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## Locally sourced grocery delivery service expands into Lynchburg

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Sam O'Keefe

Christopher Clarke (left) opens a carton of eggs for Jessica Ignacio (right) to inspect while she picks up her grocery order from the Relay Foods location in Lynchburg on Wednesday.

Posted: Monday, September 23, 2013 3:15 am | Updated: 9:24 am, Mon Sep 23, 2013.

**Eleanor Kennedy**

Another new grocer has opened its doors in Lynchburg, but those doors are very different from those of Fresh Market, Kroger, Food Lion or Walmart.

Every Wednesday afternoon, a brightly colored Relay Foods trucks pulls up behind the BB&T on Old Forest Road and lifts up its rear gate to reveal plastic tubs filled with canvas bags containing pre-ordered, locally-sourced grocery products.

Relay Foods, an online grocery-ordering service originally launched in Charlottesville that operates in cities throughout the mid-Atlantic region, expanded to the Lynchburg market earlier this month. Through [www.relayfoods.com](http://www.relayfoods.com), shoppers

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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
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Sam O'Keefe

Noah DeCarmo, 8, checks out tomatoes from Relay Foods as he helps pick up groceries for his family on Wednesday.

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food she wants.

“The biggest thing for me is that they offer local items,” she said.

King, who said she first heard about the company through social media, was drawn to place an order thanks to discounts available to first-time customers and those who refer their friends.

After picking up close to \$100 worth of groceries for which she paid a little over \$20, including a \$1 “bounty basket” filled with local fruits and vegetables, King said she “absolutely” planned to keep using the service.

Hope Lawrence, whose Charlottesville-area business Hudson Henry Baking Company sells granola through Relay, said the service has helped her small local company grow in a dynamic way. Lawrence’s business sells its products at the Charlottesville City Market and in some stores, but has been able to ex-pand its reach significantly through Relay.

“For our little company, it’s just been wonderful,” Lawrence said. “Because they’re in so many different markets, we’ve been introduced to D.C. customers and Williamsburg customers, and all around Charlottesville and Richmond...It’s really expanded our client base.”

Relay decided to add Lynchburg to its list of sites because of “pent-up demand” in the

can place orders for all grocery items, ranging from veggies to candies to diapers, and pick them up at a designated spot once a week.

Kevin Kurzendoerfer, senior vice president of operations for Relay, said customers are attracted both to the convenience of online grocery ordering and the bounty of locally sourced products available from Relay Foods.

Relay works with local farmers and vendors – with “local” defined as within a 250-mile radius – to provide customers with fresh, organic products whenever possible.

“[Customers] really enjoy local sustainable foods and they want to support the local economy,” Kurzendoerfer said.

Sarah King, who picked up her first-ever order from the Relay Foods truck in the BB&T parking lot Wednesday afternoon, said although she can drive to the grocery store once a week, she doesn’t have the time to visit dozens of local farms for the

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city, Kurzendoerfer said. Now, only a few weeks in, the company is considering adding additional pickup days for the area, he said.

“Lynchburg is a rapidly growing market for us,” Kurzendoerfer said.

**Contact Eleanor Kennedy at (434) 385-5524 or [ekennedy@newsadvance.com](mailto:ekennedy@newsadvance.com).**

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