

# **Kohl's joining Kentucky 54 business boom**

## **Store expected to open in spring**

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Kohl's, which bills itself as "America's fastest-growing department store," is planning a 68,725-square-foot store at 3440 Villa Point Drive in Woodlands Plaza.

That's the new development on the southeast corner of Fairview Drive and Kentucky 54.

A spring opening is expected.

Kohl's officials did not return a call for comment about the project. And Brad Anderson, managing partner in the group developing Woodlands Plaza, said he could not comment.

But plans filed at City Hall show Kohl's will be part of a five-store strip center on the east end of the development near Ralph Avenue.

Blueprints show 57,446 square feet of sales floor.

That means the Kohl's store will be a little larger than the 62,000-square-foot J.C. Penney store at Towne Square Mall and have slightly more sales floor than the Kmart on West Parrish Avenue, which has 55,000 square feet of sales space.

Kohl's will be the first large national retailer to locate on Kentucky 54 without already having another Owensboro store.

And its arrival is expected to begin changing that fast-growing retail strip from a local shopping area to a regional center.

Rumors say that Best Buy, Bed Bath & Beyond and Chick-fil-A also are looking at property in Woodlands Plaza.

The new strip center, plans show, will be east of the section under construction on the property now.

That section, which includes a fitness center, several restaurants and a bank, is slated for an August opening.

The Kohl's development will have four other stores totaling 63,692 square feet, plans show.

The parking lot will be between the center and Kentucky 54. And there's room remaining along the highway for two or three other businesses.

Kohl's is the nation's 27th largest retailer -- and fifth-largest department store chain -- with \$11.7 billion in sales last year.

It ranks behind Sears (\$36.1 billion), J.C. Penney (\$18.4 billion), Federated (\$15.6 billion) and May (\$14.4 billion), according to the new STORES Top 100 Retailers.

The ranking, based on 2004 sales, shows Kohl's stores averaged \$19.87 million in sales.

That's better than Sears (\$18.3 million), J.C. Penney (\$17.1 million) and May (\$12.5 million.)

Federated stores averaged \$34.4 million, STORES says.

Federated (Macy's) and May (Famous-Barr) are scheduled to merge into one chain in the next 60 days.

The companies still haven't said what that will mean to markets like Owensboro, which have both stores.

Kohl's Owensboro store will be one of the smaller outlets among the chain's 670 stores in 40 states.

The average Kohl's location has about 88,000 square feet and employs about 150 people full and part time, according to the company's Web site.

But three years ago, as it began expanding into smaller communities, Kohl's began opening stores down to 62,000 square feet in places with fewer than 100,000 residents.

Traditional stores are about 30 percent larger.

The Owensboro location will be the company's 11th in Kentucky.

Kohl's, a 43-year-old Wisconsin-based chain, describes itself as "a family-focused, value-oriented specialty department store offering moderately priced national brand apparel, shoes, accessories and home products."

Others refer to it as "an off-mall, middle-market department/discount store hybrid."

The company's June same-store sales jumped 14.4 percent over last year, and total sales were up 25.6 percent.

The fast-growing company added 95 stores last year and plans 62 more this summer.