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## Twin Cities' Retail Hot Spots

# West End establishes 'live-work-play-shop' blend in first year

Premium content from Minneapolis / St. Paul Business Journal - by Elizabeth Millard, Contributing writer

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Although it has yet to establish a reputation as a shopping destination in the Twin Cities, The Shops at West End has certainly made a good start on building buzz.

The development, whose first business, Rainbow Foods, opened in August 2009, is about 75 percent leased, with retail on the street level and office space just above.

Restaurants, in particular, are showcased in the space, including Crave, Cooper, Rojo Mexican Grill and **Toby Keith's** I Love This Bar & Grill. Already, Rojo is planning an expansion, and several restaurants are due to open soon, including a 24-hour diner called Huey's and a location for St. Paul favorite Little Szechuan.

Recently, most of the office space in the development was leased to Baker Associates, a brand design firm.

The Shops' proximity to Highway 394, Highway 100, several hotels and nearby St. Louis Park neighborhoods puts it in just the right spot for retail and restaurant success, said **Michael Landstad**, senior property manager for Shops at West End.

"It sounds cliché, but it's really about location," he said. "It's just very convenient for people from the city and the suburbs. It has an urban feel, and yet it's close to highways. It's got that live-work-play-shop blend going for it."

The Shops benefit from the development's size as well, said **Bruce Nustad**, president of the TwinWest Chamber of Commerce. "With other retail areas being quiet in a down economy, here you have this large-scale project, and that generated a lot of interest."

Also, the diversity of shops is a unique blend, he said. In addition to Bergstrom Jewelers — which relocated to the development after being in downtown Minneapolis for 87 years — retailers include accessories boutique **Charming Charlie**, yoga clothier lululemon athletica and hip kids store Uber Baby.

"It's just a very interesting, neat collection of stores," Nustad said. "When you add that to the area, it makes it a destination for retail and entertainment. With the office space, the surrounding hotels and other retailers, and restaurants, it's like the perfect mix for success."

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