If you do a Google search of Walmart Neighborhood Grocery Stores, you will see that the giant megastore retailer has been on the march across the country, opening new grocery-only stores in Chicago, Los Angeles and now South Florida, targeted to compete with regional supermarkets.

Here in South Florida, the newest store is planned to open in January in the Boynton Trail Center at West Boynton Beach Boulevard and South Military Trail, with additional stores planned over the next year in Delray Beach, Deerfield Beach and a superstore planned for Boca Raton in 2014.

Still under construction, the Boynton grocery will sit on the site of the former Winn-Dixie, which closed in 2010.

Walmart estimates its new store growth will bring an estimated 600 jobs to the Palm Beach County area over the coming months and 2,500 across all three counties when all the stores open.

Miami is already home to a number of neighborhood grocery stores.

"Walmart customers across South Florida are telling us they want more access to affordable grocery options. We are meeting this demand with new and expanded stores, creating quality jobs in the process," said Walmart spokesperson Steven Restivo, senior director of community affairs at Walmart.

To cope with staffing the new stores, Walmart has opened a hiring center in Boynton Beach to fill the jobs and says it plans to fill about 90 permanent positions immediately ranging from part-time associates to supervisory positions.

Between now and spring 2014, new stores or expansions are planned in 18 locations in South Florida.

"The new neighborhood stores are smaller and more accessible than the Walmart superstores. Our store is 45,000 square feet, compared to 150,000 to 200,000 square feet for the typical supercenter," said store manager Julie Ferreira

"So far, our reception in local neighborhoods has been great. Customers love the stores because of the convenience, and they know they will get Walmart values."

The store will have a small deli, produce, frozen food, dairy and a pharmacy. "Everything from the grocery side of Walmart," Ferreira said.
Stuart Caine, president of COBWRA, the Coalition of Boynton West Residential Associations, agreed, saying that the store will fill the void left by Winn-Dixie.

"Currently, we have no other grocery store in the neighborhood. It's a good thing for the people in the area," he said.

Ferreira said they plan to be involved in the community.

She said she has reached out to the Boynton Soup Kitchen and planned to donate 400 turkeys to them for Thanksgiving and hopes to establish an ongoing relationship.

Eric H. Shaw, professor of marketing at Florida Atlantic University said, "Walmart has already saturated the market for low-cost merchandise both domestically and internationally and in this market the only way to grow is to expand their product line."

Will they be able to compete with Publix who has an established presence and dominates this market and be successful?

"Absolutely," Shaw said. "It's always popular to offer low prices, especially in this economy. Most people will be delighted to take advantage of them. Establishing a community-friendly identify combined with low prices will overcome any objections to having a Walmart in the neighborhood."

Interested applicants can apply online at Walmart.com or visit the hiring center at 9804 S. Military, Suite E11, Boynton Beach.