

Food Superstore Breaks Ground at Golf Mill

Gordon Food Service sells wholesale to restaurants, retail to consumers and plans local hires.

By [Pam DeFiglio](#) |

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Both restaurant chefs and home cooks will soon have a new place in Niles--GFS Marketplace--to buy restaurant-quality meats and produce.

Gordon Food Service (GFS) officials described their prices as on par with membership clubs such as Costco, but said there was no membership fee.

On Monday morning, as heavy machinery dug up part of [Golf Mill Shopping Center's](#) parking lot, officials from Niles and [GFS Marketplace](#) grabbed hard hats and shovels to pose for groundbreaking photos.

"We're extremely excited about being here. We're predicting Niles is going to be one of our best stores," said George Dempsey, area manager for GFS, which sells both wholesale and retail.

The store, which is expected to open in October, will have a 13,000-square-foot sales floor within an 18,000-square-foot freestanding building at the southern end of Golf Mill, between JCPenney and X-Sport Fitness. GFS officials said it would create both construction and retail jobs.

GFS focuses on two areas of business. It started by making truck deliveries of food to restaurants and later branched into operating food stores. Its stores sell restaurant-quality food and are often shopped by restaurant operators, said Suzette Murchison, GFS marketing coordinator.

"The stores are also open to the public. We have as much business to business as we do retail," Murchison explained. "The price points are similar to a Costco or a Sam's Club. We sell a lot in bulk."

Greg Cantley, district manager for GFS, said the company focuses on selling fresh meat, fish, vegetables and other products.

"Because we supply restaurants and caterers, the food has to be of top-notch quality," he said.

GFS has been eyeing a Niles location for some time because its trucks already make food deliveries to restaurants in the area, Dempsey said. GFS also likes Niles' proximity to Chicago restaurants.

The company has 12 stores in Illinois, with the closest in Palatine and Schaumburg. The others are in the

southern or western suburbs or far outside the Chicago area.

The Niles store will become the 13th in the state. It will also be GFS' 143rd store nationally. Headquartered in Grand Rapids, MI, the company operates in nine states: Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Tennessee and Florida.

Dempsey emphasized the store would be hiring people from the community. The positions will include 25-30 part-time staff members, a store manager, two assistant store managers and shift leaders.

GFS officials presented a check for \$200 to the Niles Teen Center, which is located inside Golf Mill. Mark Williams, the center's director, said the teens enjoyed spray painting a welcome sign for the groundbreaking ceremony.



Ross Weissenhofer of Weiss Builders and Design, which will be constructing the GFS Marketplace in Niles, speaks to a small crowd of Niles officials and Chamber of Commerce members at a groundbreaking ceremony Monday. Credit [Pam DeFiglio](#)



George Dempsey, Area Manager, GFS Marketplace, from left, Katie Schneider, executive director of the Niles Chamber of Commerce, Ross Weissenhofer, VP and Founder of Weiss Builders & Design, Niles Mayor Robert Callero, Greg Cantley, District Manager, GFS Marketplace and Mike Williams, Senior General Manager, Golf Mill Shopping Center, perform a ceremonial groundbreaking for the GFS Marketplace store in Niles. It's expected to open in October 2011. Credit [Pam DeFiglio](#)