

## I-10 site progress may spur business

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Published: Dec 9, 2006

LAFAYETTE — Construction is well under way at the shopping center on Louisiana Avenue and Interstate 10 that officials say should spur even more development in north Lafayette.

Stirling Properties is building a 450,000-square-foot shopping center on the southwest corner of the I-10 interchange.

The shopping center will be anchored by a Target and J.C. Penney and could be open by fall 2008.

In a news release, Stirling Properties credited City-Parish President Joey Durel, the Lafayette Economic Development Authority and the Lafayette Legislative Delegation for making the project possible.

The lack of infrastructure in the area — no electricity, water lines, sewer, drainage or service roads the whole length of the new section of Louisiana Avenue — would have made it difficult for development, officials have said.

The City-Parish Council created a special taxing district that includes most of Louisiana Avenue near I-10 — directing a portion of future sales tax collections in the area to help fund public infrastructure.

That infrastructure includes a service road that will eventually connect Louisiana Avenue to Moss Street.

The length of the new portion of Louisiana Avenue is also included in a special overlay district. That district has special rules that govern the appearance of buildings, strong requirements for landscaping and restrictions on what types of businesses are allowed.

Stirling officials have said that if their first phase goes well, they might also develop the southeast quadrant of the interchange.

The Independent Weekly reported Wednesday that O&S Holdings, a national developer with experience building so-called “lifestyle centers” has a two-year option to develop the northeast and northwest quadrants of the interchange.

“It is very rewarding to see our efforts over the last two years come to fruition with this exciting project becoming a reality,” Durel said in a release. “This will be a wonderful development for upper Lafayette, and one that will hopefully lead to more development on Louisiana Avenue, drawing consumers from all of Lafayette, Acadiana, and the rest of the state.”