

## Retailers convene, reveal plans to expand throughout San Diego

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DEL MAR — While many retailers are in retrenchment mode, a few are gearing up for expansions in San Diego County in a big way.

A dozen retailers ranging from small one-shop operators to large publicly-traded corporations revealed their plans during an evening meeting sponsored by the San Diego Chapter of the International Council of Shopping Centers at the L'Auberge Del Mar in Del Mar Thursday.

Although the retailers didn't provide the exact locations of the new stores, they each said San Diego is a strong market for them that warrants future locations.

New Jersey-based **Jersey Mike's Subs**, which has outlets in Point Loma, Mira Mesa and Mission Valley, plans to expand with 30 to 35 more locations in San Diego County and 40 additional sites in the Inland Empire as soon as it can find the space.

First up here is a new store that is just opening in Solana Beach. Jersey Mike's currently has 450 stores either completed or under construction around the country.

According to Steve Leonard, Jersey Mike's co-owner, the sandwich-making firm is searching for space ranging from 1,200 square feet to 1,600 square feet. Mike Burton of **Cassidy Turley BRE**

**Commercial** is representing Jersey Mike's.

Ron Chamberlin, area developer of **SportClips**, an Austin, Texas-based haircutter exclusively for men and boys with 10 outlets in San Diego County, said the business plans to add three or four more stores here this year and perhaps five more in 2011. The leases for the stores this year are in the works but have not been signed.

Chamberlin said his franchise's performance is impressive, despite the recession.

"We've had 6 1/2 percent same store growth each of the last three years," said Chamberlin.

**SportClips** has a 900- to 1,300-square-foot space requirement. The broker handling the search is Rande Stratton of Cassidy Turley BRE Commercial.

The **Kahoots Pet Store**, a Ramona-based franchise that serves animals ranging from fish to livestock, has nine stores in San Diego County.

"We're planning to add about 10 new stores a year from Ventura County to the border," said Michael Dittinger, Kahoots president.

Kahoots requires 6,000 square feet to 8,000 square feet for each location and Dave Hagglund of **CB Richard Ellis** is handling the search.

A representative from San Diego

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## Retailers

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publicly-traded **Petco Animal Supplies Inc.** (Nasdaq: PETC) was also present at the meeting. Elizabeth McKinley, Petco real estate director, noted that Petco has 21 full-size stores and three of the small Unleashed by Petco stores in this county.

She said the Unleashed stores are more likely to be opened first, because they only require about 4,500 square feet versus 8,000 square feet to 10,000 square feet for a full-size store.

"You can put these (Unleashed) where you couldn't fit a regular Petco," McKinley said.

Nancy Johnston of **Epsteen & Associates** is aiding Petco, which already has more than 1,000 stores nationwide, with its search here.

As is the case with Petco, **Collective Brands** (NYSE: PSS), which has the Payless Shoesource and Sperry Top-Siders, Keds and Stride-Rite

brands under its umbrella, there is no clear picture in how many stores might be added here.

Kelli Howerton, a Collective Brands spokeswoman on the firm's real estate team did say, however, that her firm is bullish on the region.

"Southern California is going to be a home run for Sperry Top-Siders in particular," Howerton said.

**CVS Caremark Corp.**'s (NYSE: CVS) CVS Pharmacy is expanding, too, but Mark Miller, a regional vice president, said the 7,100-store firm has as much grown by acquiring other stores like Long's and SavOn as adding new locations.

Miller said he could conceive of adding 20 to 30 stores here, but isn't sure where. Presently, CVS is working on three leases in the county but the locations weren't revealed.

"We could do 1,500 stores in Southern California if we

had the available space," Miller said. "We want to get as many stores as we can out here."

Kevin Cassidy of **Epsteen & Associates** is handling the search for CVS.

Other retailers represented at the session who plan expansions include **Yogurtland**, **Luna Grill**, **Pony Express Car Wash**, **Bright Now Dental** and **Tavern Bowl**.

Not every speaker was from a standard retailer. Dr. Robert Biter, a gynecologist and obstetrician, and Laura Ann Fairchild, co-owners of Cardiff-based **Babies by the Sea Boutique** and the **Babies by the Sea Birthing Center** in Carlsbad, are looking for more locations for additional calming, and ecologically-friendly, birthing and surgical centers.

"The goal is to expand these across the country," Biter said.

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