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NEW STORES, EATERIES SET FOR MALL

SHOPPING: TOWN CENTER EXPANSION TO BEGIN SOON.

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VALENCIA -- While this shopping season is winding down, Westfield Valencia Town Center officials are eagerly anticipating an expansion that will bring 40 more retail stores to the mall.

Construction is slated to start next year and be completed by fall 2009.

``It's only going to improve our retail mix," said Jalina Warner, the mall's marketing director. ``We have a number of great retailers here already. This will only add to the breadth of retail we have."

Potential retailers include Kate Spade, Sephora, Williams-Sonoma, BCBG, bebe, Cache, Lucky, J.Crew, The Children's Place and babystyle, Warner said.

Four new restaurants with outdoor dining will also be opening. Potential eateries include The Cheesecake Factory, Daily Grill and Cafe Marmalade, Warner said. California Pizza Kitchen is a definite addition, she said.

Canyon Country resident De Shane Stephens, who was shopping at the mall with her husband, Brian, on Saturday, has been waiting for a California Pizza Kitchen to arrive.

“We have exhausted all the restaurants here,” Stephens said. “But when CPK comes, we will exhaust that, too.”

She would also like to see more variety in men's and women's clothing stores. Stephens admits to heading to Westfield Topanga in Woodland Hills because of its variety and quality.

She now visits the mall once every two months, but she said she would come more often depending on the **new stores** that move in.

The new restaurants and retail stores at Westfield Valencia Town Center will encompass an open-air center dubbed The Patios, which will feature fountains, fireplaces, lush landscaping and a children's play area. The outdoor pedestrian corridor will be located between Macy's and Sears.

Macy's will also expand by 50,000 square feet.

The Patios are the first phase of a 491,890-square-foot expansion of the mall's eastern area. Future phases call for adding parking garages and outdoor stores and restaurants between JCPenney and Sears. Final completion is expected by 2010.

The city's Planning Commission approved the expansion's first phase in July.

Construction was temporarily blocked when two Town Center West restaurants, Salt Creek Grille and Poquito Mas, appealed the approval citing what a representative called “long-existing parking, traffic-management and public-safety issues.”

A representative for the restaurants later agreed to let the project move ahead. Santa Clarita City Council members denied the appeal Oct. 30, essentially giving the expansion a green light.

The expansion is estimated to bring in \$1million of new sales tax revenue into the city of Santa Clarita's coffers.

City officials are thrilled that the mall is expanding, said Jason Crawford, Santa Clarita's economic development manager.

“It is going to bring the kind of shopping opportunities that Santa Clarita residents have been asking for,” Crawford said. “We are working with Westfield to attract the right mix of retail and restaurants that we know the community wants.”

Santa Clarita is one of the top 25 retail markets in the state, according to the California

Retail Survey, Crawford said.

The mall's expansion will increase Santa Clarita's reputation as a shopping destination, he said.

The goal is for Santa Clarita residents to eat and shop in the city, instead of jumping on crowded freeways, Crawford said.

If residents spend their money in the city, it stays in the city.

“It's a win-win,” Crawford said.

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GETTING STARTED

A groundbreaking ceremony for the Westfield Valencia Town Center expansion will be held at 2 p.m. Jan. 19 between Macy's and Sears in the parking area facing Valencia Boulevard. The public is welcome.

Caption: Box:

GETTING STARTED (see text)

Keywords: WESTFIELD VALENCIA TOWN CENTER - RETAIL - PLANNING - EXPANSION - SHOPPING MALL - LIST - RESTAURANT

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