

Outlets Livermore to Open in November 2012

The length of time it took to move forward with the Paragon Outlets Livermore had principal partner Robert Brvenik referring to it jokingly as, "The Project That Would Not Die," and "Perseverance Outlet."

He was referring to the seven years it took to gain all of the permits from fourteen regulatory agencies to allow the project to

begin construction. The official groundbreaking was held last Friday.

The projected opening of the \$162 million project is November 2012. Brvenik called it a tremendous project. "It will be compelling and well tenanted." The 443,000 square foot project will include 120 upscale tenants (See PARAGON, page 2)

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PARAGON

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featuring iconic U.S. and luxury brands.

Among those already announced are Banana Republic Factory Store, Barney's New York Outlet, Cole Haan Company Store, J.Crew, Michael Kors, Neiman Marcus Last Call, Nike Factory Store, Saks Fifth Avenue OFF 5TH, Salvatore Ferragamo and Tommy Hilfiger.

The center is expected to provide 2000 jobs, starting with 400 construction jobs.

It will be located on an eventual development site of 152 acres of land at the southeast corner of El Charro Road and Interstate 580. The site will support 1.5 million sq. ft. of retail space. Adjacent multi-use trails and a future public park are among the amenities.

During his remarks, Brvenik said he dreamed of people coming in shuttle buses from San Francisco to shop. In an interview after the program, he said that it is more than a dream. It is something that Paragon works towards. He explained that the company meets with tour operators to integrate shopping into a trip experience. Marketing is conducted in overseas markets. Visitors will know about the Livermore outlets before they come here, he commented. "My hope is that they will come to

Livermore for more than just shopping. A visit could include shopping, dining, visits to wineries and the local performing arts theaters." The area offers opportunities for cross-promotion.

He expected Paragon Outlets Livermore to become the dominate outlet in Northern California. The fact that it is already 62 percent leased is a good indicator that it will be successful, he stated. To have such a high lease rate this early is remarkable.

Livermore was one of 30 potential sites for a new outlet center that Paragon then pared down to three. Livermore was selected. Brvenik said, "We looked at the existing outlets in Northern California, where they were located. There was a perfect hole in the middle of the donut. The roads provide access. The demographics were what we were looking for. "This is a sophisticated shopping market."

Asked if he ever thought there were a time that the plan would not become a reality, Brvenik laughed, "There were some days the viability of the project was questioned. We had a ton of money into the site. I told others in the company, 'we are working with good people. I think we are going to get there.'"

Among those who worked with Brvenik to make sure the

outlets would move forward was Livermore Mayor Marshall Kamena.

Kamena called the opening, "One of the most significant, expensive and important groundbreaking events ever in Livermore."

Kamena provided some background into the effort it took to make the outlet center a reality. Prime Retail, as the company was formerly called, had not yet constructed an outlet center from scratch in California and was nervous about the environmental constraints and the regulatory process. Kamena said there were six site inspections over a five month period conducted under a veil of secrecy. In October 2005, Kamena was given permission to announce the selection of Livermore as the site for an upscale outlet center.

He laughed about the fact that fourteen separate agencies were involved. We are grateful for the association and have qualified for awards in the Guinness Book of Records for the category called "shopping centers under 750 stores" in the following categories: 1) the longest entitlement process; 2) the greatest number of regulatory agencies required for approval; 3) the highest infrastructure cost, \$57 million dollars, obligated before one

nail could be driven; 4) greatest number of reviews over 6 years of the same application with the same facts and figures. That's six annual reviews of that same application for six years due to complete annual turnovers of the regulatory staff. 5) longest continual and sustained effort by a female city engineer over 5 feet tall; 6) greatest amount of land provided and set aside for a habitat for the tiger salamander, fairy shrimp, and red legged frogs, although no evidence of their presence was found. However, 150 acres off-site was required. 7) the longest contract between a city and a 3 letter regulatory agency, 1109 pages.

He thanked those who worked with him to make it possible. Among them was Congressman John Garamendi, who helped gain the final permit in time to meet the deadline for all the approvals, after which the principal entitlements or permits would have expired. Supervisor Scott Haggerty provided over \$11 million of loans to extend Jack London Blvd. to connect to Stoneridge Drive in Pleasanton. Others mentioned were Brvenik, City Engineer Cheri Sheets, attorney Slend Slendorio, and the rest of the city council, John Marchand, Doug Horner, Jeff Williams and Marj Leider.



Robert Brvenik of Paragon talks about plans for the new Outlets Center in Livermore.