By: Andrew Westrope

Walmart stores on their way to Rocklin

Grocery store opening in September, supercenter to follow this fall

Philip Wood · The Placer Herald
Nguyn Bui, left, Alain Irizarry and Robert
Nauyoks set up fixtures in the new Walmart
Neighborhood Market.

The world's largest retailer will open two stores in Rocklin this fall, bringing jobs and tax revenue to the city and heavy competition to local businesses.

Walmart has set a grand opening date of Sept. 18 for its Neighborhood Market at 5609 Pacific St., but it has yet to schedule one for the supercenter under construction since February at Rocklin Crossings on Sierra College Boulevard.

Karen Garner, Rocklin's economic growth manager, said the two stores are separate projects with separate contractors, but long delays in the supercenter caused their schedules to coincide, and now the supercenter might open in November. She said both stores are located in growing commercial areas: the Neighborhood Market's opening coincides with that of a new Subway next door, and a 7-Eleven on the opposite side of Sunset Boulevard will open within the next few months.

"Obviously, both (Walmart stores) are going to be significant sales tax generators, and sales tax goes into the city's general fund, and that's what funds a lot of our programs and services, in-cluding most of police and fire, and what they do," Garner said. Before now, the Walmart stores nearest to Rocklin were a supercenter off of Highway 65 and a discount store east of Interstate 80 on Lead Hill Boulevard, both in Roseville. The latter will temporarily close after Rocklin's supercenter op-ens, transferring its associates to the Rocklin location while it undergoes a one-year remodeling process.

Walmart spokesperson Rachel Wall said the Rocklin supercenter will still hire about 100 new employees, and the Lead Hill store will reopen in fall 2014 with about 200 new jobs. Combined, the two stores will employ about 500 people.

A 2006 economic impact analysis by CBRE Consulting, Inc., said the planned 231,353-square-foot supercenter at Rocklin Crossings would have made $109.7 million in 2009, earning more money than estimates say it would have diverted from other stores. The study's figures are now dated and do not

include the Neighborhood Market, but brokers who contributed to the study did not believe the supercenter would cause any grocery stores to close.

Steve Tapp, store manager of the Neighborhood Market, said his will be a full-service grocery store like the one in Granite Bay, but some 10,000 square feet larger at 52,932 square feet altogether, and stocked with food and other consumable goods like paper products, chemicals and household cleaning items.

"I think the city of Rocklin is growing at a continual pace, and they don't have representation of a Walmart Neighborhood Market," he said. "In the 'old town' Rocklin, where this one is located, we thought we would be very valuable in the community, provide jobs in the community and also a place for them to shop so they can save money and live better."

Tapp said the Hiring Center at 5514 Pacific St. has received close to 600 applications for about 100 open positions at the Neighborhood Market since June 17, and will continue receiving them until opening day.

"We have full- and part-time jobs," he said. "But the Walmart benefit program includes competitive pay, a quarterly bonus program, affordable health care with no lifetime maximum and as little as $17 per paycheck, and a matching 401(k) program. They get a discount card, so they get discounts on the general merchandise in the store, we have an associate stock purchase program … and then complete paid life insurance."

Philip Wood · The Placer Herald
Walmart Neighborhood Market employee Donnie Carey, left, and manager Steve Tapp look over training software as the new Rocklin store prepares for its Sept. 18 opening.

Tapp said progress on the Neighborhood Market is "right on target," with new hires already in training and installing fixtures this week, and stocking shelves by Aug. 26. He said anyone interested can apply in person at the Hiring Center or online at www.walmart.com/careers.

http://www.auburnjournal.com/article/walmart-stores-their-way-rocklin