

## Sunflower picks Boulder site; Wild Oats looks in Longmont

**Source:** Boulder County Business Report  
**Author:** Caron Schwartz Ellis and David Clucas

08/04/2006

BOULDER - With Sunflower Farmers Market coming to The Village shopping center, Boulder Valley natural foods aficionados will have another place in Boulder to get their fix.

But Longmont also may be getting a purveyor of natural foods in the form of a Wild Oats Market.

With J.C. Penney at Twin Peaks Mall relocating across the street to the former ShopKo location, speculation abounds about a new tenant for the 51,000-square-foot space.

"We are actively looking in Longmont," confirmed Sonja Tuitele, Wild Oats spokeswoman. "There's been so much growth there. And we get so many requests; it's probably the most requested place across the country."

Tuitele would not say if the Penney's site is under consideration, stating only that Wild Oats is looking for about 35,000 square feet of space. "That location would definitely accommodate that, but until we have a signed lease we can't confirm we are looking."

Bill Singer, regional leasing director for Twin Peaks' owner, Chattanooga, Tenn.-based CBL & Associates Properties Inc., said he does not comment to the press prior to completing a deal with any prospective tenant of the space.

The opportunity to open a natural foods grocer in Longmont was a finding in the city's Retail Opportunities Study completed earlier this year by Economic & Planning Systems Inc. of Denver.

According to the study, "retail opportunities analysis identified an unmet potential for two major uses: a theater complex and a natural foods grocer."

Household survey and merchant interviews indicated a "strong desire" for a natural grocer. According to the study, there is support for about 38,000 square feet of grocery space - a size that could be filled by Sunflower's typical 26,000 to 30,000 square foot store or Wild Oats' typical 26,000 square feet.

But Sunflower's taking the spot in Boulder puts a damper on Longmont's hopes for the discount natural foods grocery.

Although it would like to open in Longmont someday, "We've got a pretty full pipeline for next year," said Mike Gilliland, chief executive of Newflower Market Inc., the parent company of Sunflower.

The 25,000-square-foot Boulder store will replace the United Artists movie theater along with a few storefronts on the west side of the complex anchored by McGuckin Hardware. "Our idea is to have a cafe on the McGuckin's side so people can enter from that side," Gilliland said.

Gilliland said the store is scheduled to open mid- to late 2007.

Gilliland has a long history in the natural foods industry, having co-founded Wild Oats in 1987.

Newflower, which operates 11 Sunflower stores and employs about 1,000 people throughout New Mexico, Nevada, Arizona and Colorado - including stores in Denver and Fort Collins - is headquartered in Boulder and has a distribution center in Phoenix.

It is not affiliated with the Sunflower Market brand owned by Supervalu Inc., the Eden Prairie, Minn.-based supermarket chain owner that purchased much of the Albertsons chain earlier this year. Newflower licenses the Sunflower name from Supervalu for use in five western states, Gilliland said.

Contact Caron Schwartz Ellis at 303-440-4950 or [csellis@bcbr.com](mailto:csellis@bcbr.com).