

# Aldi announces plans to open 25 stores

Locations to be outside Denton, but distribution center to bring in jobs

Denton Record Chronicle, December 12, 2008

By Candace Carlisle / Staff Writer

Discount grocery retailer Aldi Inc. announced company plans to open 25 stores in the Dallas-Fort Worth area by spring 2010 -- all supplied by a Denton distribution center that is scheduled to open within 18 months.



Courtesy art/Aldi

This rendering depicts a typical Aldi stand-alone store.

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Although the company is in the process of securing properties, the discount grocer is already locked into store locations in Dallas, Garland, Pantego, Plano, Richardson and Rowlett, said spokeswoman Martha Swaney in Chicago.

"This year is a very significant year for growth," Swaney said. "We are doubling our rate of expansion."

While Denton was not announced as one of the limited-assortment grocery store locations this week, about 100 jobs will come to the city through the distribution center that is the company's first in the Southwest, Swaney said.

"When the 25 stores are successful, we'll look at additional locations," Swaney said. "We'll have more specifics in 2009 for Denton shoppers."

The German-owned company broke ground on 185 acres near the Denton Municipal Airport in June to build a \$40 million, 500,000-square-foot center that will support stores in Texas and Oklahoma.

The distribution center is scheduled to open before the stores. Company officials expect to finish construction between December 2009 to June 2010, she said.

City officials said the discount grocer still plans on eventually opening up two store locations in the city, with projected investments in the buildings reaching \$3.5 million.

Aldi -- whose stores are comparable in size to a Walgreens -- will carry meat, produce and dairy, as well as 1,400 private-label products that cost an average of 50 percent less than their brand-name counterparts, the company said.

"We are proud to have the most loyal customers in the industry," Swaney said. "They save money without compromising quality. They may come for the prices, but they stay for the quality."

The discount store is able to charge less in part because it charges 5 cents per grocery bag and gathers a 25-cent deposit for grocery carts, the company said.

With more than 1,000 stores in the United States, Aldi is growing into Florida and Texas; both states that are major strongholds for fellow discount retailer Wal-Mart Stores Inc.

Aldi focuses on appealing to its competitors' customers, claiming to offer shoppers 25 percent greater savings than Wal-Mart, said Linda Ratliff, the city's economic development director.

"They can beat Wal-Mart in prices for food," Ratliff said. "They focus on the people looking to save money."

*Dallas Morning News staff writer Maria Halkias contributed to this report.*

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