

December 28, 2011 Andrea Glover, Staff Writer, *Elko Daily Free Press*

2011 Year in Review

Shoppers have more options with new stores

ELKO — Gary Pinkston began the redevelopment of the Elko Junction Shopping Center looking for a challenge.

“It was apparent that Elko Junction was the best real estate in the trade area, but that it had not been managed well over the last 20 years. We wanted to get it back to where it was when it was initially conceived,” said Pinkston, president of Meridian Pacific, which purchased the Elko Junction Shopping Center in January.

“We’ve accomplished exactly what we set out to do, reposition it and become the number one shopping center in the trade area,” he said.

Pinkston began renovating the center in the spring, beginning with the construction of new showhouses at Cinema 6, renewing the lease with Mattie’s Bar and Grill, refurbishing Coffee Mug, resurfacing the pavement and moving Sears into the old Blockbuster building.

“The next challenge, once we fixed the movie theater, was to see if we could attract major tenants,” Pinkston said. “That’s always a challenge in a small community.”

“These guys are fearful of getting a project started and not completed. ... It looks bad on their list of places if they start one and can’t finish one,” Pinkston said.

After securing interest from tenants, Pinkston began renovating the old RedStone Supply building. In February, Pinkston announced that Jo-Ann Fabrics and Crafts would be a new tenant. Just one month later, Pinkston announced Ross Dress for Less clothing store would be opening, and in July Pinkston announced the addition of Famous Footwear and Rue21.

All of the stores except for Ross have opened, and each of the three have reported record grand opening figures.

Pinkston said each of the tenants in Elko Junction has reported increases in sales volumes between 25 and 50 percent. He also added that each of the new stores doubled what they projected in sales volumes.

“It’s off the chart to take a shopping center like this and in 18-months, buy it, fix it ... and keep the center working during that time,” said Pinkston. “(We) couldn’t have done it without the city ... and the local help.”



The shopping plaza isn't done growing yet. Pinkston plans to spend the upcoming year fine-tuning the shopping center. He expects that figuring out how to balance taking care of existing tenants while still continuing to upgrade the shopping center will be the next challenge.

Pinkston is already in the process of talking with several other tenants looking at the shopping center as a possible location.

Jack in the Box will soon be at the corner of Raley's Way and Mountain City Highway. In November, Pinkston told the Free Press construction on the fast food restaurant would begin in early spring 2012.

Maurices also has plans to move from the East End Shopping Center to Elko Junction in February, and Pinkston is still in the process of leasing the building formerly housing Round Table pizza.

In addition, Ross will hold its grand opening in either February or March, and Pinkston said he is also looking for another restaurant to be added to the shopping center.