

Gresham —

Restaurant boom town

Not many years ago, it was a simple task for Greshamites to decide where to dine out.

Restaurants in the city could be counted on one hand, even if the thumb wasn't used in computation.

Now it takes all the fingers and toes to make a count. The restaurant and fast food business is booming in Gresham.

A walk through the yellow pages and a drive through town reveals at least 21 eateries for the discerning gastronomist to choose from.

Application of little basic

arithmetic shows something like a 500 per cent increase in the restaurant business. How's that for growth?

Steak dinner with all the trimmings, seafood, Chinese food, pizza, pancakes and pork chops are all on the Gresham menu. Those in a hurry can eat and run or run and eat after ordering a burger, corn dog, chicken, fish, pizza or deli treat.

And that's not the end of it. More restaurants can be expected to locate in the area—so much the better for the galloping gourmet.

Fred Meyer center right on schedule

Work on the Gresham Fred Meyer Shopping center is right on schedule, according to Oran Robertson, vice-chairman of the Fred Meyer, Inc. board.

The 166,000 square foot complex, located at the intersection of Burnside and Powell Valley roads, is scheduled to open March 15, 1976.

When complete, the shopping center will be the largest Fred Meyer in Oregon. A sister store of comparable size will soon be completed in Everett, Wash. and there is one larger Fred Meyer in Lynnwood, Wash., Robertson said.

The only problem the store has encountered so far is a difference of opinion with Multnomah County and City of Gresham officials on street improvements at the shopping center, Robertson said.

But he said he was confident problems would be ironed out. When complete, Burnside Road will be widened to four lanes plus a turning lane in the center,

Robertson said.

There will be parking for 758 cars in the center's parking lot.

The shopping complex will have food, apparel and variety departments and an enlarged home improvement and auto center, Robertson said.

The complex's garden center will be the largest in the Fred Meyer chain, he said. There will be fabric and domestic center and a large jewelry store, which is a first for the Fred Meyer chain in Oregon.

There will be an Eve's Restaurant, a photo-electric and sound department and a drugs and cosmetics department, he said.

A candy-greeting card section will also carry books, magazines, gift wraps, etc., Robertson said.

An application will also be submitted for a Fred Meyer Savings and Loan branch at the shopping center, Robertson said.

Construction of the shopping complex began in May. Its estimated cost is \$2,655,594.

OUTLOOK MAY 12, 2001

Out&About

PHOTO BY
FLINT CARLTON - THE OUTLOOK



Above: Cashier trainer Sue Gibbs works with new employees at the registers of the new Fred Meyer store that will open Wednesday, May 16, in Wood Village Town Center at Glisan Street and 223rd Avenue. Above Gibbs' head is a "space pod" or apparel display area. The store will feature a second story with 34,000 square feet of retail space.



Staff photo by Cheryl Blankenship

Last-minute crowds

Stores catering to last-minute shoppers were having a field day Thursday. Crowds were big at the Gresham Fred Meyer store as well as other shopping malls around East County and downtown Gresham. That was pleasing to the hot dog vendor who set up his cart near

the front door of Fred Meyer to corral hungry shoppers. Most people seemed to be after that gift they forgot, something for that very special person or picking up something extra for the Christmas Eve dinner.

*Original
30th 1980*



Casuals for Giving or Keeping
Now at Low, Low Prices

Sale 13.96 to 14.96

Reg. 17.99 and 18.99 The season's most popular look now at a reduced price. Choose from a variety of styles and two heel heights. Women's sizes.

Prices good Today thru Sat., Dec. 6, 1980

Shoe Sections except Stark, Walnut Park, Morrison. Rose City, Lake City, Crossroads, Puyallup

Each of these advertised items must be readily available for

Christmas is special at Fred Meyer

Original
30 Nov 1980



Sugar and Spice...

Traditional holiday looks in 100% nylon velvet for infants and little girls thru 4-6x. Machine washable dresses trimmed with lace and bows.

Pictured styles represent stock and may not be available in every store.

