

Goodyear Bashas' to reopen next week

*Eli Arnold - Oct. 16, 2009 04:36 PM
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Bashas' is set to reopen a store it originally closed as part of its Chapter 11 bankruptcy reorganization and is counting on local shoppers to help it thrive.

The company announced late Thursday that it will reopen its only Goodyear store next Saturday, just two weeks after closing it.

Of the 23 stores closed in recent months, it is the first and only store that is expected to reopen, Edward "Trey" Basha, a company senior vice president, said Friday.

"This is very unique, and it's due in large measure to Westcor helping out," he said. Phoenix-based Westcor developed Market at Estrella Falls in Goodyear. Bashas' operated a 50,000-square-foot grocery store and food court there for 10 months before closing Oct. 10.

The company announced plans to close 10 locations before its July bankruptcy filing. Thirteen more, including the Goodyear location, were slated to close by the end of the month.

"We need the community's support to ensure this (Goodyear) store's long-term success," Basha said in a prepared statement. "The fate of this supermarket is in the hands of grocery shoppers in the West Valley. This is their Bashas', and we will continue to ask for their input every step of the way."

The company announced Thursday that it had reached an agreement with the store's landlord, mall developer Westcor.

Westcor operates the power center where Bashas' will reopen, northeast of Pebble Creek Parkway and McDowell Road. Bankruptcy filings show Chandler-based Bashas' was paying \$707,678 a year for the space leased through 2030.

Karen Maurer, Westcor assistant vice president of development relations, declined to discuss specifics of the deal.

Allowing the store to close would have meant another empty retail space in an already challenging business environment, Maurer said. Also, she said the company heard a lot of feedback on Bashas' closing and is glad to reopen it.

Now, they're hoping shoppers will "show Bashas' how much they really support that store," Maurer said.

Basha said Friday that he didn't know the details of the lease, but it was "enough of an incentive" to allow them to reopen.

"The temporary closure has been an all-too-real reminder of just how challenging times are," Garrett Newland, Westcor's vice president of development, said in a prepared statement. "We're pleased that we could team up with Bashas' to help reopen the supermarket. . . . We continue to see Bashas' as an incredibly important retailer there and hope the community appreciates the commitment Bashas' has made to the store."

Customers can expect to see some changes.

The store will close an hour earlier than before, offer more of items that sold well and reduce those that didn't, Basha said.

The new operating hours of the Goodyear store will be 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays and 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sundays.

Bashas expects to return to a 75 to 100-member workforce it had before the closure.

Most employees had been reassigned to other stores and will return with the reopening.

"We're thrilled to have another shot," store director Steve Stover said.

<http://www.azcentral.com/business/articles/2009/10/16/20091016biz-bashas1017.html>