

FLASH

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Native Roots Market opens for business

Oklahomans now have the opportunity to shop at a new market with a small grocery store environment but with the addition of locally grown fruits and vegetables. Sara Kaplan and Matt Runkle opened the doors of Native Roots Market in Norman on Aug. 13.

“Sara and Matt are excited about providing a variety of Made in Oklahoma products at the new store, along with locally grown fruits and vegetables,” said Jim Brooks, Robert M. Kerr Food & Agricultural Products Center manager of business and marketing services.

The purpose of the market is to promote Made in Oklahoma products that fit the more natural foods category and organics.

“We want to provide a nice selection of natural foods items but also establish ourselves as a full-service grocery store, just on a smaller scale,” Kaplan said.

The store is located on the bottom floor of one of Norman’s historic downtown buildings and has been completely renovated with new flooring and the natural brick walls. The store, located at 132 W. Main, is approximately 3,700 square feet.

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Jim Brooks

FAPC Business and Marketing Services Manager

“One of our merchandising philosophies is to have only one or two facings of each product, thus utilizing the shelf space to carry a larger variety of items rather than four or five rows of the same products in a traditional grocery store,” Runkle said.

This method of merchandising their various products equates to the same number of items offered to consumers in a 7,500-square foot store.

The owners want to provide the type of products that their customers want. Space is available to add additional shelving as the request for products grows over the next few weeks and months. They recently added some free-range, hormone-free frozen meat items.

Kaplan said she understands that many consumers are shopping at the big-box stores, but she can tell her customers where the products come from every day and

will give the customers the contact information of where the products were purchased for her store.

Kaplan and Runkle are convinced consumers will visit their new store as word spreads and more shoppers like the idea of buying from local owners who support the community and its economy.

Another feature Kaplan and Runkle plan to add to their market is a demonstration kitchen. During the weekends, local chefs will demonstrate how to prepare various items. Kaplan and Runkle also will offer recipes for customers.

“Sara and Matt have a spent a great deal of time in defining the niche market they want to shop at their store, and they intend to serve that niche better than anyone else in the area,” Brooks said. “They are committed to offer more products that are from within the state than any store of their size, and they are off to a great start.”