



**Paper: St. Louis Post-Dispatch**  
**Title: NATIONALS TURN INTO SCHNUCKS MARKETS**  
**10 STORES SET TO OPEN FOR BUSINESS TODAY**  
**Date: June 13, 1995**

It was controlled pandemonium at some National stores Monday as workers hustled through the day and into the night to scrub refrigerated cases, stock near-empty shelves and change store signs and price tags.

The workers were trying frantically to get 10 National stores ready to open for business as Schnucks markets at 7 a.m. today. The same frenzy will get 21 stores ready to reopen Wednesday and 20 more on Thursday.

The changeovers are the final step in St. Louis' massive grocery chain buyout. By week's end, Schnucks will operate 113 stores in Missouri and Illinois, gaining clear dominance in many portions of the metropolitan area and some rural communities in Illinois.

Under an agreement with the Federal Trade Commission, Schnucks must sell 18 of the 57 National stores it bought Monday, along with six of its own stores. The company also closed six Nationals permanently, and will close two of its own stores - in Granite City and at Grand Boulevard and Iron Street - at 10 tonight.

After all the sales are completed, Schnucks will own 89 supermarkets.

The transition had some rough spots on Monday afternoon.

First, the wire transfer of money from Schnucks to Loblaw Cos., the Canadian owner of National, was 2 1/2 hours late. Company officials didn't sign the papers and take possession of the stores until about 3 p.m.

Craig Schnuck, company chairman, hurried to a National store to meet with reporters at 4 p.m. But he couldn't get into one of his new stores, at Lindell Boulevard and Sarah Street, because inventory crews were hours behind schedule, meticulously counting the store's remaining wares following Saturday's shelf-clearing bargain-fest.

The inventory process is a high-security event, Schnuck explained, conducted by two independent companies. The value they put on the remaining inventory will affect the purchase price for National, he said. No unauthorized personnel, even company executives, could enter until they were done.

About 100 employees and delivery people waited Monday afternoon in the hot, sunny parking lot. Some asked security guards at the doors to let them in; others questioned whether they would be paid for the wait.

Schnuck answered reporters' questions while touring a nearby store, at Delmar Boulevard and Kingshighway. Although workers there were closer to being on schedule, some were still mopping floors and scrubbing shelves, expecting new shipments of food any minute.

Schnuck said he realized that the store still looked messy.

"But I like what I see," he said. "This is a very massive undertaking. It requires literally thousands of people to get the job done, to get products from the warehouse, to clean and restock the shelves."

Some National customers unaware of the conversion were turned away at the doors. Others went to nearby community grocery stores.

Shapiro's Market, a small, narrow store jammed with a variety of foods and a fresh deli and meat counter, attracted more customers than usual, said Jerry Wagner, who owns the store with his wife.

"This is a neighborhood store; we know people by their face or by name," he said. "We've got a lot of new business from people not going to (National) stores."

Rosalie Wittelstein, a graduate student at the University of Missouri at St. Louis, was one of them.

She said she was "addicted to National's salad bar" but had to settle for a quick visit to the deli counter at Shapiro's, a block and a half away at 111 North Newstead Avenue. She said she gladly tolerated the inconvenience, however, because she expected Schnucks to keep its newly acquired stores cleaner and better stocked.

"I'm hoping for an improved salad," she said.

Other loyal National customers say they'll spend more at independently owned stores like Shapiro's and the nearby Straub's market.

"I've been going to National all of my life," said Patricia Parker, a shopper at Straub's in the Central West End. "It'll never be the same . . . I'm not going to Schnucks. I'm mad at Schnucks."

Caption:

Color Photo by Larry Williams/Post-Dispatch - Paul Skaggs removes the National sign Monday from a store on Lindell Boulevard in the Central West End, one of 57 **National supermarkets** purchased by Schnuck Markets Inc. from a Canadian firm. The store will reopen today as a Schnucks.

Caption:

PHOTO

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