

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

FEBRUARY 26, 2008



Midwest's 1st L.L. Bean to open in S. Barrington

BY SANDRA GUY • sguy@suntimes.com

Outdoor gear retailer L.L. Bean will open its first store in the Midwest at a new shopping center in South Barrington.

The L.L. Bean store will be built “green,” complying with environmental standards, and will occupy 30,000 square feet of the Arboretum at South Barrington. It will employ 125.

The shopping center, an open-air lifestyle center with a high-end movie theater, restaurants and retail, is slated to open in September. The 600,000-square foot shopping center at the northeast corner of Route 59 and Higgins Road is bounded on the east by Highway 59, on the west by Bartlett Road, on the south by Higgins Road and on the north by a 400-home development to be called The Woods of South Barrington.

L.L. Bean's entry into the Chicago area is part of the Freeport, Maine-based retailer's plan to open 32 new stores by 2012. The Chicago-area store will be L.L. Bean's 11th store outside of Maine.

Mary Lou Kelley, L.L. Bean's vice president of retail real estate and marketing, said the Chicago area is one of the retailer's top three markets via catalog and online.

“We'd like to have four stores in the Chicago area within the next two to three years,” Kelley said, noting that Chicago is L.L. Bean's largest expansion market outside of the Northeast.

Other potential L.L. Bean store sites are in the South Loop, Lincoln Park and in the suburbs, Kelley said.

The store will include L.L. Bean's Out-



The L.L. Bean store will be built occupy 30,000 square feet of a new shopping center in South Barrington. The shopping center (inset), an open-air lifestyle center with a high-end movie theater, restaurants and retail, is slated to open in September.

door Discovery School, where instructors offer hands-on experiences in sports such as kayaking and fly fishing.

The Arboretum also will be the site of the first upscale Australian luxury cinema in the United States, called the Village Roadshow Gold Class Cinema. The eight theaters, each with 40 reclining seats, include super-wide screens and digital audio, plus full-service bar, gourmet food and waiter service during each screening. Movie-goers buy tickets at \$25 to \$30 apiece from a concierge rather than at a ticket window.

The shopping center is designed much like a main street, with each retailer having its own sign and entryway, and parking close

to store entrances.

The Arboretum features stores unique to Chicago or locally owned, including Ruth's Chris Steak House, Toms-Price Furniture, Blue Coral Sushi restaurant, Pinstripes restaurant and a chocolatier not yet announced.

The center is meant to attract shoppers from “the Barringtons”—Barrington, South Barrington, Barrington Hills and Lake Barrington Shores.

“The Arboretum is specifically designed to provide a delightful, attractive and appealing experience to many people who dread going to the malls,” said Michael Jaffe, president of The Jaffe Companies that is part of the Arboretum development team.