

## L.L. Bean to open store in suburbs

By Andrew Schroedter

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(Crain's) — A 30,000-square-foot L. L. Bean store is set to open this fall in South Barrington, marking the venerable New England outfitter's first store expansion outside the Northeast.

Freeport, Maine-based L.L. Bean Inc. has leased a storefront at the Arboretum of South Barrington, a 600,000-square-foot shopping center at the northeast corner of State Route 59 and Higgins Road in the northwest suburb.

Construction of the L.L. Bean store is expected to begin in April. The mall, which is under construction, is scheduled to be finished in September, the same time as the L. L. Bean store.

The Arboretum of South Barrington is an open-air shopping center spanning 86 acres. Tenants include retailers Ann Taylor Loft, Victoria's Secret and Circuit City.

The developer of the Arboretum is Michael Jaffe, president of Northbrook-based Jaffe Cos.

"L.L. Bean has many catalog and web customers in the Chicago area, which is one of our largest markets," Ken Kacere, the company's senior vice-president of retail, says in a statement. "Our new stores will showcase a unique product selection for our active outdoor customers."

The South Barrington store will employ about 125 people. In addition to selling gear and clothing, the store will include an Outdoor Discovery School for customers to learn about kayaking, fly fishing and other sports for which L. L. Bean's products are used.

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(27480) The South Barrington location is part of the retailer's plans to open up to nine new stores by 2012. The privately held company doesn't have a store west of Philadelphia.

Named after its founder, Leon Leonwood Bean, the company has grown from a one-man operation in 1912 to a global company with annual sales of about \$1.5 billion, according to the company's Web site.

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