

BND 6-25-14

# Fresh Thyme, Aldi stores see progress

BY WILL BUSS  
News-Democrat

An organic grocery chain anticipates opening its first metro-east store in spring 2015.

Fresh Thyme Farmers Market is under construction at the Fairview City Centre redevelopment near the northwest corner of Illinois 159 and Lincoln Trail in Fairview Heights. The store had been planned to open this fall but has been pushed back to next spring.

The news comes on the



heels of an announcement by Aldi's that it plans to build a discount grocery store in

Please see STORES, A2

## STORES |

Continued from Page A1

Belleville.

Aldi has applied for a zoning permit to build a new store at West Main Street and Frank Scott Parkway, across from Althoff Catholic High School. The proposal goes before the city's zoning board on Thursday. Aldi also has stores in Swansea, O'Fallon, Cahokia, Collinsville, Glen Carbon Granite City and Wood River.

A spokesman for the company could not be reached for comment.

The Phoenix-based Fresh Thyme formed two years ago and opened its first store last spring in the Chicago area, in Mount Prospect, and another is scheduled to open Wednesday nearby in Deerfield, Ill. Earlier this year, the company announced plans to open 60 stores across the Midwest within the next five years, including stores across the river in Kirkwood, Mo. and Ballwin, Mo. by next year.

Fairview Heights Economic Development Director Mike Malloy said the new 28,000-square-foot store that Fresh Thyme Farmers Market is building is expected bring about 120 new jobs and generate about \$16 million a year in revenue for the city, where residents have been wanting an organic grocery store and is pleased add in town.

"People are constantly wanting a Trader Joe's or a facsimile thereof," Malloy said, referring to the California-based grocer that has four stores in St. Louis County. "Well, this is a facsimile thereof."

Meanwhile, Ruler Foods is building new grocery stores at the former Bel-Air Bowl site at the northwest corner of 17th Street and North Belt West in Belleville and also at The Orchards shopping center on Vandalia Street in Collinsville.

The company is a division of parent company JayC Food Stores based in Indiana, which in turn is owned by the Kroger Co. The chain sells a "limited or edited assortment" featuring a lot of Kroger brand products.

The metro-east also is home to Schnucks, Dierbergs, Shop 'n Save and a number of smaller independent grocers, as well as big-box traditional retailers Walmart and Target, which in recent years have opened grocery departments within their stores.