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June 15, 2025

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New Trader Joe's Opening in Pensacola Draws Major College

PENSACOLA, Fla. – The excitement was real as hundreds of college students gathered Saturday morning for the grand opening of Trader Joe's new Pensacola location, the first of its kind in the area. The store, which officially opened its doors at 8 a.m., featured giveaways, free samples, and plenty of buzz around affordable, student-friendly products.

The event attracted students from the University of West Florida, Pensacola State College, and even FSU Panama City, all eager for healthier, budget-conscious options that fit their lifestyles. Local musicians played outside while shoppers lined up for reusable tote bags and tastings of Trader Joe's signature items.

"This is exactly what we needed," said Maya Thompson, a junior at UWF majoring in marketing. "I'm always trying to eat better without spending too much, and Trader Joe's makes that possible. It's cool to finally have one close to campus."

Several students were involved in planning and staffing the grand opening, including UWF student and new crew member Jordan Reyes. "Working here is honestly fun," Reyes said. "They care about what students need and listen to our input on what products to highlight for the launch."

Regional director Sally Struthers praised the community's energy and student involvement. "Pensacola has such a strong college presence, and we knew this was the right place for our next store," Struthers said. "We're proud to offer products that reflect the tastes and budgets of today's students, from \$3 frozen meals to plant-based snacks and organic produce."

The 12,000-square-foot location also includes a large "grab-and-go" section and designated parking areas for bike commuters, a perk several students said they appreciated.

For many attendees, the event wasn't just about groceries — it felt like a small celebration of student life. "It felt like we were being recognized," said Brianna Lee, a first-year PSC student. "A store that gets what students want? That's a win."

The Trader Joe's Pensacola location is now open daily from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. at 4700 Bayou Blvd.