

Business/Finance

Monday, February 28, 1983 7



Spring Hill JCPenney store opens its doors Wednesday

By Dave Gathman

WEST DUNDEE — The JCPenney Co. store at Spring Hill Mall, described by its manager as a "glimpse into the JCPenney's chain of the '80s and '90s," will hold its grand opening Wednesday.

Penney's always has been considered in the same middle-ground retail category as Sears, Roebuck and Montgomery Ward. But because of recent shifts in company policy, store manager Jerry Tester said, the Spring Hill store will have more in common with Marshall Field's and Bergner's than Sears.

"Penney's has always been in the middle," said Tester, "somewhere between a department store and a K mart. But now we're coming down more on the department store side.

"We will emphasize service, product knowledge and quality lines. Some stores have gone to a self-service business. But if you come to our curtain and draperies department, for example, there will be a sales associate there. It is very important that if a customer needs assistance, that there be a salesman here to serve him.

"WE WILL carry lines like Levi's, Kangaroo shoes, Adidas and Nike sporting goods, Dresden crystal, Fostoria glassware. We have run a number of surveys and we have kept those things which the customer expects from JCPenney's."

As part of its decision to upgrade its merchandise and service, the Penney's corporation decided to drop auto service, hardware and paint. However, Tester said the Spring Hill store never was planned to include those items.

The store's 137,000 square feet compares with just 18,000 square feet in the Elgin Penney's outlet that closed earlier this month. That is slightly larger than Bergner's and Field's at Spring Hill, and a fourth smaller than Sears.

As well as the clothing and shoe lines offered in Elgin, the new store will in-



Jerry Tester

...In his first assignment as manager

tronic games and appliances. Insurance sales, through Penney's auto, life and health insurance subsidiaries, will be offered as soon as the state insurance department issues a license, Tester said.

CONSTRUCTION of the Spring Hill store began in fall 1981. Tester said

"simplicity is the key to the exterior," which is brick with glass and mirrors above the doors.

"We also use mirrors extensively inside, similar to what Bergner's has done," said Tester. "You'll find the lighting is also very unusual, with the ability to highlight merchandise areas."

Tester said lights, heating and air conditioning will be computer-controlled. Lights turn on and off at preset times and the temperature control systems adjust themselves for maximum energy efficiency.

When word went out that the new store would be employing 175 people, it and the Illinois Jobs Service office in Elgin were swamped with 1,600 job applications.

Employees wanting to transfer from the Elgin store—about 17 people—were shifted to Spring Hill, he said. Most of the other staff started training and stocking shelves about eight weeks ago.

TESTER, 38, of Glendale Heights, is a 1966 graduate of Southern Illinois University. For the past six years, he worked in Penney's executive offices in Chicago.

This is his first assignment as a store's top manager. He said he plans to become involved in Dundee area business groups and civic affairs.

The store will open at 10 a.m. Wednesday. Hours will be 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday through Friday, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Saturday and 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday.

"JCPenney Co. will be spending \$1 billion in the next few years to modernize our stores across the country in a manner similar to the one at Spring Hill," said Tester.



Local History
Please keep clippings in folder
subject Spring Hill Mall
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Daily Courier News 2-28-83

After more than a year of construction, shoppers will finally be able to see what's

inside this brick-and-glass facade as JCPenney opens at Spring Hill Mall.

Courier-News Photos by Cliff Lohs

clude a 10-operator beauty salon, fine jewelry, sporting goods, a custom decorating service, home computers, sporting goods, cameras, toys, bicycles, elec-



Among the new departments will be this 10-chair hair salon.



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