



KROGER HOLDS RIBBON CUTTING

Kroger opened its 215th store in Jefferson on Thursday with a ribbon cutting and grand opening ceremony. Shown center is Jefferson mayor Jim Joiner shaking hands with Kroger manager Sean McBride as they prepare to cut the ribbon with other city officials and Kroger personnel. *Photo by Amy McKown*

Kroger opens 215th store in Jefferson

BY AMY MCKOWN

AREA SHOPPERS now have an 83,000 square foot grocery store as Kroger opened its 215th store in Jefferson with a ribbon cutting and grand opening ceremony on Thursday.

The store offers a large variety of services and products for its customers including a Starbucks location, Community Bank and Trust branch, expanded general bakery, natural foods, floral shop, sushi bar, deli, soup bar, pharmacy with drive through service and fueling center. The store is located on Hwy. 129 at Old Pendergrass Road and is open 24 hours a day.

During the opening day celebration, Jefferson High School Band performed and area officials spoke. Kroger officials also presented \$500 donations to several schools in the area. Donations were made to Jefferson Elementary, Jefferson Middle, Jefferson Academy, Jefferson High, the Jefferson High band, Jackson County Comprehensive High School and

the JCCHS band.

Atlanta division president Bruce Lucia called the store "one of the finest centers I've seen at a Kroger location." He recognized engineers, contractors and operations managers who participated in the project and said that the start of this project was "finding a great piece of property like we have here."

McBride said the store has almost 200 associates with 180 new jobs created for the community. He said the store offers 40,000 grocery and drug products, 500 fresh produce products, 200 floral items, 1,000 meat and seafood items and 1,000 deli and bakery items.

A \$10 million project, the Jefferson location is a prototype store and is the "biggest we've opened in a while with this amount of square footage of space," according to Lucia.

The ground-breaking for the project took place in September 2005 and the project took 20 months to complete.