

# Wawa breaks ground on two sites



Targeting 40 Northeast Florida stores over five years, Wawa Inc. broke ground Thursday on its first two area locations and expects to open three by year-end.

It also announced five more Duval and Clay county sites that will open next year.

Those set to open by December in Duval County are at The Crossing at Town Center at Town Center and Gate Parkway, where Wawa held a food-filled ground-breaking, along with one at Wilson Boulevard and Lane Avenue, both in Jacksonville.

A ground-breaking also was held in Orange Park in Clay County for a Wawa at Blanding Boulevard and Filmore Street, also to open by year-end.

Two Duval County stores set to open in spring 2018 are:

- Argyle Forest Boulevard and Old Middleburg Road in Jacksonville.

- Beach Boulevard and Central Parkway in Jacksonville.

Two scheduled for a summer 2018 opening are:

- Beach and Southside boulevards, Jacksonville.

- Park Avenue and Wells Road, Orange Park.

A Clay County store set for spring 2018 is:

- Blanding Boulevard and Henley Road in Middleburg.

Brian Schaller, Wawa chief fuel and real estate officer, said it will open 10 stores in the area next year. John Poplawski, senior director of site acquisition and development, said 12 sites are under Wawa's control and more are in review.

A guest at the Town Center groundbreaking asked Wawa CEO Chris Gheysens about opening in the Nocatee area, in northern St. Johns County and southern Duval County.

"I am certain we are looking at that area," he said.

Wawa has focused initially on Duval and Clay counties but executives said they also are looking into St. Johns County.

Gheysens said Wawa invests \$6 million into each store, translating into a \$240 million investment in Northeast Florida.

At 40 employees per store, that works out to 1,600 jobs.

District City Council member Scott Wilson said Wawa



Wawa Inc. fans gathered at Thursday's ground-breaking at The Crossing at Town Center.

Photos by Karen Brune Mathis

also redevelops in infill areas. One in his District 4 includes the Beach and Southside boulevards location at the aging Southside Estates center.

The landlord intends to tear down much of that building and redevelop the site for Wawa.

Wawa, based in Wawa, Pa., launched its first Florida store in 2012 in Orlando.

It has since opened more than 115 locations across the state and employs more than 4,000 people. It plans to open 30 stores in the state this year.

It operates more than 750 fuel and convenience stores in six states.

Its leading food items are built-to-order hoagies, fresh coffee, breakfast sandwiches and specialty beverages.

#### FOOD NOTE

Construction was approved for Texas Roadhouse in Town Center Promenade at 4578 Tropea Way. Buffalo Construction Inc. is the contractor for the 7,163-square-foot restaurant at a cost of \$800,000.

#### RETAIL NOTES

- The city issued a permit for site work at 11401 Atlantic Blvd. for Audi Jacksonville. The 6-acre site is being prepared for an almost 38,000 square-foot dealership.



Wawa representatives held renderings of the Wawa near Town Center to be developed by year-end.

- Site work was permitted for the proposed Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market in Baymeadows at 9550 Baymeadows Road. The work includes demolition of pavement, curbs, trees and some utilities for construction of the market in the Baymead-

ows Commons shopping center, along with new pavement, new curbs, utility work and landscaping. According to a previously filed building-permit application, the market would comprise 40,545 square feet of enclosed space and 1,406 square feet

of unenclosed space. It would rebuild the site where Bailey's Powerhouse Gym had operated before relocating nearby.

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## PUBLIC MEETINGS

### MONDAY, APRIL 10

**10 a.m.** – City Council member public meeting: Sun-setting boards and commissions, City Hall, Suite 426

**3 p.m.** – City Council member public meeting: Ability Housing and Springfield overlay, City Hall, Lynwood Roberts Room

### TUESDAY, APRIL 11

**10:30 a.m.** – Mayor's Hispanic-American Advisory

Board, City Hall, Suite 400

**5 p.m.** – City Council, City Hall, Council Chamber

**6:30 p.m.** – Town hall meeting: Body cameras, Florida State College at Jacksonville Wilson Center, 11901 Beach Blvd.

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12

**9:30 a.m.** – Jacksonville Waterways Commission, City Hall, Council Chamber

### TUESDAY, APRIL 18

**3:30 p.m.** – Northwest Jacksonville Economic Development Fund Advisory Committee, City Hall, Third floor, Conference Room C

**7 p.m.** – Northeast Florida Veterans Council, City Hall, Lynwood Roberts Room

### THURSDAY, APRIL 20

**2 p.m.** – 2016 Value Adjustment Board, City Hall, Council Chamber

## MISSING - MISSING - MISSING \$10,000 REWARD



**MARK ANTHONY DEGNER**  
Photo age progressed to 22 yrs  
DOB: 7/13/92  
Hair: Dark Blonde  
Eyes: Hazel

If you have any information, please call Jacksonville Sheriff's Office 904-630-0500 or Crime Stoppers 1-866-845-TIPS.

Last seen Feb. 10, 2005 at Paxon Middle School on westside of Jacksonville, FL



**BRIAN ANDREW HAYES**  
Photo age progressed to 18 yrs  
DOB: 12/18/91  
Hair: Red  
Eyes: Green