



Sneak peek at the new Southwest Austin Whole Foods store

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By Penny Levers

Oak Hill foodies rejoice! The much-anticipated new Whole Foods in Arbor Trails (the Costco center at William Cannon and MoPac) will open at 8:00 am Tuesday, June 19 after a 7:30 a.m. bread breaking ceremony. While most new Whole Foods open on Wednesdays, project consultant and feng shui expert Alex Stark determined that Tuesday was the most cosmically ideal time.

Stark, a Yale-educated architect who participated in the creation of Whole Foods stores in New York, London and Chicago, was brought into the Arbor Trails project to insure that the design had maximum positive energy flow. To help accomplish this, crystals have been placed at strategic points in the ceiling.

The new store, converted from a former Haverty's, incorporates environmentally-friendly features at every turn. Solar panels cover the roof, which has also been fitted with 20 skylights to let in natural lighting. The lighting fixtures automatically dim to adjust to the amount of natural sunlight that comes into the store.

Colorful tile walls are made of 80% composted material, and decorative touches include vintage truck tailgates suspended above the checkout counters and panels made of re-purposed garden hoses. Produce bins and cabinets are made from antique pine and all new lumber used was certified as a product of sustainable forestry practices.



Most employees at the Arbor Trails location have been employed with other Whole Foods stores. Store Team leader Steph Steele had been at the downtown location, but will now be within walking (or biking) distance of her home in Oak Hill. Healthy Eating Specialist Kelly Dennis will be putting hours in at both the new Bee Cave and Arbor Trails locations.

This will be the first store to have an in-house dehydrator. Freshly dried items will be available for sale, and special orders could be accommodated with a 48-hour notice. Other features include a cookie bar, a sushi bar, a coffee/juice and smoothie bar and wine on tap to go.

For the first five days— Tuesday through Saturday— one percent of sales will go to local non-profits. The opening day beneficiary will be the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. The day will feature many kids activities, hourly prize drawings, and native plant and gardening advice. On

Wednesday, coinciding with the first day of summer, the Southwest Austin YMCA benefits, and activities will focus on fitness. Be sure and catch the flashmob dance at 3 p.m!

Thursday's one percent goes to Austin Zoo. Kids are urged to participate in the costume contest, which goes from 9 am to 11am, and come dressed as their favorite animal. In addition, there will be an all day scavenger hunt and other contests throughout the day. Friday benefits the Sustainable Food Center, who put on the farmers' markets downtown and in Sunset Valley. Come meet local farmers and artisans from 10 to noon and come back for Happy Hour with live music by Sour Bridges from 5 pm to 7 pm. The final beneficiary on Saturday will be Austin Pets Alive. Pets in need of adoption can be seen all day at the "Critter Café", while free dog washes and pet portraits will be happening from noon to 3 pm.

