

Makeover progressing at Two Rivers Center

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Staff

Strip mall finish seen in 60 days 9/8/05

Taco Bell to rise

By VINCENT BRADSHAW

The Leaf-Chronicle

A million-dollar renovation project for **Two Rivers Center** is nearly complete and new businesses are moving to the area.

In-Rel Management, which owns the shopping **center** at the corner of Providence Boulevard and Riverside Drive, has supervised the renovation which began earlier this year. A fresh coat of paint was applied to the old exterior, and expansion efforts are under way.

The project transforms the 234,000-square-foot interior mall into an exterior strip **center**.

A completed strip mall is expected somewhere within the next 60 days, says director of Leasing at In-Rel Management, Ron Riley. Construction workers are nearing the final stages of exterior renovations.

"We're in the last stages of completing the exterior facade," Riley said. "We're going to finish up and do some landscaping in the next 60 days."

In-Rel Management is currently negotiating deals to bring new stores to the **center**. Riley couldn't specify any new businesses that might be in the works, but he hinted that they would "complement the new tool store," Harbor Freight, which is now open for business.

Any new **Two Rivers** stores would accompany restaurant franchises Waffle House and a new Taco Bell structure, according to both the city Building Codes Department and corporate parents for these chains.

Construction on the new Taco Bell is well under way next door to the older one, which has closed.

"We mostly decided to build this new Taco Bell because the other one is just so old," said John Coulter, regional construction manager for Yum! brands, Taco Bell's parent. "We just wanted to upgrade the look of our building there and also give them a little more parking area," he said.

Al Crear, franchise operator for Lakeland, Inc., which owns Clarksville Waffle House locations, expects Waffle House to open early next year. The new restaurant will replace the current Waffle House at 886 Kraft St. when it closes after 30 years this October.

"**Two Rivers** Mall is revitalized, and it just seems like the better location for the next 30 years," Crear said.

Kraft Street wasn't serving Waffle House well, Crear said. The move to Riverside Drive, an area with more commuter traffic, may help increase the volume of customers, the company hopes.

Crear expects his staff to increase by "40 to 50 percent" after finalizing the move. Established **Two Rivers** stores will also receive a boost from the renovation project.

Plans include expanding Xtreme Fitness, the resident health club, by 3,700 square feet.

After expansion, owner Bryan Pullin will head a facility complete with a "teen **center**" for kids 6-12 to study, finish homework, and play games like ping-pong. "We're very excited," Pullin said.

A separate room for cycling, a larger yoga room and a larger free-weight room are also in the works. Pullin expects the new rooms to be finished by the beginning of November, and no later than Thanksgiving.

"It'll be awesome," said General Manager Phillip Jeter. "We're outgrowing our current space right now."

The influx of new businesses could potentially increase club memberships for Xtreme Fitness. People visiting neighboring stores often take note of the club.

"We thrive a lot on the people walking by," Pullin said.

Business Editor Jimmy Settle contributed to this report. Vincent Bradshaw has been a summer intern at The Leaf-Chronicle.

