



Los Angeles Wave • 4201 Wilshire Blvd. Ste. 600 • Los Angeles • CA • 90010 • Phone: (323) 556-5720 • Fax: (323) 556-5704

Retail development expected to kickstart Compton economy

By GENE C. JOHNSON JR., Staff Writer 11.OCT.07

Millions in tax revenue anticipated by city officials as long-awaited Gateway Towne Center opens doors to the public.

COMPTON — This week marks the opening of the highly anticipated Gateway Towne Center here, a 600,000-square-foot commercial and residential facility that city officials say could bring more than \$2 million a year in tax revenue.

Built on the former site of an auto plaza near the Artesia (91) Freeway, as part of a public/private partnership between the city's Community Redevelopment Agency and developer Prism-IQ Realty, the center's retail tenants include Target, Home Depot, Best Buy, 24 Hour Fitness, Staples, Shoe Pavilion, Wells Fargo and Bank of America.

Together, those businesses figure to generate \$1.5 million in retail sales tax annually, along with \$640,000 per year in property tax increments, said Kofi Sefa-Boakye, director of Compton's Community Development Redevelopment Agency.

“What this means is that hope has been restored to our community,” said City Councilman Isadore Hall III, in whose district the shopping center is located. “[The shopping mall] will be an outlet for families to come and shop — and return tax dollars to the city. It's just a great day for ... Compton.”

While there had been some controversy over the number of African-Americans involved in building the project, its construction was in fact significantly impacted by minority and women contractors.

For instance, there's African-American general contractor Brenda Curry, who owns Inglewood-based Curtom Building and Development. The Compton location, which opens its doors Sunday, marks the eighth Target store she has constructed since 1999 with RAW International architectural firm owner Ronald Wiley.

According to Curry, the newest store appears to be their most successful endeavor yet. “The project is on time and within the budget,” she said. “It's been a model project for not only ourselves but for Target as well. ... It's the largest store, for sure, in terms of square footage and all of that. It was great being a partner in the whole development.”

“I think there is a lot of opportunity down there,” added Wiley, who at one time worked as a housing director for the city of Compton. “Compton has been on a slow burn for a very long

time. I think Compton will bloom. It's in a great geographical location.”

According to Target spokeswoman Kristen Dinisio, the Gateway Towne Center is one of the largest retail developments in the country largely designed, developed and constructed by minority- and women-owned local businesses.

Originally, the collaboration between Target, Curry and Wiley came as a result of the retailer launching its Minority and Women Business Development (MWBD) Program in 1998 in an effort to partner with more minority- and women-owned enterprises.

“We saw Target as a potential client because they are one of the biggest in the industry and they have a reputation of being a fair company,” Curry said. “We’ve been pretty selective of partners in terms of us doing business with. We have to stay on the mark and continue to do well.”

“Our philosophy about business is to give back. We’re always trying to bring other companies along with us and other people,” she said. “That becomes an opportunity for leverage. We are able to open the door for other minorities.”

“The new store marks a significant milestone in our diversity history, as it is one of the largest retail developments in the country being completely developed, designed and constructed by minority and women-owned firms,” said Joe Mudd, senior director of the MWBD program. “The project also represents the renaissance of a city that has endured some harsh times. City and county leaders are determined to give the community new life, and it’s paying off and we’re thrilled to play a part in that.”

- Photo by Gary McCarthy

 [EMAIL THIS STORY](#)  [PRINT THIS STORY](#)

{ [website powered by bulletlink.com](#) }

[^Top](#)

Copyright © 2007 [Los Angeles Wave](#). All rights reserved.

[^Top](#)