

## Walkertown to get a Food Lion

### *Chain signs lease to use former Winn-Dixie space in Centre Stage Shopping Center*

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#### WALKERTOWN

Walkertown will get a Food Lion early next year in a space formerly occupied by a Winn-Dixie store.

"Yes, we have signed a lease with them," said Henry Fonvielle, the executive vice president of the company that owns Centre Stage Shopping Center.

"They (Food Lion) will do renovations and improvements. We don't have a schedule for opening of the store, but I'd guess that it would be opening in six months."

Jeff Lowrance, a spokesman for Food Lion Inc. of Salisbury, confirmed last week that the chain has signed a lease with Rappaport.

The building on Old Hollow Road will be 35,200 square feet, the standard size for a Food Lion, Lowrance said.

"It'll probably open sometime in early 2007," he said.

The exact time, he said, will depend on work permits, outfitting, electrical, plumbing and cosmetic work that's required.

Last year, Winn-Dixie announced that it was closing its Walkertown store as part of a post-bankruptcy restructuring. Lowes Foods, which moved into the Walkertown Commons Shopping Center on Reidsville Road in 2004, is currently the only retail grocery store in Walkertown.

Town and Rappaport officials said that the store will be perfect for the shopping center.

"We're very pleased that Food Lion is coming into the shopping center," Fonvielle said. "It's very important to have a grocery anchor for the shopping center, and Food Lion is the perfect tenant. Having a store like that really helps the daily traffic of the shopping center."

Town Manager Ron Bell said, "Right now, we only have one grocery store in Walkertown." A second store, he added, will benefit the town's economy.

"Shoppers would stop and spend money at other stores; we'd get property taxes," he said. "Employees would go to lunch and go to other stores in the area. It would help support the other businesses in the shopping center. It would be good for the businesses and property and people."

Gary Rappaport, the owner of Rappaport Cos., bought the shopping center in 1986, Fonvielle said. Rappaport Cos. owns 10 million square feet of shopping centers and land for developing in northern Virginia, the Washington area and elsewhere, Fonvielle said.

When Winn-Dixie closed its store in the shopping center last fall, Rappaport told the Kernersville Journal that Food Lion was one of several possible tenants.

Bell said he hopes that Food Lion will hire people from Walkertown. Lowrance said that it is likely.

"We always like the folks in the store to live in the local community as much as possible," Lowrance said. "I don't know how many people will be employed there. Typically, a Food Lion has 50 to 60 associates, with a third of them full-time."

There are about 20 Food Lions in Forsyth County and 490 in North Carolina, Lowrance said.

#### **This story can be found at:**

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