

# East Side box stores booming

**Retail** Development is proving popular with shopkeepers and customers alike

---

**BOBBI-JEAN MACKINNON**  
TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

---

**SAINT JOHN** – Saint John shoppers will have plenty to keep them busy this week-end now that three new clothing stores have opened at East Point Shopping.

Fairweather, International Clothiers and Randy River have joined the growing group of retail outlets popping up at the ongoing massive development on the city's East Side, off Westmorland Road.

Glamour Secrets, a beauty and hair products boutique and salon, will soon follow, said lead Horizon Management developer Troy Northrup.

And he's in negotiations to fill the final two storefronts of the two new ivory-coloured brick buildings he describes not as strip malls, but "open air centres" with lifestyle components.

"It's all about the experience and how people feel," said Northrup, as he walked



NOEL CHENIER/TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

Troy Northrup stands next to some of the special landscape features at the East Point Shopping Centre.

through the site Friday, excitedly pointing out the detailed design work of the upscale project.

There's the Arizona-influenced three-metre wide sidewalks, numerous parking lot islands that will be filled with trees and shrubs, and Universal Studios-style sky search lights that will grace the roof

tops.

"We want to create a unique atmosphere. We want this to be a place where people want to go."

Kathy Dumouchel is impressed. She not only likes the look of the develop-

---

PLEASE SEE → **BOOM, B2**

# Box stores will boost business on East Side for all: developer

## BOOM ← B1

ment, but also the convenience the box store style offers over a mall.

"If you're specifically looking for one or two items, it's easier," said the mother of three who's often pressed for time. "You park, you run in and you run out."

Box stores are almost guaranteed a sale when someone like Dumouchel comes through their door, said Fairweather district manager Susie Alberts-Hines. Malls are often filled with "browsers," people "killing time," or looking to get out of the house, but box store shoppers usually have a purpose.

So far, her theory has proven true, with steady traffic and sales since Fairweather opened its doors Thursday, she said. And once the word gets out, she expects those numbers to jump, particularly among women aged 30 and older who have had difficulty finding age-appropriate clothing, she said.

Dumouchel, who picked up two pairs of capris and two tops at opening-special prices Friday, certainly welcomes the increased selection East Point offers. Up until now, she has resorted to travelling to Quebec or the United States twice a year, seeking fashions and bargains.

"If you can do it here, this is obviously where you want to spend your money," she said.

Dumouchel's only complaint is that she'd like to see some development on the West Side, where she lives.

Maureen Gillis isn't sold on East Point though. Although the North End resident likes the new stores and the look of them, she prefers malls. "I don't like to have to go out in the cold," she said.

And she doesn't like the layout, having to drive around the entire complex from Westmorland Road, onto Retail Drive and Fashion Drive to get to the stores. "It's going to be awful when everything's open" and traffic increases, said Gillis.

Northrup said he hasn't heard any complaints about the layout, but has fielded some questions. He contends it would be a safety hazard to have a roadway running through the estimated 200 parking spots. He also believes the rationale be-

hind the layout will become more clear to consumers as additional phases of the 63,000-square-metre development open over the next 10 years.

Meanwhile, the condition of Retail Drive, which has some rough patches after a water leak, should improve by next week, when it's scheduled to be paved, said Northrup. And the road, which is currently blocked off, should hook up to Rothesay Avenue and Ashburn Road by the end of the month, giving motorists easy access to the highway.

Asked what impact he expects East Point will have on McAllister Mall, Northrup said, "In retail, everybody feeds off one another. The more concentration, the more traffic, the better it is for everybody."

Saint John now has the largest single concentration of retail in Atlantic Canada, he said. "There's always going to be a regional mall and it will always be successful. We're just offering an alternative," he added.

For Moores, the alternative has paid off, said assistant manager Chris Turner. The men's clothing store was the second retailer to open at East Point about seven weeks ago and has already seen a 27 per cent increase over last year's budget when it was located at the mall, he said.

"Traffic wasn't the best for us over there," said Turner. "We had customers coming in and saying 'Oh, when did you guys come to the city,' despite being at McAllister for nine years and Lansdowne for nine years before that."

Moores has also had to hire eight more staff to keep up with the estimated 80 additional customers a day at East Point, said Turner. He believes box stores appeal to consumers because "you don't have to spend three hours looking at stuff you don't necessarily need or want."

"Three steps out of the car and they're right at our front door."

Box stores appeal to retailers because the cost per square foot is usually cheaper without having to pay for mall security, there's usually fewer thefts and less loitering, which often deters shoppers.

Other East Point retailers include Roots 73, Urban Planet, and Cotton Ginny.