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# Shlachter & Co.: The former Minyard in Westcliff Shopping Center has a new name and philosophy

One of the dozens of stores sold off by Minyard Food Stores last year was snapped up by the parent of the Fiesta chain, which in turn sold it to a grocery entrepreneur named Kurt Jaeger.

And it's starting to thrive, he says.

Sales are 25 percent higher than when Minyard ran the store in Fort Worth's Westcliff Shopping Center, said Jaeger, who rechristened it City Market, the same name as his other store in Burleson.

But by adding 30 full- and part-time employees to the 40 former Minyard workers to improve service, costs went up 10 percent, leading to a bottom-line wash for the time being.

"We're building for the future," the 51-year-old Jaeger said.

The added employees means, he asserted, "you won't wait in line. We have enough staff to carry groceries out."

Jaeger has swapped out 60 percent of the product selection and added more than 1,000 items, including Boar's Head deli meats, numerous goods in the natural and organic category, upscale frozen foods, and a far broader selection of wine and beer.

And all of the chicken is fresh, not frozen, and fish is flown in daily.

Jaeger has added custom-cut meats at the butcher counter, and the bakery produces breads and pastries from scratch.

"We're very aggressive on pricing. We can buy truckloads and split them between my two stores," said Jaeger, who grew up on Fort Worth's east side and paid his way through the University of Texas at Arlington by working at Safeway, starting as a sacker and ending as an assistant store manager by the time he graduated.

He stayed on with Safeway, then bought his own independent grocery in Crandall 22 years ago. He sold that business and bought the Burleson store in 2003.

City Market customers get free soft-serve ice cream. And there's another personal touch.

When families move into the neighborhood, they'll receive a postcard coupon in the mail that can be redeemed for free groceries — a 5-pound bag of potatoes, a loaf of bread, a pound of ground chuck and a 12-pack of soft drinks.

"We started it three years ago in Burleson," Jaeger said. "We just decided we want to be part of the community. Everybody says they want to. We work to prove it."

## Offering a helping hand

Financially troubled homeowners hoping to work out a reprieve from burdensome mortgage payments gathered at 1001 Jones St. in downtown Fort Worth on Friday to meet with lenders.

The Dallas-Fort Worth Home Ownership Preservation Enterprise Partnership hosted the foreclosure-prevention workshop for at least 50 families, said Linda Davis-Demas, assistant housing director at Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Greater Dallas. CCCS is one of the housing counseling agencies, along with the city of Fort Worth and Tarrant County Housing Partnership, that helps with the workshops.

Lenders from Saxon Mortgage, Countrywide/Bank of America, Wells Fargo, GMAC and others were available to work out a solution with homeowners, Davis-Demas said.

About 75 percent of homeowners who come to the workshops get help, she said. Many of them are struggling to pay their mortgage after losing their jobs or are working fewer hours, and trying to sell a house that is slow to sell or worth less than the mortgage, she told staff writer Andrea Jares.

The HOPE group has foreclosure prevention workshops throughout the year.

One at the Arlington Convention Center last year attracted more than 400 homeowners.

Homeowners who need help with their mortgage can call 888-995-HOPE for help 24 hours a day.