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Retail center going up on U.S. 41 East

At 87,000 square feet, Naples Big Cypress Market Place will offer kiosk shopping, plus entertainment

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High rent has made it difficult to be an entrepreneur on a tight budget in Naples, but a new marketplace hopes to target small business hopefuls who want an affordable place to start.

Construction has just begun on the 87,000-square-foot Naples Big Cypress Market Place, a shopping and entertainment center on U.S. 41 about four miles east of Collier Boulevard. East Naples residents are happy that they may be able to pick up staple items closer to home, but they also are wary of noise and traffic that may disturb their quiet rural communities.

The center, which will be a little smaller than a standard Wal-Mart, will include a 20,000-square-



Construction has just begun on the 87,000-square-foot Naples Big Cypress Market Place, a new shopping and entertainment center on U.S. 41 four miles east of Collier Boulevard. The marketplace is set to open in September 2007. Rendering courtesy of Basik Development

foot entertainment arena, a food court, an open-air produce pavilion and space for 300 retailers in booths and kiosks. It is owned

by Basik Development and is slated to open in September 2007.

"A lot of people want to try out new goods or services, and what's

enticing about this is that they're able to do it at a relatively low cost," said Keith Basik, president of Basik Development. "We only require a one-year lease, so there's a lot less risk involved."

Retail tenants in the new center will pay about \$590 per month for a 120- to 140-square-foot space. In contrast to these 10-by-12-foot booths, the much-larger shops on Fifth Avenue South lease for anywhere from \$5,000 to \$20,000 a month. Currently, the retail space in The Market Place is about 30 percent leased.

"I think it sounds like a very good deal," said Mary Tait, who shopped around for retail space downtown when she relocated her Fifth Avenue South shop,

Market Place

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"Back of the Bay," to Park Street this spring.

"I think it sounds like it will be successful. I've never known a flea market to be unsuccessful."

Fifth Avenue South and Tin City retailers have been calling about The Market Place because they're having trouble paying their rising rents, Basik said.

In addition to the retail vendors, local produce vendors will sell their goods in the open-air pavilion.

The arena also will feature live entertainment on a small stage during the day.

At night the arena will seat about 800 people for larger

events such as a casino night, country line dancing or musical performances.

Initially, the center will be open Friday through Sunday, and will possibly expand to Thursdays in season, Basik said.

"I don't know of anything like this in Naples, particularly on the East Trail," said Barry Klein, a retail expert who has worked in the shopping center business for 37 years.

"There could be a market for this type of center there."

Naples once had a flea market on Davis Boulevard, but it shut down in the spring of 2005.

The nearest location now is Flamingo Island in Bonita Springs, but Basik doesn't see Flamingo Island as competition.

"We're indoor, we're air-conditioned, it's a different type of venue," Basik said.

"The energy and feel of The Market Place is different than anything else around here," he said.

Some local residents protested the center because they felt it would attract too many people and change the nature of their quiet rural community, said Bob Murray, president of the East Naples Civic Association.

"Hopefully, local people will be able to purchase staple items like bread and milk as well as vegetables, because that would reduce shopping trips, reduce traffic and save gasoline," Murray said.

"Economically, it'll draw people to it. These types of markets really draw people in on the weekends."

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