\$11 Infant sizes 9-18 months

\$13 & \$15 Toddler sizes 2 to 4

\$16 Girls' sizes 4-6X



Prices good Today thru Sat., Dec. 6, 1980
Apparel Sections except Morrison, Walnut Park, Stark, Stadium
Burlingame, Gateway, Hollywood, King Road, Rose City
Each of these advertised items must be readily available for
sale at or below the advertised price in each Fred Meyer

OUTLOOK 23 NOV. 2002

NO-STOP SHOPPING



PHOTOS BY FLINT CARLTON - THE GRESHAM OUTLOOK

Robert Miller shops at Fred Meyer daily and is disappointed that it is closing. The store will shut its doors for good on Saturday, Jan. 18, 2003. All 107 employees have the choice of transferring to other Fred Meyer stores in the Portland area.

Rockwood linchpin closes

Fred Meyer announced Friday, Nov. 22, that it will shut down its Rockwood store in less than two months.

Executives met with Rockwood Fred Meyer employees Friday morning to deliver the news. The store will close its doors on Saturday, Jan. 18, 2003.

"It stinks," said Ellen Shockley of Boring, a 10-year employee. "But more for the older people who've shopped here for years. It's not real good," she said of the mood amongst employees and customers.

All 107 Rockwood store employees have the choice to transfer to other Fred Meyer stores in the Portland area and will receive the same hours and pay.

"We asked if we could have it in writing and they said, 'OK.' " Shockley said.

Employee Paula Stein said she will transfer.

"My kids are older, so it'll be easier," she said, adding that she was more wor-

ried about the shoppers. "One of our regulars came in today and cried. It's sad because we're a family and for our customers."

Fred Meyer has asked employees to submit several choices of stores where

they would like to work.

"The employees are our first priority," said Rob Boley, assistant vice president of public relations for Fred Meyer Stores.

The primary reason for Rockwood's



Rockwood Fred Meyer employee Paula Stein, who works in the garden department, will transfer to another store.

closure, Boley said, is that the store has not been providing an acceptable return on investment.

"It was a very difficult decision," he said in a written statement, "but one that had to be made in the best interests of the continued growth of the company. It is not right to ask the company's profitable operations to support unprofitable stores where the prospect of future success is limited."

The decision was made to redirect the company's financial and operating resources to stores with more growth potential.

The Rockwood Fred Meyer has been a staple in the community since it opened in 1957, and is favored by many for its convenient location.

"This is our convenience store," said Robert Miller of Portland, who was out shopping on foot Friday. "It sucks. I come here everyday."

He held up his bags of groceries,

TURN TO CLOSES,
Page 3A

OUTLOOK 23 Nov. 2002

Closes: Business began dropping in mid-1990s

CONTINUED FROM Page 1A

which contained items such as salt, soda pop and orangesicles. "This cost \$14," he said, and pointed to a gas station convenience store nearby. "How much do you think all this would cost over there?"

According to Boley, Fred Meyer has steadily reinvested in the store to keep it modern and open. The company remodeled the entire store in 1988 and again three years ago in 1999.

"Despite substantial investments in the store and hard work by its employees, sales and profitability have continued to decline," he said.

Business started to drop during a recession in the early 1990s, Boley added, and by the mid-1990s, "We were starting to take a long look at Rockwood."

To turn the numbers around, the company decided to invest more in the store to keep it solvent. The 1999 multi-million dollar remodel dramatically expanded its garden center and food departments, for example.

"But it never really recovered," Boley said. The recent recession hasn't helped any. "Maybe we should have made this decision sooner. But we gave it a strong effort to keep it viable in that neighborhood."

Fred Meyer leases the Rockwood store and has at least 10 years remaining.

The company has no plans yet for the store beyond the closure, as it explores possibilities for the property, Boley said. When asked to elaborate, he replied, "I'll decline to speculate."

Bob Curry Wilson, vice president of real estate and store development for Fred Meyer, said, "We don't have any plans at this point. We're going to market the space for lease."

