Pénney moving in Lafayette

New store planned for Acadians Mall

By ANGELA IBIONEAUX
Acadiana Beacon

LAFAYETTE -- J.C. Penney announced Thursday its plans to locate its Lafayette full department store to Acadians Mall.

The new store will be located where the former Baker Brothers store stands, now between Bilbo's and Maison Blanche, and is scheduled to open in the fall of 1991, said J.J. Bichier, district manager for J.C. Penney.

The former Brothers store will be demolished and the 100,000 square-foot J.C. Penney store will be built in the Place from the ground up, said Robert Smith, manager of the commercial company that owns Acadians Mall.

A spokesperson for Acadians Mall said the work would be done by local contractors.

The new store will have an additional 1,000 square feet of sales area, and will use J.C. Penney's newest store design concept, Bordeaux, said, including an "open concept" floor plan.

Residents of the area have been speculating in Lafayette for some time about a potential venture with J.C. Penney.

"It's a very good move," one resident said.

The manager of the Lafayette J.C. Penney store, Joe Dauzats, did not return reporter phone calls to his office Thursday afternoon.

Jerry Prevost, manager of Northgate Mall, was out of town and could not be reached for comment Thursday. However, he said he and director Arnold Lemer and Northgate would continue to list local needs of future department stores.

"Of course we regret that J.C. Penney is leaving," Lemer said. "But fortunately our housing department had prior notice, and is currently talking to prospective tenants to replace J.C. Penney.

Nearby department stores are J.C. Penney, Montgomery Ward and Service Merchandise.

Lemer said Northgate is owned by Metaline Stores and Associates.

"This is not an economic recession, and our shopping centers remain extremely busy," said Lemer. "This is what we call a soft-ship recession. We've had constant increases in traffic, constant increases in sales, and the opening of Lafayette Lafayette and the Vermilionaise stores have only helped position us for even more exciting opportunities in the future."

The Morning Advocate
Friday, April 13, 1990
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