

# First store in mall addition will open

By KEITH MURAOKA  
Sentinel staff writer

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**CAPITOLA** — Miller's Outpost will get a jump on the approximately 50 new stores coming to the expanded Capitola Mall when it opens its door Friday — three months sooner than many of the other stores.

The 6,340-square-foot Miller's Outpost, the first store in Santa Cruz County for the Southern California-based retailer, will open in the new section of the mall at 10 a.m.

Miller's Outpost features denim jeans and casual clothing, including name brands like Levi's, Jordache, Vivre, Bugle Boy and Anchor Blue, said Assistant Manager Jodie Webber.

The glass doors that had separated the existing mall from the portion under construction have been removed to allow customer access. Even as Miller's Outpost prepares to open, however, work is going on around it. Workers were tiling the floor outside the store Tuesday.

Meanwhile, there still is no word on whether Leask's department store may sell out to the Fresno-based Gottschalk's chain.

Owners of Leask's reportedly have been talking to officials of the 15-store Gottschalk's chain about selling their interest in the already approved Capitola Mall store. Officials declined to comment on whether the entire Leask's chain, which includes the flagship store on the Pacific Garden Mall, as well as stores in Aptos and Scotts Valley, may be part of the deal.

Leask's owner Samuel "Sandy" Leask IV will neither confirm nor deny that he is talking with Gottschalk's. Gottschalk's Chairman Joe Levy said last week, "Anything I say would be premature and may blow the whole thing."

Jay deBenedetti, president of Cypress Properties, developer of the mall, has confirmed the two stores are talking "but to what extent, we don't know." He said Tuesday, "The ball is in Leask's court. We hope they will start construction or come up with another plan soon."

Whatever happens, both Cypress Properties and Capitola city officials expect a fourth department store to be in the Capitola Mall's future.

"However it works out, whether it's Leask's or Gottschalk's, it'll be one or another," said deBenedetti.

Of the approximately 50 new stores coming to the mall, about 20 are expected to open in the new \$35 million addition, including a J.C. Penney, on Nov. 2, said deBenedetti. Nearly 10 new stores are coming into the existing mall one by one, and another 20 or so are expected to open in the new portion



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Jody Skinner and Pamela Jones unpack pants for new Miller's Outpost store.

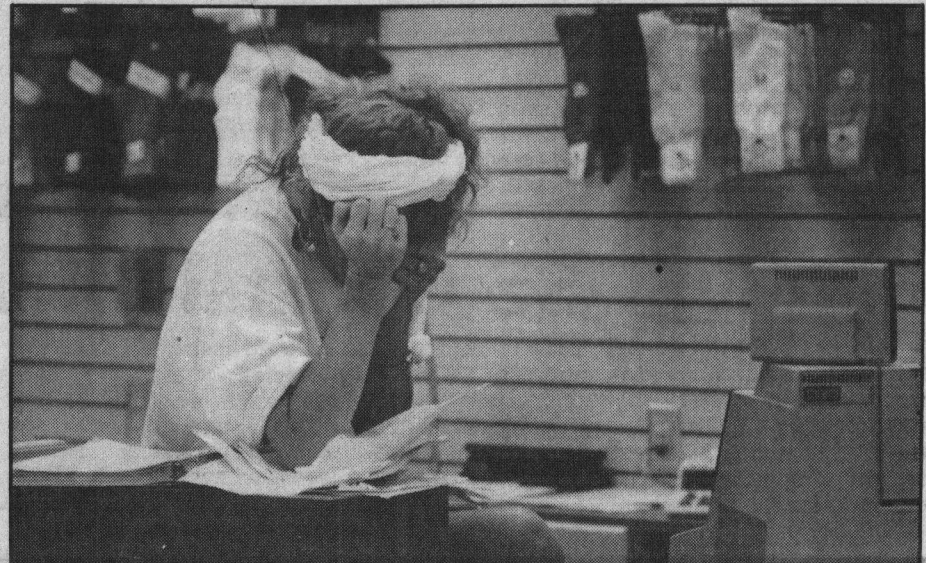
next spring.

The expansion will nearly double the county's only covered shopping mall, adding 304,575 square feet to the existing 381,098-square-foot mall.

The existing 75,000-square-foot Mervyn's also is undergoing a major remodeling.

A new interior hub will be added where weary shoppers can rest and people-watch. That hub will be surrounded by cafeteria-type restaurants. A new sound system is being installed so community events can be held there, said deBenedetti.

Even the existing mall has been remodeled at a cost of about \$5 million. More than a dozen skylights have been added, along with an all-new bright interior color scheme with free-standing plants, flowers and wooden benches. Approximately 1,000 boxed specimen trees have been planted in the expanded parking areas, as well.



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Manager Julie Lindenberger gets last-minute details ironed out.