The Washington Mutual branch, located inside the store, will have to close when the store closes. The company will be talking to the exterior tenant, Perfect Look Salon, about what it wants to do, Boley said.

Hair stylist Debbie England has 11 years experience and was unruffled Friday. "They're not going to leave us without jobs," she said of the Perfect Look Corporation.

The Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs, located in the tenant building across the parking lot east of the store, will not be affected by the closure.

At this time no other Oregon Fred Meyer stores are closing. The last Fred Meyer store to close in the Portland area was in 1991.

"As we go through the holidays, we will start to sell down some of the product," Boley said. "But a lot of the basic items we have can be transferred. We're going to continue the store up until the close of business."

After the store closes in January, customers will have the Wood Village, Division and Gresham Fred Meyer stores to shop. All are located within about 3 miles of the Rockwood store.

Reporter Jill Foreman can be reached at jforeman@theoutlookonline.com or by calling 503-492-5116.

OUTLOOK 18 JAN. 2003

Fred Meyer closes doors Saturday

*Rockwood store locks doors
for good at 11 p.m.*

BY JILL FOREMAN
of The Gresham Outlook staff

There's only one day left to shop at the Rockwood Fred Meyer store. Pay some last respects, maybe, as well as for some last-minute groceries.

Fred Meyer will be open for business on Saturday, Jan. 18, until its regular closing hour.

"We're closing at 11 p.m. Saturday evening," confirmed Rob Boley, assistant vice president of public relations for Fred Meyer Stores.

Closing for good, he meant.

Fred Meyer announced just before Thanksgiving that it would eliminate the store because it wasn't making enough money. The Rockwood store has been a community staple at its 185th Avenue and Stark Street location since 1957.

Every employee who wanted to transfer was accommodated, Boley said, and were placed in 15 different stores.

"Approximately 80 people have already started their new jobs with no loss of pay," Boley said.

TURN TO CLOSES,
Page 3A

OUTLOOK 18 JAN. 2003

Closes: Fred Meyer has nine years left on lease

CONTINUED FROM Page 1A

"We probably have 40 employees left who are continuing to operate the store and will be released next week after the remaining merchandise is distributed to other stores," he said.

Fred Meyer leases the Rockwood store and has nine years remaining on its 20 year lease. The City of Gresham is working with Fred Meyer to find a suitable tenant that will contribute to efforts of revitalizing the poverty-stricken area.

At the same time, the city is considering big-picture concepts for the future of the site, such as mixed-use housing or smaller

retail opportunities like boutiques and coffee shops.

"We don't have any replacement to announce at this time," Boley said on Friday, Jan. 17. "We're still working on that."

Fred Meyer's two in-store tenants, Washington Mutual and Perfect Look Salon, have made plans to vacate.

Saturday is Perfect Look's last day. The store will operate at its normal hours from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Three of the four employees will transfer to the Perfect Look Salon at 181st Avenue and Halsey Street.

"It kind of broke up our family here," said stylist Shawn Bauley. "It's sad."

Washington Mutual will be open through March 3 with reduced hours. Beginning Tuesday, Jan. 21, the bank will operate from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

In addition to the reduced hours, Saturday service has been eliminated and the bank will no longer offer an ATM at the site.

"It will be business as usual for us," said bank manager Lisa Casuccio. "Washington Mutual is going to make sure we're placed. They're taking good care of us."

The Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs, located in the tenant building across the parking lot east of the store, will

not be affected by the closure.

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Rockwood Fred Meyer closes after 45 years

Gresham residents are sad to see the grocer go and say the city should have tried harder to help it stay open

By CATHERINE TREVISON
THE OREGONIAN

GRESHAM — Registers clattered, shopping carts crashed and the east wind tore bottles from recyclers' hands.

But what looked like business as usual at the Rockwood Fred Meyer on Saturday was actually the end of the store's 45-year history.

The school supply shelves were empty; the pizza freezers dark and vacant. Pain killers and sleeping pills filled red plastic trays, ready for a move to another store. The remnants of Christmas were on sale, but decorations for Valentine's Day never arrived.

