

Showtime

What's new and lasting in area businesses.

BY KAT SMITH

For some, shopping itself is entertaining. For everyone else, The Naples Big Cypress Market Place will offer other forms of entertainment as well.

The 87,000-square-foot, air-conditioned Market Place, now under construction by Naples-based Basik Development, will have some 300 booths and kiosks selling an array of goods and services — and a 20,000-square-foot arena with a food court, a mezzanine overlooking the market, and an entertainment area for special events.

Keith Basik, president of Basik Development, saw a lack of small entertainment venues in the area. The Market Place's arena will be a great place for such events as big band nights, antiques auctions, dog shows and casino nights, Basik says. The special events would take place during the regular hours of operation on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, and at night. Groups and individuals will have the opportunity to rent out the arena for private functions.

The Market Place will be just west of the portion of U.S. 41 recently designated a National Scenic Highway, four miles east of Collier Boulevard. Because of its location as the gateway between Naples and the Everglades, Basik wanted to incorporate design elements of local history and culture.



The Naples Big Cypress Market Place is scheduled for completion in September 2007.

Historical photos and memorabilia from the building of the Tamiami Trail in the 1920s, the Everglades and Old Naples will be arranged throughout the space. The opening is slated for September 2007.

Hold No More

Anyone who has hung up the phone in exasperation after being told repeatedly, "Your call is important to us," by an automated voice understands the need for better customer service. No one likes playing the waiting game, and even less, rude treatment at the hands so-called service reps.

First Impressions, a consulting firm formed in May by Angela Valvo

Collins and Kirk Kvetko, aims to educate businesses about the value of good customer service and how to achieve it. Collins and Kvetko combined have more than 50 years of experience working with employees at every level, so they're well equipped to teach businesses how to improve the bottom line by increasing satisfaction, and in turn, retaining customers. The company name is so appropriate, because "your first impression directly impacts customer loyalty and retention," Kvetko says.

The duo, who are good friends, "both failed at retirement," Collins says. As they began talking about joining forces, the idea was born to create a business for improving