

Builders give details on Trader Joe's design, opening date

By: Natalie Chandler, Editor February 10, 2016

At 14,000 square feet, the first Trader Joe's in the New Orleans area will be much like others across the nation when it opens later this year, according to the builders and a company spokesperson.

But the store on Veterans Boulevard near Causeway Boulevard will be unique in that it is a standalone building. Most other Trader Joe's are fitted into strip malls.

"What is being built is exactly what they're looking for in terms of size and space," said Wesley Palmisano, CEO of Palmisano Contractors, the firm handling construction on the project.

The framework is going up and expected to be completed in March. The store's build-out will follow. Trader Joe's anticipates opening in September, he said. Two more large-scale buildings will add another 31,000 square feet of retail to the site, with the retailers to be named in the coming months.

"Those will be complementary uses, so they will be retail that lend themselves to a typical customer," Palmisano said.

Most of Trader Joe's products are under the company's private label, and the Metairie location will be in line with that but will also have a local flair, with murals and art throughout the store to reflect the community, said Trader Joe's spokesperson Alison Mochizuki.

The project represents a growth strategy for Palmisano. While the New Orleans firm has done retail work before and is currently involved with a similar sized project in the Pan American Life building downtown, it has mostly been known for its work on large hotel projects and condos.

Palmisano is also currently working on a senior living facility in Baton Rouge and on market-rate apartments behind the Mall of Louisiana. "It is part of our strategic plan to create a mix of diverse work for the company," he said.