

## **Big-Name Retailers to fill Geneva Stores**

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GENEVA — A Barnes & Noble bookstore and an action-oriented sports superstore head a list of big-name retailers descending on Geneva in 2002. Geneva Commons, a so-called “lifestyle” shopping center being built north of Delnor-Community Hospital, is expected to open next Sept. 5 with a complement of high-profile chains represented.

An official of Jeffrey R. Anderson Real Estate, the center’s developer, has confirmed the opening date and the identities of chains that have signed leases.

In recent days, walls have begun to rise for the shopping center along Randall Road (at Williamsburg Drive). It will consist of a number of buildings, encircling a courtyard area and parking lot.

“It will have a lot of upscale retailers, a number of them that aren’t in the St. Charles-Geneva submarket yet, but which are certainly in the Chicago area,” said Jeffrey Anderson’s Director of Real Estate, Mark Fallon.

Anderson, a Cincinnati-based developer, specializes in lifestyle centers, which have a strong emphasis on fashion clothing stores.

Anchoring the 417,000-square-foot center will be Galyan’s Trading Co., designed for outdoor sports enthusiasts, and the Barnes & Noble book store. Galyan’s easily will be the largest in the center, with an 84,000-square-foot, two-level store, while Barnes & Noble will have a 25,000-square-foot entry.

Galyan’s is noted not only for its size, but also for its distinctive climbing wall that enables outdoor fitness buffs to test their skills and equipment.

Other retailers that Fallon confirmed have signed leases for Geneva Commons include Ann Taylor, Banana Republic, Bath and Body Works, Casual Corner, Petite Sophisticate, Chico’s and Children’s Place.

Additionally, the shopping center will be home to Coldwater Creek, Limited Express, the Gap, Gap Kids, Hallmark, J. Crew, Pottery Barn, Williams-Sonoma (kitchenware), Yankee Candle, American Eagle, Wet Seal (girls fashions), Abercrombie and Fitch and Coconuts Music.

Fallon said there also will be a stress on restaurants. Starbuck’s coffee and Cosi (sandwiches and coffee) already have signed.

Several others are expected to be added.

“We are currently in negotiations with five different sitdown, high-volume restaurants,” Fallon added.

He said the sitdown restaurants are ones that should provide visitors a choice for a “good dining experience.”

The shopping center’s design will be convenient for shoppers, Fallon said. Each store will have external entrances, with shoppers able to park nearest the store they wish to shop at, he said. It will sprawl across a 42-acre site.

The layout is “very pedestrian friendly,” according to Geneva city Planning Director Richard Untch.

“There are numerous building design, building material and site landscape plan enhancements that have gone into it,” Untch said.

City officials, meanwhile, also are watching the revenues the new center is projected to generate for city coffers.

“At this point, the best thing we can say is, we are very confident that the center will generate in excess of \$1 million in retail sales tax revenue (the city’s portion of the sales tax) in a full year,” Untch said.

Fallon said Geneva Commons will offer “an edited mix of high-end, mall-type tenants. With that, it’s really the best of the best in their categories.”

“If you look at a large mall, often you go there and there will be 250 tenants,” Fallon said. “You’ve got to walk by a lot of the less desirable tenants or little food stands or pretzel stores to get to the store you went to see.”

He said Geneva Commons, instead, will offer more of the “old downtown atmosphere” he contended shoppers are seeking.

Fallon stressed another point: lifestyle centers, he said, are designed with women in mind.

“It’s really the stores that ‘she’ desires,” Fallon said. “When I refer to ‘she,’ that’s the customer we aim for. Probably, the average (customer) is between 20 and 50, and she makes the shopping decisions for the family.”

The current retail building boom in central Kane County may seem out of sync with a country in recession. Fallon maintained, however, that the demand for added shopping is strong in areas that are growing rapidly.

“We continue to lease right now,” Fallon said. “The Chicago market is strong, and especially the western suburbs are very strong.”

Fallon added that the western suburbs, in fact, are “grossly underserved” in terms of retail. Currently, he said, far west suburban residents may have to drive great distances to shop at a store they are interested in.

Geneva Commons may not be the last shopping center along Randall, either. Immediately north of Geneva Commons is a separate site that Duke Weeks Realty is

marketing for another shopping center: This one also would be south of the existing Meijer store complex.