

## **Commons retailers cash in**

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ALGONQUIN - Ideal weather and more than a year of anticipation led to big business for many retailers during an extended opening weekend at Algonquin Commons.

The 420,000-square-foot upscale retail center at the southwest corner of County Line and Randall roads, opened Thursday with more than 60 stores.

By the middle of next year, more than 80 stores and 10 restaurants are expected to be open at the Commons.

"Most of the retailers I talked to [Monday] said their sales goals were exceeded by 200 to 300 percent," said Tracy Nemenz, marketing manager at Cincinnati-based Jeffrey R. Anderson Real Estate Inc., which owns the retail center.

Nemenz said retailers she spoke with included Plainfield, Ohio-based sporting goods seller Galyans Trading Co. Inc.; New York-based AnnTaylor Stores Corp.'s Ann Taylor Loft apparel store; and clothing retailer Abercrombie & Fitch Co. of New Albany, Ohio.

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"We were fortunate that for four days we had beautiful weather, with the exception of a chunk of Friday," she said.

"We had lots of families walking around the Commons with lots of shopping bags.

"When a complex like this is built on a main road like Randall Road, people drive by it every day. They watch it grow out of the ground. They see the signs go up and want to get on the property."

Several retailers declined to comment about business over the weekend and those who did could not discuss specific sales numbers.

Officials at Oshkosh, Wis.-based OshKosh B'Gosh Inc. said sales and customer traffic met the company's goals. The chain's store sells bedding, casual clothes, eyewear and hair accessories.

To help draw customers into the store, OshKosh B'Gosh had a grand opening celebration throughout the weekend that included face painting.

"About 60 percent of our customers bought things," said Corey Kam, OshKosh's area manager. "About 40 percent were just browsing or [children] looking to get their faces painted who took their parents into the store.

"This location has our new concept of offering more than just toys and baby clothing. We have men's and women's apparel. We had a lot of [customers] coming in for the adult apparel. That was exciting for us."

At least one retailer said things started out slow, but gradually picked up.

Mohammed Tajuddin, manager at Irving, Texas-based Zale Corp.'s jewelry store, said store traffic Thursday was "pretty good," but sales were "not that good."

But sales on Friday and during the remainder of the weekend came closer to meeting expectations, Tajuddin said.

"I think at first people just wanted to see what the store was about," he said. "The first day people who were looking came back throughout the weekend to buy. The weekend was great."