

News Clips Report

Charming Charlie coming to Hammond Square: 'Hot Retailer' one of 4 stores to open in first half of year Hammond Daily Star

12/29/2010

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Four businesses are pushing to open stores at Hammond Square in the first half of 2011, and La Nails Spa is nearly doubling in size.

Charming Charlie, Academy Sports + Outdoors, Children's Place and Obsessions are expected to be strong additions to the growing retail center on well-traveled Interstate 12, said Jimmy Maurin, Stirling Properties chairman.

Charming Charlie, a ladies accessories and ready to wear store, signed with Hammond Square about three weeks ago, he said.

Based in Houston and only about three or four years old, the company has about 75 stores in the southeast and recently won the International Council of Shopping Centers' "Hot Retailer of the Year Award."

At Hammond Square, Charming Charlie will take 10,000 square feet on Main Street across from Books-a-Million, Maurin said.

This fashion accessory boutique is organized by color families, not by category, so shoppers can go straight to those sections to find the earrings, necklaces, bracelets, handbags, scarves, belts and other items to complete an outfit.

The local store will be Charming Charlie's third in Louisiana, the other two being in Baton Rouge and Lafayette.

Openings are anticipated between mid-March and the first of May for Charming Charlie, The Children's Place and Obsessions, a ladies shoe store that had been located in downtown Hammond and moved to St. Tammany Parish.

Academy is pushing to open in June, Maurin said.

Meanwhile, La Nails Spa is expanding to nearly 3,000 square feet.

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With 740,000 square feet of buildings all leased, Hammond Square is about 92 percent filled, he said.

In 2011, Stirling Properties will focus on leasing the remaining 60,000 square feet, which is mostly along Main Street and near the doors of Sears and Dillards, he said.

Parcels of ground remain available at Hammond Square, the largest being the 10 to 12 acres north of Fagan which had been planned for Home Depot before the company halted the building of stores nationwide due to the economy.

"We would still like to get Home Depot there. We're continuing to talk with them," Maurin said.

"At the end of the day, Hammond Square will be 850,000 square feet," he said.