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The Mountain Times

THE
Blowing Rocket

News

Old Navy leads mall growth

By Frank Ruggiero
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Old Navy dropped anchor in Boone last Thursday. The popular casual clothing store is one of many up and coming additions to Boone Mall, which was purchased by a Pittsburgh corporation in June. "We are working with local, regional and some national tenants, and we hope to, in the next few months, announce some more additions to the mall," said Barry Nicholson, spokesman for the H.L. Libby Corp. of Warrendale, Pa., a suburb of Pittsburgh.

Old Navy occupies space at the front of the mall, in the corner formerly occupied by Hobbytown USA and Southern Sideboard Cafeteria. The mall added 3,000 square feet to accommodate Old Navy, as well as a mall entry tower, which Nicholson said increases the mall's visibility from Blowing Rock Road.

Visitors to the mall will also notice new tile and new restrooms, which are opening within the next week.

Another new store is rue21, a Pittsburgh-based clothing retailer that specializes in youth fashions. The mall's center court will feature a seating and kiosk area, Nicholson said.

Outdoors, the mall's front and back parking lots are also undergoing renovation, and Nicholson said each lot will feature new lighting.

Construction has also commenced on a Panera Bread restaurant. Panera serves as a bakery and sandwich shop, and stores typically offer WiFi Internet access.

Out of the mall's 35 total retail spaces, Nicholson said only four remain vacant, with one of those expected to be filled within the next couple of months.



Following the recent opening of Old Navy at the Boone Mall, additional construction on the 25-year-old mall continues, bringing new tenants to its line-up. Photo by Frank Ruggiero

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Boone Mall was originally developed in 1981 by Barnett Properties, LLC, of Henderson.

Upon sale of the property, Barnett Properties chairman William T. Barnett said the mall has aged considerably since its grand opening and said, "It's time for us to let someone else move it into the current century."

Nicholson had said H.L. Libby specializes in buying aged properties and revitalizing them for the future, all while attracting new tenants to the market.

"We've made a substantial investment in the mall," Nicholson said. "When we bought it, we bought it to do it correctly."

Boone Mall is located at 1180 Blowing Rock Rd. in Boone. For more information, call 264-7286.

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