

Penney's, Target anticipate dates

By Brennan David

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Demolition resumed this week at Hammond Square.

Metal beams have been added to the existing walls bordering the exterior of Sears and Dillards and the mall area under demolition, Stirling Properties Project Manager Dick Cyr said.

A large section of the mall will be removed within the next seven days, he said.

"We had to make adjustments on the Sear's and Dillards walls," Cyr said. "Everything is now signed off, and a major part of the middle area will come down soon."

Complications during demolition have set crews back close to 90 days, Stirling Properties Chairman Jimmy Maurin said.

The delay is due mostly to the difficulty of demolishing the mall while keeping Sear's, Rite Aid and Dillards in operation.

The demolition crew began in late October at the rear part of the mall and is working towards the front to not disturb the operations of the remaining stores.

The concrete slab for J.C. Penney will be poured within the next week, Cyr said. Once the slab is down, progress at the site will be visible to onlookers traveling on C.M. Fagan Road.

The Penney store is scheduled to open in the fall.

Construction of the new Target will begin sometime this spring, and the store is scheduled to open in spring 2009.

Stirling Properties plans to make an announcement about other tenants within 40 days.

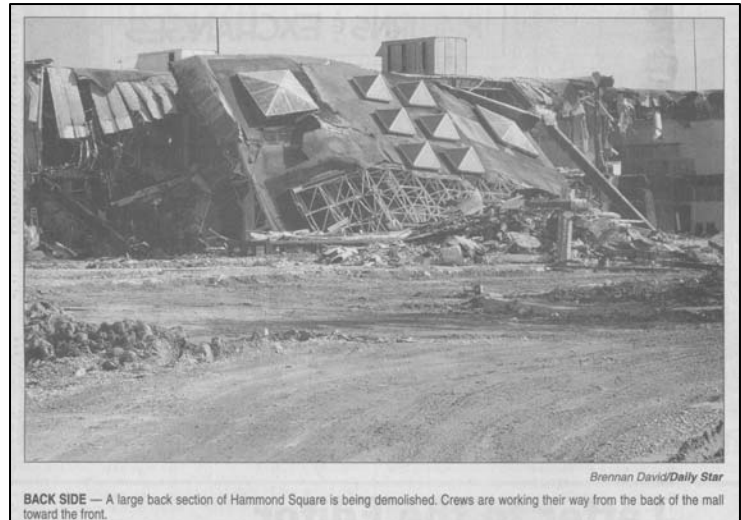
Hammond Square Drive is also under construction, and will be completed by mid-March. The new road will serve as the mall ring-road and will be transferred to the city.

Dillards and Sear's parking lots will be repaved beginning March 24. Parts of the Dillards parking lot are already under construction.

Road work also continues along U.S. 51 near the mall with the removal of concrete. Kiley Bates, Spangler Engineering senior design engineer, said drivers can expect the single lane roadway to shift lanes for the next eight months.

A right-turning lane will be added for southbound drivers merging onto Interstate 12. The projects includes two turning lanes for northbound travelers turning into the mall. An additional southbound turning lane is also in the works at the Interstate 12 Exit 40 westbound off ramp.

Beginning Jan. 30, Interstate 12's Exit 40 westbound off ramp will be entirely closed. Bates said southbound drivers are asked to use the Interstate 55 interchange.



BACK SIDE — A large back section of Hammond Square is being demolished. Crews are working their way from the back of the mall toward the front.



FRONT SIDE — An exterior wall at the front of the mall is being ripped down.



CONES IN FRONT OF MALL — U.S. 51 southbound merges into one lane near Hammond Square as major road renovations continue. Two turning lanes will be added for travelers to turn into the mall.