

Spring Hill Spiess to open, offer more for its customers

By Karen Smith

WEST DUNDEE — The look is modern and airy, with bright, visual displays and a domed skylight in the center.

Yet for all the changes, company officials say Joseph Spiess Co. is still the same family-owned store that first opened for business in downtown Elgin 116 years ago. The only difference is that as of Thursday, Spiess will be one of 125 ultra-modern stores in the Spring Hill Mall on Illinois 31 and 72. The new store replaces the downtown Elgin store, 32 Fountain Square Plaza, which closed as a retail outlet at the end of January. The downtown facility becomes the headquarters for the Spiess stores in Spring Hill, Crystal Lake and St. Charles.

"We are not abandoning our old customers," said Spiess President Doug Smith. "We are still the same store with the same quality merchandise our customers expected in Elgin. In fact, we are giving them more."

But the new store will offer some new attractions to cater to a wide range of customers with a variety of tastes and interests, according to Smith.

Gone are the home appliance, housewares and stationary departments, although those departments will still be part of the St. Charles and Crystal Lake Spiess stores. New departments include gourmet foods, a petite clothing department and an addition to the children's department called "My favorite child," that offers specialized gifts for babies to be given by grandmothers and other relatives.

In addition, said Smith, the women's, men's, juniors' and children's clothing departments will be expanded and two new employees, a women's and a men's fashion coordinator, will be available to store customers.

Smith said the fashion coordinators will offer advice on fashion and accessories, help select gifts and arrange gift purchases by companies

Local History
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SPiess Co.



Courier-News Photos by Cliff Lohs

Store manager Art Taylor and jewelry buyer Mary Andreas, above, check out Safari-look bracelets at the Spring Hill Spiess jewelry

counter. The newly built skylight-domed store, below, will be open for business in Spring Hill Mall Thursday.



even Smith acknowledges is geared to impress the younger crowd: a state-of-the-art video jukebox situated in the junior clothing department along with six video screens that will show the latest, most popular rock videos.

According to Art Taylor, who was recently hired as manager of the new store, the videos are a perfect

ent; like a separate store."

Taylor was assistant manager at Bonwit Teller at the Oak Brook Shopping Center before being hired by Spiess about a month ago. Before that, he was manager of the men's department at Saks Fifth Avenue in Oak Brook and manager of a family-owned department store near Pittsburgh.

shifts, from 10 a.m. until 11 p.m. every day to ready the store for the grand opening.

"THIS IS LIKE moving into a brand new house," he said. "We really just outgrew the Elgin store."

Smith said the company would like to build several more new stores in the Fox Valley and pos-

Jim Dewees of the display department and Mary McNally, assistant to the children's department buyer, decorate a giraffe and mannequins at a children's clothing display in preparation for the Spring Hill Mall Spiess store's opening. The store is offering specialty services such as a gift department designed for grandparent buyers.

"WE BELIEVE our strong point is personalized customer service and this is one of the things we believe is necessary to stay number one in that area," he said. There is one unique feature that

way to draw teen-agers and young adults into the store. "Of course it is appealing to the teen-agers, but really we are gearing each area to the type of customer we are trying to get," he said. "Each department is very differ-

"One of the reasons we chose him is because he comes from a family-run operation in Pennsylvania with a philosophy very much like Spiess," Smith said. Taylor said he and other Spiess employees have been working two

sibly the northwest or western suburbs. But, he added, there are no definite plans for expansion at this time. "We have several areas we would like to locate in, but it is too early to reveal what they are," he said.



Three Spiess women's sportswear employees examine the store's spring and summer lines. They are, from left, Jane Pilmer-Miller, assistant buyer, Pat Waxlax, the active sportswear buyer, and Marie Blume, the women's sportswear supervisor.

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The components of computer systems will be covered: the data processing cycle, hardware, software, operating systems, etc.

The second and third sessions will be presented by James Gries and Dwain K. Tataryn of

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