

Bowling, Best Buy coming to Kimball Junction

The Newpark Town Center wants to be a tourist draw and locals' hang-out

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Construction is well underway in Newpark for a Best Buy store and a bowling alley.

Developers of the Newpark Town Center in Kimball Junction would like to see it become the heart of West Summit County.

To draw tourists and locals alike, the area will feature two things the county has lacked: bowling and electronics.

June of 2009, Parkites will no longer need to drive the 16 miles to Holiday Lanes in Heber or the 28 miles to the Best Buy on 2100 South.

Both businesses at Newpark are predicted to break even at best for the developers, explained Jim Doilney, co-owner of Newpark.

But profits are not what they're for. The bowling and Best Buy are intended to promote a larger concept: to create a Summit County Main Street, he said.

"We are buying foot traffic," Doilney explained.

Doilney's partners at Territory Incorporated, real estate and development experts specializing in shopping centers, have little doubt this will be achieved. The Newpark Best Buy will be the chain's only store east of Salt Lake City until Grand Junction, Colorado.

Further, it has a unique design including underground parking (the store will be built on pedestals) and an adjusted color scheme to match the façade with the rest of the Newpark complex.

Nick Hannon, senior vice president with Territory Incorporated, also hopes the Swaner Nature and Education Center along with the Newpark Hotel will draw people to the area.

"It's basically a four-pronged retail mixed-use project," Hannon explained. "We're getting buildings close together to have energy and attract people biking and snowshoeing to come off the trail, shop a little, be part of a community."

With Redstone Plaza next door and town homes planned for a later building phase, Hannon and Doilney said they are trying to create a very walkable, nature-friendly community.

"Newpark views (itself) as the heart of western Summit county, as a regional community center," Doilney said. "So we're creating a walking Main Street where people work, play, shop and live."

As if to put to rest any doubt about Doilney's commitment to this concept, he's working on installing a bell tower.

"Everyone has a clock tower, we'll have a bell tower," he said with excitement.

Like Old Town Park City's 10 o'clock whistle, he hopes the day-time bells become something local residents associate with life there.

Doilney also said they donated an additional 257 acres to the Swaner preserve, as well as the land the museum is built on because they value their surroundings.

"There's no end to the number of skiing and golf courses that can be built here, but nobody else has a nature preserve next to them," he said.

Both Hannon and Doilney are committed to the idea of a multi-use facility. They don't want people to park, go to their predetermined spot, then leave. Instead, they want to see people enjoying the space for multiple activities, whether it's buying a snack in the middle of a cycling trip, or partying at night after checking into the hotel.

With all the parking shared between the different attractions, Hannon foresees people coming to Newpark for evening concerts, weddings or corporate events in the hotel, and then spilling over into the other retail.

The success of the idea will depend on the planners' ability to attract shoppers during all months of the year, and all hours of the day.

The bowling, for example, will not be an "alley," but a state-of-the-art leisure center with a sports grill, plasma screens, lasers, video games, billiards and 18 lanes including four VIP lanes, Hannon said.

During the day and early evening it will focus on family entertainment so visitors will have a simple, affordable activity they can do together, and locals will have a hang-out for teens and bowling fans.

At night, it will be more of a night club and will be available for rent during special events like Sundance. The challenge will be to keep enough merchants open late to keep up the spill-over foot traffic, but Doilney said they're working on it as part of the leases.

They're also being careful to produce overhead, outside lighting to produce an ambiance friendly to milling around, without adding to light pollution, he said.

"(The result) will be state-of-the-art, people are talking about it all over the country," he said.

John Erik Green, a retail specialist with Commerce CRG, said he sees the Newpark concept as an extension of the Redstone Plaza, which has had some turnover of leases, but otherwise been highly successful.

"Locals and visitors would agree that (Redstone) has offered a lot to the community," he said.

As a father of three, Green said he's especially excited about the bowling since he won't have to drive to Heber or Salt Lake City anymore.

"I think it will get a lot of local support," he said.

He also lauded the planners' ability to secure Best Buy that will expand the regional draw that Kimball Junction already has with its many retail and outlet offerings.

He said he believes the electronics mart could draw shoppers from as far away as Evanston and maybe Rock Springs.