

Wednesday, April 23, 2008

Best Buy coming to Hammond Square

By Brennan David

Best Buy Co., a Fortune 100 company and the largest specialty retailer of consumer electronics in the United States and Canada, will construct a 30,000 square-foot store at Hammond Square.

Stirling Properties Chairman Jimmy Maurin announced the news Tuesday. The store will stand between Target and the soon-to-be expanded Dillard's with its back to Interstate 12, he said.



Viewed from Interstate 12, digging takes place Tuesday in the vicinity of Hammond Square where the Best Buy store will stand between Target and the soon-to-be expanded Dillard's.

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This will be the third Northshore location for Best Buy, Forbes magazine's 2004 "Company of the Year." Best Buy already has stores in Slidell and Covington.

The Hammond store will be the fourth Best Buy that Stirling has built, Maurin said, and the company is aiming for a spring 2009 grand opening. Target is also scheduled to open next spring while J.C. Penney is committed to opening this October.

The Hammond Square lifestyle center is on schedule to open in spring 2009. Maurin said the open air shopping center will include 60 total retailers, he said.

Demolition is now complete, he said, and the walls of J.C. Penny are already constructed. The ring road is now paved, with striping to take place toward the end of the week.

The city of Hammond will soon buy the ring road using a \$15 million bond issued to the city for infrastructure improvements. Mayor Mayson Foster said the ring road will be open to the public for access to Dillard's, Sears and the AMC Theatre but sections will likely be closed for safety reasons.

While Maurin has stated several times that the slow economy is making retail stores across the country cautious about investments, he hopes to close several deals next month during the International Council of Shopping Center's Convention.

Maurin said he will be taking a team of 25 employees to the Las Vegas event to close deals for Hammond Square.