

Leask's will open new store in Scotts Valley

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SANTA CRUZ — Leask's Department Store is expanding north into Scotts Valley.

Owners of the 94-year-old, family-run business signed final papers Monday to lease an 11,200-square-foot space at the new Scotts Valley Square shopping center for an expansion of its existing Santa Cruz and Aptos stores, said Sam Leask IV.

The owners hope to open the Scotts Valley addition in the fall, probably in September, said Leask.

"We've been planning this for about one year. We've been getting ready to plan it for

about 10 years," commented Leask, who took over full-time management of the business after the 1981 death of his father, Samuel III, a former mayor.

Leask's new Scotts Valley location will be adjacent to the K-mart store that opened in March at the shopping center, recently built by Leask's new landlord, Malcolm Riley and Russell Pratt. Developer Howard Norton of Scotts Valley Properties said he acted as broker for the deal between Leask's and Riley-Pratt.

Also signing papers were H.T. and S.R. Leask.

Leask's feels the time is right for expanding into Scotts Valley.

He said more than 12 percent of Leask's customers are residents of Scotts Valley or the San Lorenzo Valley.

"This is a convenient and a good location. We think the critical moment is here to make a store like this very productive for Leask's," said Leask.

Scotts Valley Mayor Joe Miller said the city welcomes Leask's as a positive addition to the town.

Leask's will occupy eight connecting spaces at Scotts Valley Square.

The size of the new store is 40 percent larger than the 8,800-square-foot store in the Aptos Rancho Del Mar shopping center, said Leask. By comparison, the three-level

downtown Santa Cruz store covers 65,000 square feet.

The new Scotts Valley store will feature men and women's apparel and other sundries and be similar in atmosphere to the recently remodeled Rancho Del Mar store, said Leask.

The Scotts Valley project is consistent with the history of Leask's — a local business legend featuring consistent success resulting in growth and expansion.

It is a story that reaches back to the 19th Century when Leask's great-grandfather, Samuel I, a Scottish immigrant, opened "The Seaside Store" with his partner John Johnston in downtown Santa Cruz in June of

1892.

In 1896 Leask bought out Johnston's share and became sole operator of the retail business in Santa Cruz during horse-and-buggy and dirt-street days.

Through the years Leask's was housed in various locations in downtown Santa Cruz in heritage buildings.

The modern, boxy architecture of the current Leask's building at the corner of Church and Pacific Avenue represents a marked departure from the ornate and embellished facades of the former locations.

The Aptos branch was opened in 1964.