"It's bare in there," said one man, whose family has shopped at the store for 25 years.

Just before Thanksgiving, Fred Meyer announced it would close the store because it has been losing money for years. The Kroger-owned chain has moved about two thirds of the store's 119 employees to 15 other stores. None lost seniority or pay, a store spokesman said. Although the Rockwood store

closed to customers at 11 p.m. Saturday, a crew of 40 will stay until Thursday to finish the shutdown.

Many see it as a devastating blow to a community already suffering more than its share of poverty and crime. Rockwood resident Dina DiNucci, who organized a Thanksgiving weekend rally opposing the closure, was unable to interest many in another rally Saturday.

Despite hope generated by several groups of concerned citizens, including the Rockwood Weed and Seed Project and the Rockwood Action Plan Implementation Committee, "for a lot of people, when this happened, it was the last straw," DiNucci said. "It's a really sad thing."

Neighbor Jodi Miller said she is disgusted that Gresham leaders allowed the neighborhood to reach this point. She thinks that for years, they missed chances to help, such as failing to retain a community policing station near the Fred Meyer.

When Miller first heard the Fred Meyer was closing, "I was really devastated. It's going to hurt a lot of low-income people," she said.

On the other hand, "it's not going to give a place for the criminal to hang out and steal" any longer, she said.

Miller belongs to Stone Soup, a

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JODI MILLER,

A MEMBER OF STONE SOUP, A GROUP OF ROCKWOOD RESIDENTS TRYING TO UNITE DIFFERENT CULTURAL GROUPS TO HELP TURN THE AREA AROUND

group of Rockwood residents trying to unite different cultural groups to help turn the area around. But she thinks that there will be little improvement without the city's help.

"If Fred Meyer is willing to pull out of an active lease and lose money from that lease, who would be willing to follow in their footsteps?" she said. "It will stay vacant — for a very long time."

The closure kicked several city efforts into higher gears. A proposed urban renewal district, previously scheduled for a vote this fall, is now on an "aggressive timeline" so voters can consider it this spring, city planner Deb Meihoff said.

City officials met with Fred Meyer real estate executive Bob Curry-Wilson about the future of the land and building it leases at 18535 S.E. Stark St. They are scheduled to meet with Fred Meyer's president

next month, said Max Talbot, Gresham Community and Economic Development director.

The city wants to redevelop the site and find a tenant that will draw people from outside the community, such as a department store, Talbot said. The design of the current building and parking lot are dated and wouldn't attract many modern retailers, Talbot said.

The land is owned by a small family-based trust, which says Fred Meyer's lease runs until 2012. Talbot said both Fred Meyer and the trust have a stake in the future of the site.

Fred Meyer is obligated to pay more than \$400,000 in rent each year, Talbot said. And while the landowner receives that now, "if Rockwood continues to deteriorate, and we don't get a user in there, and other businesses shut up, then at the end of that contract, it would be worth a lot less than if it were in a growing, vital econom-

ic area," Talbot said.

Many shoppers say they're sad not just at losing a grocer, but losing a place where they could drop off a ballot, recycle bottles, eat lunch, pick up transmission fluid, buy camping gear, make copies and fax letters.

The Washington Mutual branch inside the store will close March 3. A temporary interior alley will allow people to get from the front door to the bank while walling off the rest of the store. A beauty salon at the southeast corner of the store will close by the end of the month.

Shopper Juan Sumano said in Spanish that he regretted losing a store so well stocked and so close to his home. In the future, he'll have to shop at smaller neighborhood stores, he said.

Shopper Susan Wills, who has been living in the area for 15 months, said the store was a perfect place for residents who don't travel by car.

"It's close to transportation," she explained, adjusting her earmuffs as she walked to a nearby light-rail station.

What would be the best replacement for the Fred Meyer?

"They need another grocery," she said.

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Oregonian

20-Jan-2003



The garden department of the Rockwood Fred Meyer in Gresham was as bare as the rest of the store Saturday after it closed following 45 years of business.

ROSS WILLIAM HAMILTON/THE OREGONIAN

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