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Early-risers get a look at the new Wal-Mart Supercenter store

in South Union Township as the facility opened to the public

Friday morning. Dave Rafferty/Herald-Standard



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Wal-Mart Supercenter opens in South Union

By James Pletcher Jr., Herald-Standard 03/08/2008 Updated 03/09/2008 12:06:06 AM EDT

in the Fayette Crossing shopping plaza.

A small group of shoppers waited in the chilly morning air Friday to get a look at the new Wal-Mart Supercenter

By 7:24 a.m., following a brief opening ceremony, shoppers gained access to the 203,000 square feet of clothes, groceries, automotive supplies and other goods the store offers.

Bobette King of Uniontown noted how "nice this store is," adding that she had worked at the company's Belle Vernon store. "I have been waiting for them to open a store like this here," she said.

Richard and Bonnie Gaye of Dunbar also thought the store was "nice"

"But we are still looking around," Richard Gaye said.

The new Wal-Mart, located at 355 Wal-Mart Drive, replaces one the company opened in 1993 in the nearby

Cherry Tree Plaza. That smaller store, with 116,000 square feet of space, closed at 6 p.m. Thursday. Marcy Sloneker, Wal-Mart market manager, said goods remaining in that store will be moved to the new store.

Rich Cravotta, store manager and a native of Fairchance, said the new store is the "largest format that Wal-Mart has. There are similar stores in Morgantown (W.Va.) and Greensburg.

Cravotta, who has been with Wal-Mart since serving as an intern at its State College store in 1991, said the company developed the larger store "because it felt this area could support it. This also renews our commitment to the area."

Don Ciotti, Wal-Mart regional vice president, praised Cravotta and the store associates.

"This does not happen without great leadership and associates," Ciotti said.

Cravotta also praised the associates for their work in maintaining the old store while preparing to open the new one.

Wal-Mart's Supercenter - open 24 hours a day, seven days a week - employs 532 associates, or about twice the number of the old store. The average wage for full-time hourly Wal-Mart associates in Pennsylvania as of February is \$10.71per hour, according to the company,

Wal-Mart benefits, available to eligible full- and part-time associates, include health-care insurance, with no lifetme maximum. Wal-Mart also offers a 401(k) plan and profit-sharing contributions, whether an associate contributes or not store discount cards, company performance-based bonuses, stock purchase program and life insurance.

The store's grocery department includes a full bakery, a delicatessen offering a variety of prepared foods, fresh produce, frozen foods, meat and dairy selections

Other features of the supercenter include a pharmacy, a vision center, a tire and lube express, a Wal-Mart Connect Center for wireless phone sales, a portrait studio and a one-hour photo lab. Additional leased space and services indude a McDonald's restaurant, a hair salon, a nail salon, and a branch of Woodforest Bank.

The new general merchandise departments include a full lawn and garden center with a drive-through feature, health ard beauty aids, sporting goods, books, toys, electronics, jewelry, apparel and accessories and a section for infants and

The new supercenter also showcases energy saving and sustainable features including skylights, light-emitting diode (LED) refrigerated case lighting, motion-sensor lighting in the freezer cases and motion-sensor water faucets and lighting in the restrooms

The store's pharmacy also has a drive-through lane and will offer Wal-Mart's expanded \$4 prescription program. The \$4 prescriptions are now available for most commonly treated medical conditions.

Robert Schiffbauer, South Union Township supervisor who was on hand for the grand opening, noted the vision Fayette County commissioners and the Fayette County Redevelopment Authority had seven years ago when development of the 300-acre Fayette County Business Park on Route 40 west of Uniontown began.

He also thanked state Rep. Tim Mahoney, D-South Union Township, who also was present for the opening, for his help in solving an environmental issue concerning wetlands that could have seriously delayed that development

"Rep. Mahoney brought the issue to the attention of the governor and within weeks it was settled and the project went on," he said.

Others who gave brief comments at the opening included Mahoney and Fayette County Commissioners Vincent A. Vicites and Vincent Zapatosky.

According to the redevelopment authority, Cedarwood Development has invested more than \$50 million in the business

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park, of which Fayette Crossing is a part. Another \$20 million invested in infrastructure improvements came from a variety of local, state, and federal sources and includes improvements installed in the entire business park, including the Matthew Drive extension project.

As of February, Wal-Mart employed 50,732 associates and owned and operated the following facilities 83 supercenters, 41 discount stores, 23 Sam's Clubs and four distribution centers in Pennsylvania.

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