

By The Editorial Board
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Our View: Save-A-Lot marks historic return of a grocery to West End in Rockford

For decades, dating from the 1920s, an A&P grocery at West State Street and Central Avenue tended to the needs of residents in the then-new neighborhoods of the West End.

A National Tea stood a mile west on State, and west of that was a Piggly Wiggly with a May's Drug next to it. There were also small corner stores, bakeries and specialty food stores. Junk-food gas stations had not been invented.

Those stores started closing in the 1960s as the middle class moved out with its money. By the end of the 1970s, all had been closed. Since then, [there hasn't been a quality food store in the area](#), which has lately been dubbed "Ellis Heights" by the planners.

So, for 35 years there hasn't been a decent quality grocery store in the West End, an area that goes from State and Central all the way to Meridian Road.

All that is about to change in coming weeks as a Save-A-Lot supermarket opens on the northwest corner of State and Central. [Save-A-Lot](#), owned by Minneapolis-based SuperValu, is known for excellent meat products, fresh fruits and vegetables.

It's not fancy but it's good. It certainly will fill a void in the area.

The Save-A-Lot was developed in conjunction with Chicago-based nonprofit IFF and the city of Rockford. It fits neatly into the \$20 million redevelopment of West State Street from a bumpy thoroughfare with dilapidated buildings on both sides to a beautiful parkway, soon to be featuring gardens, trees and shrubs.

Even better, the store is hiring 25 to 30 people from the neighborhood to work there. [Three hundred people showed up to apply for jobs there](#) last week, which indicates that people want to work and need more job opportunities in that part of Rockford.

For four decades we've watched in sadness as the proud West End, home to four-term Mayor Ben T. Schleicher, who lived on West State, descended into poverty and despair.

Now it's on the long road back to prosperity. It'll be a long trip, but the turnaround has begun. Welcome, Save-A-Lot!



The Save-A-Lot at West State Street and Central Avenue in the Ellis Heights neighborhood on Rockford's west side is slated to open in August. BEN STANLEY/RRSTAR.COM

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