

Walmart to become a major employer in Burnsville

By [John Gessner](#) on August 9, 2012 at 11:10 am



The Burnsville Walmart store at 12200 River Ridge Blvd. is scheduled to open Oct. 26. Hiring begins Aug. 20. Photo by John Gessner

Store opening set for Oct. 26

Hiring begins Aug. 20 for Walmart, Burnsville's newest major employer.

A Walmart store that won City Council approval in January is scheduled to open Oct. 26 at 12200 River Ridge Blvd., east of Interstate 35W in north Burnsville.

A hiring center will open Aug. 20 at 12245 Nicollet Ave. S. in Burnsville, said store manager Sean Brooks.

The store will provide 350 to 375 jobs, half of them full time, Brooks said. Employment could swell to 400 over the holidays.

The 350 to 375 jobs would make Walmart the No. 8 employer in town, based on 2011 figures from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

Brooks said wages will probably range from \$8 to \$15 an hour. "It depends on experience," he said.

He and his department managers have been getting to know community leaders, including Mayor Elizabeth Kautz and Skip Nienhaus, Burnsville's economic development coordinator.

The two officials attended an Aug. 6 meet-and-greet session with Brooks and his team that was arranged by Sandra Schlaefter of Burnsville-based employee benefit and insurance firm King and Cos.

“We want you to know that we welcome you,” the mayor told store managers. “When you come into Burnsville, this is the way I look at it – we are family.”

Much of the discussion focused on the new store’s philanthropic efforts in the community.

Kautz suggested home fix-ups for senior citizens and early literacy programs as worthy beneficiaries.

“We want everybody to know we’re here as part of the community,” said Brooks, whose previous position with Walmart was as fresh market manager for its Sam’s Club warehouse stores in Minnesota and North Dakota. “We want to be leaders in the community.”

Walmart would outpace the Target store on County Road 42, with 315 workers, as Burnsville’s single largest retail employer, based on the 2011 DEED figures.

The Costco retail warehouse that opened in 2010 on County Road 42 employs about 250, with another 150 product demonstrators, according to Nienhaus.

The store will donate a minimum of \$19,000 a year to local causes, Brooks said. Beyond that, employee volunteer projects in the community can be matched with \$500 corporate checks, he said in an interview.

Brooks said his team has already met with Sal Mondelli, CEO of Burnsville-based nonprofit 360 Communities.

Walmart is planning a volunteer project at a 360 Communities family shelter, which will be accompanied by a \$500 donation, Brooks said.

Prototype store

The Burnsville store is one of three smaller, leaner prototype stores opening in Minnesota, Brooks said.

The stores are about 150,000 square feet and are designed to use less energy and accommodate customer traffic patterns, he said. Less product is stored on-site.

“It has nothing to do with cutting costs,” Brooks said. “It’s more along the lines of customer feedback and being environmentally friendly.”

Prototype stores will open in Lakeville in October and in Brooklyn Center in September, Brooks said.

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