Roanoke Celebrates Food Lion $91.7 Million Investment With “A Bang”

Terms: LATEST AT THE LION

Roanoke knows how to celebrate “fresh” beginnings.

Hundreds of Food Lion customers, associates and local officials gathered this week to celebrate the completion of $91.7 million in renovations for 63 stores throughout the Greater Roanoke market.

“I don't think I have ever seen this parking lot and store this full,” one customer said while shopping inside the Danville store Wednesday.

Each store disseminated gift cards valued between $10 and $250 to residents who stood in line as early as 6 a.m. in excitement for its opening.

Seven Virginia stores located in Vinton, Danville, Blacksburg, Rocky Mount, Lynchburg, Bedford and Daleville held special 15-minute grand opening events before opening building excitement throughout the crowds. Each event was led by their store managers.

There were mascots, large American flags, cheerleaders and local dignitaries all in attendance thanking Food Lion and its associates for the changes which is helping to make their shopping experiences easier.

“This store is so beautiful,” said Carroll Walker, former store manager who retired from Store 2621 in Danville. “The lighting was darker when I worked here and we did the best we could do, but this is just amazing how the renovations have made the store more alive.”

Not even a light rainfall could dampen the spirits of a crowd that began to gather as early as 6 a.m. for the grand re-opening of the Bedford Food Lion. Store manager Brian Raynor kicked off the grand reopening by reflecting on what was most important to him about the new store experience.

“Three things came to mind. Easy, Fresh and Affordable and those are the things we're delivering to you today and every day,” he said.

Raynor also acknowledged his amazing staff for all of their hard work over the past several months in getting the store ready for this big day.

Robert Wandrei, Mayor of Bedford and Councilman Stacey Hailey were on hand for the event. Mayor Wandrei said “We appreciate Food Lion and your dedication to this community. Thank you for making this investment. We're excited to see you grow.”

Food Lion also made a $2,000 donation, the equivalent of 20,000 meals, to Bedford Church of God Food Pantry and Bedford Christian Ministries food Pantry, the local feeding agencies partner with this particular store throughout the year. After recognizing its incredible community partners and associates, a Food Lion grand re-opening would not be complete without a special surprise for customers.

Local resident, Elizabeth Sellick could not get over the new produce cooler. “This is fantastic,” she said. “I've never seen anything like this.”

A few miles away, Kirk Johnson, store manager of the Daleville, Va., store reflected on his more than 13 years as a manager.

“I've been in management for over 30 years now, and looking back I wish all of those 30 years had been with Food Lion, that's how great of a company they've been,” Johnson said.

He was especially proud to be amongst his Food Lion family last Wednesday to celebrate the grand re-opening of his store. Customers, community partners and Food Lion leadership came together during a ribbon-cutting ceremony to reintroduce the new, updated store.

During the ceremony Johnson presented a $2,000 check to Linda Johnson, a representative of Springwood Baptist Church. Volunteers from Springwood pick up fresh produce, deli/bakery items from store 2698 several days a week to fill their church pantry.

“We're a small pantry. We serve about sixty families a month, so this money will go a long way for us,” said Johnson.

Meanwhile the rain did not dampen the spirit of celebration at the Food Lion in Rocky Mount, Va. Five local dignitaries, many loyal customers and police and fire officials joined the Food lion associates as the ribbon was cut to celebrate the remodeled store.
store.

Mayor Steven Angle offered remarks and said, “Food Lion needs to be thanked not only investing in this updated store and upgraded products, but also for investing in the people of Rocky Mount.”

A local feeding agency, Stepping Stones, was presented with a $2,000 check as Food Lion's continued investment in the community. The first 100 customers received a reusable bag and a surprise Food Lion gift card.

Vinton customers also enjoyed their grand opening event.

The skies may have been gray and producing intermittent rains, but that didn’t dampen the spirits of nearly 100 customers who began arriving at Food Lion Store137.

“I love this remodeled store, I shop here every week, so I couldn't miss this event today,” exclaimed the first customer who arrived at 6:52 a.m. “I wanted to be first in line to get in a get a gift card. I love Food Lion,” he said.

He was hoping to score the gift card to purchase frozen chicken to stock up his freezer.

“I eat a lot of chicken and the frozen chicken here is the best.”

As other regular customers began joining him in line, they too expressed their excitement about the remodeled store and the ease of the shopping experience. And they talked about Food Lion’s commitment to the community as one of the reasons that Food Lion is their choice of grocery store. That sentiment was echoed by local dignitaries at the event as well.

Store Manager Houston Wallace welcomed those shoppers and a host of dignitaries to the ribbon cutting event as he shared with them information about the new product assortment and changes they would see inside the store.

“This is a great day for Food Lion and the Town of Vinton,” said Mayor Bradley Grose. “Food Lion has made a significant investment in your stores in this area, which is a wonderful testament to your commitment here. But I am, also, most impressed, by what Food Lion does for the community, especially your support of Feeding America. Folks in need in this community count on Food Lion and Food Lion is always there for them. And I want Food Lion to know, you can count on Vinton!” the Mayor said.

David Burgess, representing the Good Samaritan Christian Soldiers food pantry accepted a donation of $2,000 from Food Lion Feeds during the event, which equates to 20,000 meals for the food pantry. He took a moment to thank Food Lion as well noting, “we could not feed anyone in our community without the support of Food Lion.”

The event culminated with Mayor Grose joining the store manager, Vice Mayor, Keith Liles and other representatives of the Vinton Town Council, Town Manager, Barry Thompson, and Jennifer Faulkner, representing Congressman Bob Goodlatte’s office, and leadership of the Vinton Chamber of Commerce for the celebratory cutting of the ribbon.

Crowds of customers gathered early Wednesday morning at their Food Lion in Lynchburg, Virginia excitedly waiting to see all the new updates that were in store for them after months of construction and remodeling. Store Manager Kristie Myers kicked off the grand opening by greeting everyone and thanking them for their continued support. “I just know you're going to love all the new changes we've made to the store!” said Myers.

In addition to talking about the new offerings at the store, like more grab-and-go items and fresh, local produce, Kristie presented a check to local feeding agency Hyland Baptist Church for $2,000. “This donation is truly a blessing and could not have come at a better time, especially with the holidays coming up where we serve a lot more people” said Julie Cordier, manager of the pantry.

As soon as the ribbon was cut, customers entered the store to shop and pick up some of the new features Kristie had mentioned. “The store is beautiful, I love it!!” exclaimed a customer as she was leaving. “Congrats Food Lion!!”

Elected officials, excited associates and eager customers were joined by the Virginia Tech cheerleaders and HokieBird to cut the ribbon at the Food Lion located on Main St. in Blacksburg, Va. Jason Kinzer, the store manager, addressed the crowd, highlighting some of the many new offerings inside his store, from an expanded selection of natural and organic offerings, more local craft beer and additional grab and go items, such as a wing bar.

“Every change we’ve made has been with our customers in mind,” said Kinzer, who has managed the store for the last several years.

After the ribbon cutting, Kinzer and his team of associates handed out complimentary gift bags and tote bags to shoppers.

Smiles and excitement were evident as the crowd of nearly 100 customers filed into the store, and it was clear that the Blacksburg community appreciates their fresh new Food Lion!