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# Journal Star

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## Specialty grocer slated for Westlake

The Fresh Market will employ about 90 people, open this fall

BY PAUL GORDON  
OF THE JOURNAL STAR

**PEORIA** — From his first visit to a store called The Fresh Market, Les Cohen could see a difference from what he called the "typical big-box grocery stores."

That's why Cohen, president of Cohen Development Co. and developer of Westlake Shopping Center, started working six years ago to bring The Fresh Market to Peoria.

On Friday, Cohen announced The Fresh Market will open a 25,000-square-foot store at Westlake in the former site of Circuit

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## WESTLAKE

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City. The store, which will employ about 90 people, will open this fall.

"Just from the depth of the quality you find there and the outstanding operations the average shopper can experience, once you shop at The Fresh Market you will see the difference," Cohen said.

It was a long courtship, Cohen said, "But it was worth it."

Redevelopment of the space, including the parking lot and landscaping, will cost about \$4 million, he said.

The Fresh Market is based in Greensboro, N.C., and this will be the 89th store in the chain, which began in 1982 and today remains mostly concentrated in the southeast, the Midwest and the Mid-Atlantic

regions of the country.

The chain is now in 17 states, however, and expansion into the Midwest continues. There is a smaller Fresh Market store in Normal and three in Chicago-land.

Cohen said the stores are reminiscent of a European marketplace.

"In our (shopping center) industry, Fresh Market and Whole Foods are the current reigning rock stars of national fresh food retailers. And for many people — myself among them — Fresh Market is the more satisfying shopping experience."

The Fresh Market will be the first grocery store at Westlake since 1991, when Randall's — one of the shopping center's original anchors when it opened in 1974 — relocated to Glen Hollow to expand as Cub Foods.

"But this time the grocery store theme may be more en-

during and complete, because The Fresh Market is a classic grocer in the fullest sense of that word," Cohen said. "With Fresh Market, the story is not about quantity, but rather depth of quality in absolutely every single product they carry. Our research shows that steadfast quality builds a loyalty in every town where they open a store: they develop a following who come to rely upon the quality and who, when it comes time to prepare the family meal, prefer to shop nowhere else."

Said company founder Ray Berry, "The Fresh Market was founded on one simple idea: to bring friends, family and neighbors products they could savor and appreciate. We strive to deliver a shopping experience that is out of the ordinary; one that delights and surpasses our customer's expectations every time they visit."

Cohen said The Fresh Market is "reminiscent of European fresh markets all gathered under one roof in an inviting and softly lit setting. Classical music plays. The aromas are delightful. The food choices are, quite simply, inspiring. The service is superior: cooking advice and guidance and menu cards are available in virtually every department, and your groceries, if you wish, are carried cheerfully to your car."

In addition to fresh foods, The Fresh Market offers freshly prepared foods, a bakery, delicatessen, specialty and gourmet food-stuffs, and floral department.

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### The Fresh Market

The Fresh Market, a specialty grocer based in North Carolina that focuses on fresh foods, will open a 25,000-square-foot store at Westlake Shopping Center this fall at the former Circuit City location.



- The Fresh Market, a family-owned operation, currently operates 88 stores in 17 states. This will be its fifth store in Illinois.
- Each store features a large produce department, full-service meat and seafood counters, deli and prepared foods, in-store bakery, floral and gift department, and specialty groceries.
- The Fresh Market boasts it has an extensive program for supporting local farmers to offer produce in its stores. "The company's goal is to continue to grow its selection of local, organic and all-natural products throughout the store," the company said.
- The Peoria store is being developed by Cohen Development Co., founder and chief developer of Westlake Shopping Center.

Source: Cohen Development Co.