



Stores, theater in S. Barrington to open in fall

L.L. Bean, dine-in movies on tap

By Ashok Selvam | Daily Herald Staff

Published: 3/4/2008 12:15 AM

Though winter weather has complicated construction of the Arboretum of South Barrington, officials still aim to open the "lifestyle" shopping center by September.

The 86-acre project's cost stretches upward of \$200 million. It's about 70 percent leased, said Michael Jaffe, president of the Jaffe Cos., the site's developer.

"It's a challenging retail environment nationally, but our leasing has been very, very steady," he said.

Jaffe had dubbed the enterprise an upscale lifestyle center and said it would open in two stages near routes 59 and 72. By September, a 500,000-square-foot portion should be open with the remaining 100,000 square feet ready for customers late next year or in early 2010.

Last week, Freeport, Maine-based retailer L.L. Bean announced it would open its first Chicago-area store -- and the first outside of the Northeast -- at the Arboretum. Jaffe also said Blue Coral Sushi will open a branch.

He said other announcements are imminent, including the addition of a "legendary" Chicago hamburger joint. Committed tenants include a movie theater, Circuit City, Potbelly and Soft Surroundings.

South Barrington Village President Frank Munao said he's pleased with the progress. The project has had many delays since 1999 when the parcel, formerly part of the Klehm tree nursery, was first zoned for commercial use.

"This is a very important time for the village," he said.

Jaffe said his goal is to attract shoppers with unique stores and eateries not found in typical shopping centers.

One of them is Pinstripes, a restaurant with bowling lanes and bocce courts. Owner Dale Schwartz opened his first site last year in Northbrook and said he's already booking private events for the South Barrington site. He said he's eager to tap into affluent suburban clientele in the fall and will break ground in a matter of weeks.

"All these surrounding communities are wonderful communities that appreciate quality," he said.

Arboretum backers also say Gold Class Cinemas will be a success, despite being less than four miles from the 30-screen AMC South Barrington movie house.

Gold Class announced late last year its intentions to build an eight-screen movie theater in South Barrington. The Australian-based company offers patrons plush seating, beverages from a full liquor bar and gourmet food choices.

Also distinguishing itself from the AMC location is that at least some of the existing Gold Class theaters impose an 18-or-older age limit on customers.

Munao said there hasn't been any discussion on an age limit in South Barrington, though village officials will be watching how the theater chooses to regulate alcohol sales in the possible presence of minors.

South Barrington Village Administrator David Pierce explained the village's incentive agreement, saying for the shopping center's first 12 years of operation, Jaffe Cos. gets to keep half a percentage point of the state's sales tax.

Jaffe added that he hopes the development across the street in Hoffman Estates' Prairie Stone Business Park has a positive impact on the Arboretum. The park includes the Sears Centre arena. There's also plans for the Prairie Creek Amphitheater, an 8,900-seat outdoor music venue and a water park resort.