

Winn-Dixie will close stores, cut 570 jobs

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Winn-Dixie Stores Inc., which is emerging from bankruptcy, said Friday it plans to close seven Florida stores and lay off more than 570 workers including 125 at a closing Deltona store.

The Jacksonville-based grocery-store chain disclosed the decision in a filing with the state. Other locations tabbed for closure are in Jacksonville, Tallahassee, Pensacola, West Palm Beach, Pembroke Pines and Largo.

Company spokeswoman Robin Miller said the store closings are not part of Winn-Dixie's plan to emerge from bankruptcy, which was filed in June. Instead, the closures are the result of the company's ongoing evaluation of individual store performance, Miller said.

The company notified employees affected by the decision on Thursday. The store closings will be completed by the end of August, Miller said. Winn-Dixie will offer employees at those stores positions at other stores "whenever possible," she said.

Since filing for Chapter 11 protection in February 2005, Winn-Dixie has shed more than 300 stores and laid off about 24,000 employees.

The company said last month that it intends to remodel some of its locations over the next year as part of its plan to upgrade its concept. Winn-Dixie now operates 366 stores in Florida.