

Revamped Bashas' landmark store preview March 31

By Barb Charzuk
Times Reporter

An 11-month void in shopping options will soon be filled, much to the delight of many residents.

Bashas' is set to unveil its renovated grocery store in Fountain Hills Plaza, southwest corner of Palisades Blvd. and La Montana Drive, at 4 p.m., Tuesday, March 31.

The third and most modernized version of Bashas' stores will feature an Italian kitchen and gelato bar, Wi-Fi lounge with flat-screen TV, organic food section, community meeting room, and children's Cub House.

The Pederson Group, a Phoenix-based company, led the rejuvenation of the grocery store and the plaza.

"Families have been counting down the days for this new store to open," said store director and long-time town resident Ken Fett.

"There's a lot of excitement out there, and we're looking forward to celebrating this ar-

rival in a big way.

During the preview party, guests can tour the store, sample food, enter to win a Bashas' gift card, and take home giveaways, including a reusable bag. Bashas' will donate to Extended Hands Food Bank as part of the grand opening festivities.

Bashas was the first chain grocer to serve the town in 1974. As the town outgrew the modest-sized original store, the location closed in 1986, and a larger store opened the next day at 16605 E. Palisades Blvd., the present location.

To revitalize the area and contribute to the neighborhood's stability, Bashas' decided to demolish the 21-year-old store in April 2008 and rebuild a contemporary neighborhood store with a fresh prototype design.

Special features in the town's new Bashas will be:

- Customer lounge with a 42-inch flat-screen television and free Wi-Fi access.

- Community room designed for a meeting and gathering place for civic and non-profit

organizations.

- Cub House, a free supervised play center equipped with a Sony Play Station, arts and crafts and board games for children ages 2-10.

- Extensive selection of organic and natural choice foods.

- Bakery with products made from scratch on site.

- Full-service deli offering Boar's Head brand meats and cheese and chef-prepared hot entrees.

- Full-service United Drugs Pharmacy

- Front-end self-checkout lanes.

"During the last 77 years, we've opened a lot of stores," said Johnny Basha, vice chairman of Bashas' Family of Stores. "We've closed a few, too. But it's rare for us to close a store and rebuild a completely new store in the same spot. When this new store opens, we believe that the Fountain Hills community will agree that it was worth the wait."

The new store spans nearly 50,000 square feet, more than



Crews make final improvements to the rebuilt, larger Bashas' supermarket at Fountain Hills Plaza, corner of Palisades Blvd. and La Montana Drive. The public is invited to preview the grocery store at 4 p.m., Tuesday, March 31.

triple the size of Bashas' first store in town.

Bashas' will employ about 100 cashiers, courtesy clerks, managers and other team members at the new store.

Hours will be from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Bashas' is the eighth larg-

est employer in the state with 13,000 members and 160 grocery stores. The Bashas' Family of Stores, a family-owned grocer, operates Food City, AJ's Fine Foods, Sportsman's Fine Wines & Spirits, Eddie's Country Store, and Bashas' Dine supermarkets.