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# Business Monday

D | The Republican. | MONDAY, AUGUST 24, 2015



## From cow barn to modern market

Atkins Farms readies opening of new market  
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## ON THE COVER

# Crews putting finishing touches on Atkins north

Grand opening set for Sept. 12

BY DIANE LEDERMAN  
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AMHERST — Every day, dozens of people pull into the parking lot of the new Atkins Farms Country Market in North Amherst, asking if the market is open.

Soon — but not yet. The market grand opening is Sept. 12 but they could open sooner if they finish the final stages of work.

They were so intent on their mission, that Matt Lannon chose to keep sanding than stop for a picture.

"It's exciting that it's almost done," he said, pausing briefly. Lannon is the son of Atkins president Pauline Lannon.

The former cow barn at 113 Cowles Road has been rebuilt into a modern day space to feel like a barn with its pitched roof. Chestnut beams that had once been used to hold up the roof were used again and the lighting is soft.

Cinda Jones said her grandmother had the beams taken down when the cows left the barn and it was used to store lumber. Work on the barn began last fall.

Jones, the president of WD Cowls and Mill District developer, launched a petition drive in 2013 trying to convince Lannon that people wanted the market there. They announced the agreement for the 4,200-square-foot space in May of last year.

Much of what the 53-old-South Amherst Atkins market offers will be sold at the new Mill District market.

Market manager Matt O'Brien gave a tour of how the now empty bins and cases will soon be filled. The front of the store will display produce, "as much of the produce as we can," he said.

They'll sell coffee — both



Working in the soon-to-be-open new Atkins Farms Country Market in North Amherst are, from left, store general manager Matt O'Brien, store supervisor Shane Fugler and assistant general manager John McMahon. (MICHAEL S. GORDON / THE REPUBLICAN)



Inside the soon-to-be-open new Atkins Farms Country Market on Cowles Road in North Amherst. (MICHAEL S. GORDON / THE REPUBLICAN)

packages of Pierce Bros. to grind and take home — and cups at a coffee bar.

They will offer bulk trail mix dispensers as well as shelves of maple syrups. They'll sell simple sandwiches at a deli as well as all kinds of deli meats and cheeses and cold salads.

Sandwiches already packaged along with other meals will also be sold as well. The salad bar is set up and he said they hope to have an olive bar, too.

Pastries, cakes and breads baked in South Amherst along with their famous cider donuts will be sold.

They will also sell sushi, packaged meats, kielbasa, five different kinds of eggs, dairy products from nearby Mapleline Farms in Hadley as well as specialty sodas.

Jones said her family has been friends with John Kokoski and his family for decades and he knew the barn when it was a cow barn.

The dairy has operated in Hadley for more than 100 years. She likes the shared history as well as how each family is moving into the 21st century.

Atkins ice cream, along with pastas, sauces and oils, will also be sold, O'Brien said.

They will also have a little grocery section for things like paper towels, soaps and pet food so if someone is stopping in for dinner on their way home won't have to stop somewhere else for that can of missing food.

He said the store would be able to accommodate requests if they don't have something because trucks will deliver from the South Amherst market five times a day.

The initial plan is to have seven employees who will be cross-trained so they can help out wherever needed. "We're so excited," Jones said. "This place is going to hop."



Evan Jones, president of Cowls Building Supply; Cinda Jones, president of W. D. Cowls; and Mollye Wolahan, vice president for real estate and community development, in front of the Trolley Barn building at 65 Cowles Road, part of the Mill District development. (MICHAEL S. GORDON / THE REPUBLICAN)

## AMHERST

## New Atkins seen as lure for Mill District business

BY DIANE LEDERMAN  
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As Atkins nears its grand opening in The Mill District next month, Mollye Wolahan is already thinking about its expansion.

The vice president of real estate for W.D. Cowls Inc. thinks the demand will soon exceed the 4,200-square foot space. She is also thinking about the other buildings available for leasing on the site to see the vision of the district becoming a new Eats, Arts & Entertainment destination.

Atkins is the third business opening in the district following the opening of the Lift salon and Bread & Butter restaurant across from the new Atkins.

Wolahan would like to see the 4,000-square-foot onion barn or the 14,400-square-foot sawmill become venues for dining, music, entertainment and shopping on the 20-acre site. She said she gets calls for finished spaces but is still working to lure new ventures. She thinks the opening of Atkins will help.

Wolahan said there is a

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## Atkins

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real absence in the area for places that offer live music, dining and spaces for people to gather after work or school.

Cinda Jones, the Mill District developer and president of W.D. Cowls Inc., often talks about the history of the Cowls family and how it has evolved over that history. The family has been in agriculture since 1741.

Wolahan said Jones wants her generation — she and her brother Evan Jones — to carry that forward, developing the former spaces to that arts destination.