

## Pulverized



**HILL OF RUBBLE** – A backhoe operates atop a pile of broken concrete at the Hammond Square Mall demolition site Monday afternoon. The concrete will be pulverized and recycled for use in redevelopment. Photo by Kari Wheeler

Penney's, tire store remain on the grounds - literally

By Joan Davis

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The old Hammond Tire store came down last week, and a crushing machine is pulverizing concrete from it and the old Penney building to be recycled in the new Hammond Square Mall redevelopment.

"The old mall will not leave the grounds," said Jimmy Maurin, owner and chairman of the board of Stirling Properties, developer of the Hammond project.

The process of recycling old concrete hasn't been done in 30 years on any project that he can remember, Maurin said. Once all the dirt work is done, the pulverized cement will be layered on top of rock before the new parking lots are poured.

"We're trying to get more green, to not waste anything," he said. "We felt it very ironic. We're tearing it down but leaving it right here."

Those riding by the site will notice a big backhoe on top of the huge pile of chunks of concrete, he said. The pieces are then spit out into a pile of smaller chunks.

Elsewhere, Maurin said the city is moving forward on proposed street work, widening Magnolia and Bauerle and extending Bauerle.

Also, Home Depot has appeared before the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Hammond City Council to get approval on its planned store.

Stirling Properties will bring 25 of its people, a whole crew that handles marketing, to Las Vegas for the week of May 21 to the "Spring Convention and Deal Making" for the International Council of Shopping Centers, he said.

The convention is the big trade association event of the year, and Stirling will have a large exhibit there, as well as most developers from around the country.

"It's where the retail world and developers meet up," he said. "It's where we advance a lot of our projects. That meeting is the big one of the whole year. A lot of business gets done. That's why we bring so many people out there."

When the team returns, Maurin said he will be in a position to make announcements of other retailers who are joining the redevelopment project.

In the interim, work is commencing on air conditioning and electrical overhaul inside the mall so that the three remaining tenants, Sears, Dillard's and Rite-Aid, will be free-standing stores.

Also, a 200,000-gallon water tank at the rear of the mall and an old building near it will be torn down in the coming weeks, and in 30 to 40 days, wrecking crews will begin on the back portion of the mall for the final teardown.

"We're taking this in stages as we get deals finalized, plans and specifications finalized and public work with the city beginning," Maurin said. "It's all moving along well."