



CHRIS CUMMINS/The Kansas City Star

A brontosaurus fossil — at least, a cast replica of one — was “dug up” Tuesday during a groundbreaking for The Legends at Village West project. Amateur paleontologist Kaly Clafin, 7, checked out the find. Among the project’s expected tenants will be a restaurant called T-Rex, which will include theatrical dinosaur exhibits.

Breaking ground for the future

By JOYCE SMITH
The Kansas City Star

The developers of The Legends at Village West, a massive entertainment and shopping district in Kansas City, Kan., announced more than 20 additional tenants during the project’s groundbreaking ceremony Tuesday.

The 750,000-square-foot development near Kansas Speedway at Interstate 435 and State Avenue will include several chains new to the area, such as Off Broadway Shoe Warehouse and Cavender’s, a Western wear store. Many of the operations have signed exclusive agreements with The Legends.

“One-of-a-kind operations, that’s what we believe is going to allow us draw people from all over the city out here to spend their entertainment dollar,” said Dan Lowe, a partner in RED Development, which is developing The Legends.

Lowe said the \$250 million center has been difficult to market to retailers because there isn’t an immediate trade area surrounding the site. RED pitched the project based on the tourist component — people driving in from up to 250 miles away. More than 40 stores and restaurants have signed on or are in final negotiations.

“The numbers speak for themselves, the demographic of the Nebraska Furniture Mart customer, the demographic of the Cabela’s

First glance

- The Legends at Village West announces more than 20 more tenants at its groundbreaking.
- For a list of the stores and restaurants planned for the Kansas City, Kan., development, go to www.kansascity.com.

customer and the number of customers both of them are drawing you just can’t argue with it,” Lowe said. “If we build a shopping center next door and only capture 20 percent of them you still have a strong center.”

When it is finished, The Legends will have about 140 tenants. The first phase is scheduled to open next fall.

Planned retailers include Helzberg Diamonds, Amini’s Galleria and T.J. Maxx.

RED also is in talks with H&M, a publicly traded Swedish retailer of low-price but fashionable clothing.

Planned restaurants include Firebirds Rocky Mountain Grill; Stix Restaurant, a sushi bar, Japanese and Chinese restaurant; Bozo’s Hot Pit Bar-B-Q from the founders of Hard Rock Cafe; dinosaur-themed T-Rex from the founders of Rainforest Cafe; and Jimmy Buffett’s Cheeseburger in Paradise.

Cafe Tu Tu Tango, a previously announced tenant, still has strong interest in the project but has to re-

solve some internal corporate issues, Lowe said.

Despite the numerous restaurants set to open in The Legends, Lowe said the market is underserved.

“Even with these new restaurants we are still under capita relative to others areas like the Plaza,” Lowe said.

The Legends announcements and groundbreaking came one week after the Unified Government revealed it plans to sell 25 acres it owns near The Woodlands for a development anchored by a 100-room hotel.

That development — which is to feature neighborhood amenities such as a drug store, two restaurants (one fast-food), some smaller retail venues and professional office space — pales in size to the \$750 million Village West, but its significance rests with the fact that the developers are not asking for government assistance.

“What we are starting to see now is more interest in other parts of our community given what we’ve done here at Village West and the Speedway,” Unified Government Mayor Carol Marinovich said at the Legends groundbreaking Tuesday. *The Star’s Mark Wiebe contributed to this report.*

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