



Penney's to open Sunday

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by Joan Davis

The J.C. Penney workforce of 144-plus associates from throughout Southeast Louisiana are in the store this week making sure shelves are stocked, floors and glass polished and the store ready for opening day Sunday.

Shoppers have been trying to come in for at least a week, thinking the store is already open because the parking lot was full.

“Every 10 minutes, we have to turn somebody away,” store Manager Kevin Daigler said.

Sunday will mark the beginning of Penney’s big week, including a meet and greet next Wednesday from 5 to 7, hosted by Stirling Properties, the Hammond Chamber of Commerce and the city of Hammond.

Charlotte Lenoir, chamber director, said hors d’oeuvres will be served and the Reggie Sanders Jazz Trio will play. The public is invited.

“To some extent it’s like an After Hours, but there won’t be (alcoholic) drinks,” she said. “The band will be playing, and people can walk around and shop.”

On Friday, the formal grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony will take place at 8:30 a.m. The Reggie Sanders Jazz Trio will play, and there will be light refreshments. Speakers will include Daigler, Mayor Mayson Foster, Parish President Gordon Burgess, Penney’s district manager for Louisiana Pat Meadowcraft and Palace/ Stirling Properties Owner Jimmy Maurin.

The opening is particularly poignant for Maurin.

“We’ve been working on this project for a long time,” he said. “We’ve owned Hammond Square for over two years, since May 2006, so a lot of work has gone on. You don’t get happier than the day you begin to open stores, and this will be the first of many to come. It’s particularly heart-warming

and special to me because we’re bringing Penney’s back to Hammond after two or three years. That’s what’s really important to me.”