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Welcoming store, jobs

All eyes are on that 100 acres south of town where **Stirling Properties** is redeveloping the old mall. Road work and other improvements are coming to a conclusion next month, and the first new store is almost finished.

The opening of J.C. Penney is on the horizon, and the merchandiser's return to Hammond after an absence of several years will be celebrated with a party on Oct. 1 hosted by the city, chamber and the developers. Residents will soon get to see the inside of the new 84,038-square-foot store and all it will have to offer.

But before then, General Manager Kevin Daigler will need some dependable employees — 145 to be exact. He'll start his search with a 3-day job fair this week starting Thursday.

While most of the jobs are part-time, he's offering extensive training, both in the store and on the floor at the Covington store. Training will start Aug 7. He's looking for sales associates, stockers, replenishment teams, salon stylists and even a couple supervisors.

The opening of Penney is just the beginning of many good things coming to Hammond because of the mall redevelopment — shining new stores and restaurants and jobs for hard-working families.