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May 27 is the big day

Commerce City's Costco will be largest in Atlantic Canada

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SAINT JOHN – Troy Northrup says the answer to Saint John's most-asked question is May 27. That is the day the largest Costco in Atlantic Canada is set to open its doors in East Saint John.

"It would be an understatement to say we are excited," said Northrup, developer of East Point Shopping. "For a whole lot of reason: for what it will do for the Greater Saint John community, the benefits of having it in East Point Shopping and I am excited as a citizen of this community."

Gary Swindells, vice-president of regional operations for Costco, said construction is almost completed and the company is expected to receive its first shipment of goods in April.

"It is beautiful," Swindells said. "It is 142,000 square feet with all the bells and whistles. Everything we carry at Costco we will have at this location, except gas pumps."

Costco is a warehouse membership store that sells everything from food to appliances to electronics. The Saint John location is off Retail Drive and is the latest addition to the East Point Shopping



KÁTÉ BRAYDON/TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

Costco will hire 100 workers for this Saint John store at three jobs fairs in March.

development that includes an Indigo book store, an open-air mall of clothing stores, Home Depot and a Montana's Restaurant.

Swindells said Costco is going to hire 100 employees. He said salaries for entry-level positions start at \$11 an hour, with the potential to rise to more than \$22 an hour.

The company has scheduled job fairs for March 5 from noon to 8 p.m., March 6 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and March 7 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Costco warehouse.

"We have had a lot of people calling with interest," Swindells said. "We have a

lot of people who have already sent their resumés. We expect to have a pretty big crowd."

The company is hoping to find all the workers needed for the Saint John store at its job fairs.

Swindells said beginning March 15, a desk will be set up in the warehouse and people will be able to go in and sign up for their membership.

The Costco regional vice-president said the Moncton location grew to the point the company decided to look at other areas in the province and found it had a good relationship with Saint John.

"We offer all those great items and the

prices are great," Swindells said. "We have a lot of people from Saint John driving to shop in Moncton. There will be a lot of quality products and it's a one-stop shop."

Northrup said the benefits for Saint John are plentiful.

It will stimulate retail expansion, allow Saint Johners to shop where they live and bring new people to the city, he said.

"It's a regional draw," Northrup said. "People will come here. It strengthens Saint John as a drive-in city rather than a drive-by city."

Northrup said that with their busy lives, people don't want to live in one city and shop in another. Costco will further strengthen the retail diversity so people never have to leave to get the things they need and want, he said.

He expects people from as far as Nova Scotia and Calais will make the trip to Saint John to save by shopping at Costco.

"When you look at Saint John and all of the things that have happened in Saint John in the last four or five years each one of them is important but the sum of all the advantages are very material and very significant to Saint John," he said. "All of the advancements continue to strengthen the momentum of the city."

Northrup said East Point has come a long way since it started in 2006 and he looks forward to making more retail announcements very soon.