Save-A-Lot expands in Upstate



RON DEKETT / Staff

Shoppers browse at the Save-a-Lot food store in Pickens after its ribbon cutting Wednesday.

Discount grocery opens in Pickens

By Julie Howle
STAFF WRITER
jhowle@greenvilleonline.com

PICKENS—A Save-A-Lot food store opened Wednesday in Pickens creating 30-35 jobs and returning life to a Hampton Avenue building that has been vacant for years.

Dwayne Goodwin, president and CEO of The Goodwin Group Holdings LLC, said the Pickens store is his company's third Save-A-Lot in the Upstate.

Goodwin, who lives in Easley, said stores were opened in West Union and Laurens last year. He plans to open a fourth store by the end of the year in the Upstate with 3-5 sites now under consideration.

Pickens resident Audrey Ortino was among the first to stroll the aisles in Pickens.

"I think it's going to bring more people to Pickens because of the type of grocery store that it is," Ortino said. "It is nice to see something that used to be a store that sat vacant for such a long time that now is back open and thriving."

Goodwin said his company hired 30-35 employees and more hires are possible.

"If we come through and week three (is) better than we projected then there'll be another wave of hiring, kind of Phase 2," Goodwin said.

The store received more than 850 job applications, he said.

Mike Parrott, executive director of the Greater Pickens Chamber of Commerce, said the former Winn-Dixie site has been vacant probably 8-10 years and possibly longer.

"This will have a tremendous impact for the economic development of Pickens," Parrott said.

The store is using about 25,000 square feet of the building with about 18,000 devoted to sales floor area, Goodwin said.

Shoppers will find everything from fresh produce and a meat department with fresh-cut meat to a bakery section and frozen foods at the store, Goodwin said.

He said Save-A-Lot is one of the nation's leading hard discount grocery chains and offers a savings of 20 to 40 percent on groceries when compared to conventional stores.

John Likens, vice president of retail operations for Save-A-Lot, said there are about 1,300 stores nationwide.