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New Walmart store: still doing more with less?



In the last five years, the world's largest retailer has opened 455 U.S. stores, a 13 percent increase, while laying off 20,000 employees, a 1.4 percent reduction.

As Bloomberg News reported in March, that has prompted loud complaints from both underpaid staff and frustrated customers. "You cannot keep cutting labor hours and expect the shelves to get filled," an analyst with New York research firm Sanford C. Bernstein told Bloomberg.

Let's see if the message has been received when Walmart opens its new, smaller-format Neighborhood Market in Pleasanton in July.

Last week the Bentonville, Ark. company put out the word that it was hiring 65 "associates" — full-time and part-time, average wage \$12.93 an hour — to "bring good jobs with great career opportunities to the area." A temporary hiring center has been set up at the Meadow Shopping Center in Pleasanton, and you can also apply at www.walmart.com/careers.

Walmart topped the latest Fortune 500 list, which came out on Monday. Overall, the 500 recorded "near record high earnings" in 2012 while keeping staff levels low, and, like Chevron, dispensing with worthy initiatives that do little for the bottom line.

More in today's Bottom Line column at SFChronicle.com.

<http://blog.sfgate.com/bottomline/2013/05/07/new-walmart-store-still-doing-more-with-less/>