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Factory outlet center will open by Oct. 11

By Dave Burge / El Paso Times
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The factory outlet shopping center being built near Interstate 10 and Trans Mountain Road on the West Side will open on Oct. 11, a spokeswoman for the developer said Thursday.

The center has also changed its name to Sun Valley Outlet Center, instead of the original name of Sun Valley Factory Shoppes, said Gina Slechta, marketing director for Horizon Group Properties in Chicago.

"This is a name that all our customers can relate to better," Slechta said. " 'Factory shoppes' didn't translate as well as we wanted into Spanish."

Horizon Group plans to market the outlet center to shoppers in northern Mexico.

About 90 percent of the space at the 385,000-square-foot center has already been leased, she said. New tenants include shoe retailer Journeys, women's apparel retailers Sag Harbor and Koret and restaurant Mo'z Bar-b-que, she said.

In the next two to three weeks, the company will announce several "significant" anchor-quality tenants, Slechta said.

Horizon Group Properties develops and owns outlet centers across the nation and has partnered with Los Angeles real estate investment company Grand Misuma on the El Paso project.

The center will eventually contain about 100 stores, Slechta said.

When a groundbreaking ceremony took place in February, Horizon announced that the outlet center would include Banana Republic, Brooks Brothers, Tommy Hilfiger, Nike and Gap Outlet.

"It's going very well," Slechta said. "To pull a project out of the ground and have a percentage leased as high as we do is very rare. I think it shows the excitement there is for this property and the project."

Westsider Maribel Gutierrez, 33, is counting the days until the outlet center opens.

"To me, it's too long, because I already want to go shopping," she said. "But the good thing is, I'll be saving" money for when it opens.

In the past, Gutierrez has shopped at outlet malls in Katy and San Marcos, Texas; Phoenix; and Washington, D.C.

"I like to shop around and see what I can get -- the best item at the best price," she said.

The outlet center will give consumers more options and keep shoppers from traveling outside of El Paso to spend their money, Gutierrez said.

"It will be good for El Paso," she said.

International Council of Shopping Centers spokeswoman Patrice Duker said outlet malls or centers are a relatively new retail format, which was developed in the 1980s.

Originally, outlet centers focused on selling off-season and slightly defective merchandise, she said.

"Now, they're more company stores, and products are more what you'd find in their traditional stores with a slightly lower price point," she said.

This new retail center once again shows that El Paso is a growing market, Duker added.

Dave Burge may be reached at dburge@elpasotimes.com; 546-6126.

Outlet center facts

- **The outlet mall being built at Interstate 10 and Trans Mountain Road has a new name -- Sun Valley Outlet Center.**
- **The 385,000-square-foot center will open on Oct. 11 and has about 90 percent of its space leased.**
- **The center will eventually have about 100 stores.**

- **The project is expected to cost \$70 million and will create 300 construction jobs.**
- **Once completed, the center will create about 800 retail jobs.**
- **El Paso is the only city among the 30 largest cities in the United States without a factory outlet center within 100 miles.**

Source: Horizon Group Properties.