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New Edmond grocery stores opening

Uptown Grocery Co. and Sunflower Farmers Market are getting ready to open in Edmond.

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EDMOND — Grocery shopping is getting more interesting in Edmond with the planned opening of two new stores over the next seven weeks.

Uptown Grocery Co., in a 50,350-square-foot building near the southwest corner of Kelly Avenue and Covell Road, will feature natural and organic foods. It will offer a large selection of prepared foods in a building that mirrors one in a New York warehouse district. It is scheduled to open Feb. 29.

Sunflower Farmers Market will offer local, organic and natural produce, supplements and other products. Renovation of the former 31,000-square-foot Homeland store at Second Street and Littler Avenue is under way. It is expected to open March 28.

While both stores will feature natural and organic products, the stores are unique in what they offer.

Uptown Grocery Co.

Uptown Grocery Co. is for the shopper looking for something ready to eat or the ingredients needed to prepare a meal at home.

High-quality meats, seafood, sushi and a large selection of exotic cheeses, plus concierge service, cooking shows, event planning and an on-site master florist are all part of the store, said Hank Binkowski, owner and president.

“We have tried to create a unique experience,” Binkowski said. “We are totally different than our competitors.”

Susan Binkowski, Hank's wife and owner and manager of the property developer Esperanza Real Estate Investments, said the store mirrors aspects of Whole Foods Market and H-E-B, a food retailer with stores in Texas. The store will employ 250 to 300 people. Construction cost is \$13 million.

Sushi and specialty cheeses will line a 50-foot counter decorated with glittery tile. Cheese makers from as far away as England are expected to be in Edmond to educate shoppers about their products, Susan Binkowski said.

Despite the size of the store, Susan Binkowski said, an important design element was to provide the shopper a feeling of intimacy.

“I don't want to go from the front to the back of the store to just get milk,” she said.

Shoppers coming in the south entrance can grab milk and eggs and pay for the merchandise without ever leaving the area of the store where they came in.

People don't even have to come in the store to shop. They can order online. The food will be gathered and stored in a refrigerated room until the shopper drives up and the

groceries are loaded.

Sunflower Farmers Market

Sunflower Farmers Market will be the second Sunflower store to open in the metro area. The other store is in Oklahoma City at NW 63 and May Avenue.

A \$3 million remodeling project is under way to get ready for the Edmond opening. The store will hire 100 workers.

Fresh organic and natural produce and merchandise sold in bulk are the highlights of Sunflower stores, said Steve Black, vice president of operations.

“Natural and organic produce will make up 25 percent of our store,” Black said. “We offer serious foods for silly prices. We buy direct, and there is no middle man.”

The store is designed to remind shoppers of local farmers markets, with seasonal, specialty and local produce displayed in the middle of the store.

Ron Green, Edmond's store director, described the Sunflower stores as having a festive atmosphere. “We offer a relaxed shopping atmosphere,” Green said. “Our prices are excellent.”

Green, who has been in the grocery business since 1978, said the first time he walked into a Sunflower store he knew he wanted to be part of the company.

He went home, typed up his resume and applied for the job the next day.

“I have been really impressed,” Green said. “I can't wait to open a new store for Edmond.”



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