

## Opening day crunch will be worth it, Whole Foods says

Oklahoma City's new Whole Foods store, 6001 N Western in the Triangle at Classen Curve shopping center, opens at 8 a.m. Wednesday.

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We've all heard the saying that death and taxes are the only two things that are certain in life. It's probably safe to add to that list: crowds at Whole Foods Market on Wednesday for the store's Oklahoma City debut.

Maybe it's just that customers can't wait. Maybe they want to say they were among the first and post or tweet about it.

Whatever the reason, expect traffic woes, parking headaches and long checkout lines. But Whole Foods wants customers to know: It will be worth it.

The company says it will donate 5 percent of all sales Wednesday to the YWCA in Oklahoma City, a nonprofit that works to end domestic violence and sexual assault and operates a shelter for battered women and children. Stores typically hold fundraisers each quarter for a local charity, but not during an opening.

“That will be one of our highest dollar days ever, so we can make the biggest impact,” store manager Steve Cramer said.

Giving back is one of Whole Foods' core values and the company supports several issues by sourcing food from local farmers, giving micro loans through its Whole Planet Foundation and sponsoring healthy eating in schools through its Whole Kids Foundation.

The stores are eco-friendly and they take a stand on sustainable farming practices.

The company also emphasizes having well-informed (and happy) workers, whom they call “team members.”

That's why Mark Dixon, president of Whole Foods' southwest region, which includes Oklahoma, fell in love with the company while working as a stock clerk 27 years ago, he told an audience at Tuesday's Rotary Club of Oklahoma City meeting.

“We sell food, but we're not really a grocery store,” he said. “It's much broader than that.”