

# Keizertimes

SECTION A

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## How Keizer ended up with

# ONE GROCERY STORE

## and the future prospects of more

By **CRAIG MURPHY**  
*Of the Keizertimes*

Amid rumors of a Walmart opening soon in Keizer Station, the Roth's grocery store in Schoolhouse Square was closed in the spring of 2012.

While that was a big loss, at least Keizer still had two grocery stores.

Until last year, that is. The former Albertsons at Creekside Shopping Center was converted to a Haggen, as the Washington-based grocery store chain undertook an ambitious growth strategy to take advantage of the merger between Safeway and Albertsons. Plans fell apart spectacularly, however, and by the end of September Haggen was closed.

So then there was just one grocery store left in Keizer, Safeway.

Almost immediately, there were cries for another grocery store to come. So far, the most common request has been for a WinCo. That was, by far, the leading vote getter in a Keizertimes reader poll last fall and a "Keizer Wants WinCo" group was started on Facebook. As of Monday,

the group had more than 1,300 members.

On the surface, it seems a given Keizer will get a second grocery store, sooner rather than later. The city has a population of approximately 37,000 residents and growing, as evidenced by multiple new housing, apartment and senior living projects recently completed or currently underway.

On multiple occasions, mayor Cathy Clark has thrown out this phrase: "The first person to get money and plans together to say 'we're going to open a store here' is going to get our money."

The grocery store topic brought a large crowd of about 70 people to a town hall meeting in January hosted by state Rep. Bill Post at the Keizer Fire District building.

There was much optimism expressed at the meeting that Keizer would soon have another grocery store.

"The market will correct itself," John Morgan, Keizer's first director of Community Development, said at that meeting. "Vacant storefronts are

"It's all about the demographics."

— George Grabenhorst



KEIZERTIMES/Lyndon A. Zaitz  
A lone shopping cart sits in front of the shuttered Albertsons/Haggen grocery store, which remains boarded up.

costing businesses money. There are 15,000 rooftops in Keizer. There's an overwhelming market demand and opportunity. We just need patience. I'd bet at least one (vacant grocery store building) will be filled in the next year."

That meeting helped lead to this in-depth look at the grocery store issue and the challenges — as well as opportunities — in terms of Keizer landing another grocery store.

Simply put, the problem isn't merely a town of 37,000 people only having one store. George Grabenhorst, a veteran realtor and senior advisor with Sperry Van Ness Commercial Advisors in Salem, said that's about half the needed size for the Idaho-based chain.

generation realtor who's been in the business for 30 years and has sold land used for grocery stores.

According to Grabenhorst, companies looking at opening a grocery store in the area look at the whole area — not just Keizer.

"They look at factors like the population of the area, the median income, what are peoples' habits and where they look to do their shopping," he said. "It's all about the demographics."

There is also the profit issue. Grabenhorst said stores typically try to operate at a 3 percent profit.

Joe Gilliam, president of the Northwest Grocers Association, Please see GROCERY, Page A13

## What grocers could come and where would they go?

By **CRAIG MURPHY**  
*Of the Keizertimes*

When the idea of a new grocery store in Keizer is brought up, two main questions typically come up: what store and what location?

For months, many Keizerites have been requesting a WinCo. The former Roth's space in Schoolhouse Square is too small, while the former Albertsons/Haggen

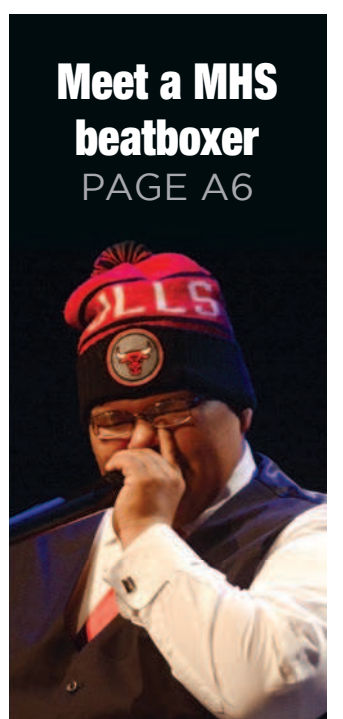
space in the Creekside Shopping Center, at about 35,000 square feet, is also much smaller than a typical WinCo.

George Grabenhorst, a veteran realtor and senior advisor with Sperry Van Ness Commercial Advisors in Salem, said that's about half the needed size for the Idaho-based chain.

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