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## First shops open doors at Fayette Crossing

By Amy Zalar, Herald-Standard  
 10/24/2007  
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The first shops at the Fayette Crossing development along Route 40 in the Fayette County Business Park are open for business, as the ever-expanding retail center continues to take shape.

The "small-shop building" the first phase of the development, which will feature more than 400,000 square feet of retail space when completed, served as the location for a gathering Tuesday of officials who gathered to hear details about the 58-acre project.

The \$51.5 million venture includes new stoplights, roads and retail stores, the main feature of which will be a 203,000-square-foot Wal-Mart Super Center.

Cedarwood Development Inc is developing Fayette Crossing. The Fayette County Redevelopment Authority is developing the project, which is located in South Union Township on former county property. Randall Hake, director of development for Cedarwood Development Inc., said the project included moving 2 million cubic yards of dirt to level the hillside.



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Fayette Crossing's first shops await customers at the new South Union Township development Tuesday. Robert Esquivel/Herald-Standard

Herb Margolis, solicitor for the redevelopment authority, said when he researched the title for the property, he learned that the project is being developed on land that was in the hands of Fayette County for 200 years.

"I can't think of a greater development in my lifetime," Margolis said, adding that he will turn 80 next week.

Hake explained that the few shops that are open at the small-shop building - namely Game Stop, Subway, Great Clips and Oreck - are the "first step." Hake said the project, which took two years, was the result of a cooperative effort. He said it will feature a great highway system, a new traffic signal on Route 40, an Applebee's restaurant, a Sonic "throwback-type restaurant" and another family dining restaurant, along with the Wal-Mart Super Center, which is slated to open around Jan. 20, 2008.

Hake said some of the tenants are already open and Applebee's wants to open before the holidays. Another shop building, as well as freestanding buildings also are planned for the development.

Hake said that additionally a former cemetery in the middle of the development has been refurbished, and features a monument and fence.

A large, \$8.1 million check was featured as a backdrop during remarks. Earlier this year, the authority learned it would receive the state grant money to assist Cedarwood with work.

The state cash, which will be paid in the form of approximately \$813,000 per year for 10 years, is from the Infrastructure Facilities Improvement Program (IFIP) through the state Department of Community and Economic Development. The money will be used to offset debt for infrastructure work such as roads, water and sewerage that the private developer has incurred for the project.

The redevelopment authority applied for the money in November 2006.

As the applicant, the redevelopment authority will act as a "pass-through" agency for the money, which will ultimately be paid to Cedarwood for the project. Redevelopment authority executive director Andrew French said after learning of receipt of the IFIP money, talks began to decide how to finance the upgrades. He said while the IFIP money will come for the next 10 years, the improvements must be paid for now. The authority is planning to issue tax-exempt bonds that can be used for improvements from the previous 60 days and in the future, French said.

French said the IFIP grant the authority obtained is one of the largest in the state.

Hake said more than 90 percent of the money spent at the development are from Pennsylvania-based subcontractors and consultants.

Fayette County Commissioner Joseph A. Hardy III said frequently a lot of people just talk, but said Cedarwood should be commended for pulling the project together.

South Union Township Supervisor Bob Schiffbauer said the public has no idea what it takes to make a project of such a magnitude happen. He said one of the important steps was getting the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission to enlarge the road from the Mon/Fayette Expressway onto Route 40. He said \$3.6 million was used as a match to complete Matthew Drive Extension.

Fayette County Commissioner Vincent A. Vicites said the \$2 million the commissioners spent from the county bond issue was money well spent.

"It's phenomenal how it's grown," Vicites said.

Vicites said \$20 million of funding has been secured toward infrastructure. Vicites said the third phase, which may include a residential development will be just as exciting. He said the project may become a "mini-Southpointe," referencing the mixed-use business park in Canonsburg, Washington County.

The South Union business park also features a hotel, CareerLink, an engineering firm, the Fayette County Mental Health/Mental Retardation offices, medical offices and an Italian restaurant, Pasta Lorenzo.

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