenant for the center.

“We’ve received significant feedback from the community regarding this vacancy and an overwhelming majority has asked that we consider an affordable grocery tenant in this location,” said Jeff Boyd, manager of plaza owner Mountain Shadows Investors, LLC.

Arkansas-based Wal-Mart launched the smaller markets in 1998 and now has 250 nationwide and three in the North Bay. In addition to an existing store in Vacaville, another is opening there along with a new store in Vallejo.



Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market stores includes a full grocery. (image credit: Wal-Mart)

This smaller-store expansion comes as United Kingdom-based retail giant Tesco encountered troubles over the past several years in launching small markets about half the size of the forthcoming Wal-Mart store in Rohnert Park. A Southern California billionaire inked a deal with Tesco in early September to acquire about 150 Fresh & Easy Neighborhood Market stores, including ones in Napa and Vacaville.

The Walmart Neighborhood Market format has a full grocery department with certified-organic and “natural” foods. The store is set to have prepared foods, a bakery, self-serve deli, health and beauty products, a pharmacy, pet supplies and household goods.

“We are thrilled to have a Neighborhood Market in this location,” said Yolanda Ramirez, owner of Straw Hat Pizza and one of 20-plus tenants still at the center. “We are glad to see the plaza secure a business that will bring new customers to the entire shopping center.”

“We serve thousands of customers each month at our current store, and we see Rohnert Park as a great fit for both the expansion of our current store and the new Neighborhood Market,” said James Groh, area manager for Wal-Mart. A total of 150 new jobs are envisioned at the two stores.

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