



Right on target

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Cherokee County shoppers later this month finally will have their first chance to shop in a new regional retail center.

The first soft opening in Canton Marketplace, the 800,000-square-foot shopping center on the south side of Highway 20 east of Interstate 575 exit 19, is scheduled at Lowe's home improvement store on Feb. 27.

Soft openings will carry over into next month, with Kohl's department store opening its doors on March 1 and SuperTarget discount store on March 3.

Kohl's and Lowe's will celebrate their grand openings on March 5, with SuperTarget's on March 8.

Stores including Best Buy electronics store, Books-A-Million, Dick's Sporting Goods, Off Broadway Shoe Warehouse, Office Max, PetSmart, Rack Room Shoes, TJ Maxx clothing store and ULTA beauty store will open in March or April.

The majority of the center's stores and restaurants should be open by April, according to The Sembler Co. spokesman Nick Gold of Gold Concepts Public Relations. All outparcel buildings are scheduled to be completed by the first part of June.

Other tenants include Bed, Bath and Beyond; Canton Jewelry, Cheeseburger Bobby's, Chick-fil-A, Famous Hair salon, GameStop video game store, International House of Pancakes, Kirklands home accessories store, La Parilla Mexican Restaurant, Mattress Firm, Olive Garden Italian Restaurant, Oriental Cuisine, Rue 21 clothing store, Subway restaurant, SunTrust Bank, Taco Mac and Vision Works.

A full list of stores as it's updated is available on the center's Web site at www.shopcantonmarketplace.com.

Canton officials said the shopping center's opening will bring needed revenue to the city.

Mayor Gene Hobgood is waiting for sales tax revenues to start rolling in to city coffers.

"It certainly can't come soon enough," he said.

The city does not know how much in sales tax it will generate, but it's expected to be a significant addition.

And once Canton Place, the larger mixed-use development that includes Canton Marketplace, also is completed, "it will be a huge increase in our total digest," according to City Manager Rob Logan.

Along with new revenue for the city, the shopping center is creating at least 1,200 jobs, Gold said. Sembler is the developer of Canton Marketplace.

"That might even be considered conservative," Gold said about the number of jobs.

Kohl's already has hired 150 employees, and SuperTarget is employing at least 200 jobs.

Lowe's plans to hire 175 people total, and its hiring center is open in the Wal-Mart shopping center in Canton at I-575 exit 20. The center is open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Mondays through Fridays and from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays. Applicants can see the Web site at www.lowes.com/careers for an application.

Hiring for the 35 positions at PetSmart will begin closer to the store's opening in April. Olive Garden, which opens in April, will employ 150 people, with hiring to begin next month.

Canton Ridge, part of larger Canton Place development, is coming before the Canton Planning Commission on Monday for a change in its master plan.

Developers have requested replacing 97 single-family homes and 81 townhomes with 204 townhomes. The changes also would increase the office space to 550,000 square feet from 311,000 and the retail space to 240,000 square feet from 66,000. Canton Ridge is located behind the shopping center.

Community Development Director Ken Patton said York Properties has filed plans with the city to construct about 340 apartments between the shopping center and Canton Ridge. Construction could begin in as soon as four months.

He said no plans have been filed so far for the new Northside Hospital-Cherokee campus, which will be built behind the apartments on a site that extends to Highway 140 near I-575 exit 16. The hospital will include 120 to 150 beds in the first phase, expanding to 350 beds over a 15-year build-out.

Construction also is continuing on Commerce Parkway, which will stretch from its current length through the shopping center all the way to Highway 140.



New Canton Marketplace SuperTarget employee David Frady of Dahlonega unpacks frozen vegetables from their carton and puts them in freezers in the grocery department on Wednesday.

Photo by Amber M. Eberly