



Good News in Saint John



Brought to you by the Saint John Board of Trade Retail Forum

March 2009

Issue 1, Vol 1

Retail Grows and Thrives in the Port City

The Retail sector in Saint John and Atlantic Canada is bucking the trend that is seeing sales decreases in the sector in North America. According to the International Council of Shopping Centres (ICSC), "the Atlantic Region reported the strongest sales increase on a year-on-year basis with 9.2% which led all other Canadian regions." Saint John's growth and expansion is continuing with 400,000 square feet of development and 600,000 square feet of redevelopment to be completed within the next few years, ICSC has reported.

The positive growth of this sector in our City is highlighted by the statement from Tanya McCluskey-Kelly of Cadillac-Fairview that "McAllister Place experienced a very favourable holiday season with an overall increase in both retail sales, *Shop!Card* gift card sales and customer traffic. With many new retailers; Areopostale, Lids, Eastside Board Supply, Subway, Freshly Squeezed, The Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory, Mappins Jewellery, and Wireless Wave, McAllister Place continues to provide our shoppers with an exceptional retail offering that features first-to-market retailers and an enhanced shopping experience."

The growth and expansion is being felt not only on the East side of the City but throughout. Gaye Ann Walsh of Walsh Luggage in Market Square experienced her "best holiday season in 25 years!"

Brunswick Square, has also seen positive development recently with two new shops, J&R Bags and Shoes and Edible Blossoms. Also, Brunswick Square experienced a significant increase in sales over the 2008 holiday season despite the reported economic distress other provinces across Canada are experiencing.

The renovations of Lancaster Mall and the rejuvenation of the Golden Mile on the West Side are underway. The recently announced redesign of Simms Corner, expected to begin in May, is adding more excitement.

These are just a few examples of how Retail in the Port City is not only weathering the economic downturn, it is thriving during the storm!

Retail Trends Survey & Marketing Plan

In the Summer of 2008, the Saint John Board of Trade's Retail Forum presented the results of its Shopping Patterns in Saint John and Surrounding Areas Survey, conducted by Bristol Omnifacts Research. The survey provided some key findings which include:

- The variety and selection of stores was the primary reason for people from Moncton, Fredericton and Sussex to shop in Saint John.
- Over 90% of people living in the Suburbs of Saint John shop outside of the city.
- 50% of people who shop in Moncton go to Costco.

The results highlighted the unique character of the Retail experience in Saint John. They also show positive growth potential in the retail sector through a marketing campaign. At present, MT&L Public Relations has been contracted to work on a strategic plan for the marketing of Saint John as a Retail Destination. More updates to follow!

Costco One Step Closer to Saint John!

As has been recently announced in the media, Costco has recently applied for a revised building permit for the East Point location. Many in the city are thrilled over this development, including the Saint John Board of Trade Chair, Dr. Michael Barry who was quoted saying that "it will be fabulous for the City" in the Telegraph Journal. Many people have been saying that they will no longer have to drive to Moncton to go shopping! This is great news for the Saint John Retail and Hospitality sectors, especially in light of the survey results mentioned above! Let's keep Saint Johners shopping in Saint John!

Good news stories...

Do you have a good news story on retail or business in Saint John? We want to hear about it! If your store is expanding, renovating or you've hired new staff, let us know and we will send out the good news to our members in our quarterly Good News publication!! Send your Good News Story to Erinor Jacob at ejacob@sjboardoftrade.com.

More...

Hotel Association Winter Promotion

This past Christmas season, the Hotel Association teamed up with other organizations like the Board of Trade to promote Saint John as a Shopping Destination. The program offered travellers discounted hotel rates and a \$50 shopping card to use at participating retailers during their stay. The marketing campaign included billboards in other cities, like Moncton, radio ads and ads in local papers. This program highlights the benefits of groups working together for the betterment of the Saint John economy and community! Partners in the program included Brunswick Square, East Point Shopping Centre, Market Square, McAllister Place, Tourism Saint John, Uptown Saint John, and the Saint John Board of Trade.

Gallery Hop highlights Saint John's Unique Character

On Saturday, December 6th the Uptown merchants and galleries hosted a special Gallery Hop. The Gallery Hop highlights local artists, shops and restaurants to Saint Johners and visitors!

This was the fourth gallery hop of 2008, and the first ever to be held during the month of December.

Having grown from three galleries to eleven in just seven years, the Great Saint John Gallery Hop has become one of the premiere events for the City.

Each year people eagerly anticipate the first hop which occurs in early May, normally the first of three, the others following in August and October.

This past year the group decided to add a December Hop. It was held throughout the entire day of December 6, with all galleries hosting new exhibitions. Joining the galleries for this hop were some of Trinity Royal's best restaurants and bars, making this event larger and more successful than ever. With great art, food, drink and hundreds of participants this grand historic city launched the winter season with wonderful style. The organizers were thrilled with the success, and have determined to make this an important annual contribution to the renaissance of Uptown Saint John!!

Home Depot Staying... Successful in Saint John!

Home Depot recently dispelled rumours that it would be closing its East Side location. The rumours were countered with the spokeswoman for Home Depot, Sheri Papps, stating that the Saint John location was a very successful store in Canada and they have no plans of closing it.

Training Programs

In addition to the Brown Bag Series and Toolbox Lunch & Learn Training Sessions normally held by the Saint John Board of Trade, the Retail Forum provided a complimentary 2 ½ hour morning session in November. This session provided retailers with information on Money Laundering and Pin Pad Fraud given by members of the RCMP Major Crime and Proceeds of Crime divisions. The event was attended by approximately 20 retailers who were able to ask in depth questions to the RCMP representatives.

If you have any suggestions for a training session you would be interested in attending please contact Erinor Jacob at ejacob@sjboardoftrade.com.

Retail Forum looking for Members!

The Retail Forum is a committee of the Saint John Board of Trade dedicated to improving and promoting the Retail Sector in Saint John. Current members of the Retail Forum represent various businesses including Alternatives, Buckland Gallery, Centennial Pontiac, East Point Shopping, FCS Flooring & Concrete Solutions Specialists, McAllister Place, Uptown Saint John and Walsh Luggage. Presently the Forum is working on improving the Retail sector's presence in the media and making Saint John a Retail destination.

If you are interested in participating on the Retail Forum please contact Erinor Jacob for more information at ejacob@sjboardoftrade.com.

Indigo Books & Music Inc at home in Saint John!

Since opening its doors last summer as the first Indigo Books & Music Inc in New Brunswick, Indigo has been active in the Saint John community. On January 24th, in celebration of Family Literacy Day, Indigo held a Family Literacy Day® Guinness™ World Record Attempt event. They invited children and their parents to attend and contribute to the national attempt to break the world record for "Most Children Reading With an Adult, Multiple Locations". They read some of their favourite Robert Munsch stories and created some personalized crafts that encourage reading, for the children to take home. They had up to 20 children in the Kids department participating in the story time event.

Indigo also hosts a monthly book club for adults which takes place on the last Wednesday of every month for those who wish to share their views and opinions on the chosen book. For more information on the book club, visit their Facebook group at Indigo East Point Book Club. These are just two of the ways Indigo is making itself at home in the Saint John community.