

Promises made, promises kept at Ventnor Plaza

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Business Buzz

By Rich Baehrle

It has been quite a busy year for new Ventnor Plaza owner Mark Greco and his partners who purchased the 15-acre retail center in June 2022.

To say that the center needed to be rejuvenated and repositioned is an understatement. When they purchased the plaza, there was nearly 90,000 square feet of vacant space and its image was in need of immediate attention.

But Greco had a vision to not only recreate the physical aspects of the building, but also to recognize the proper tenant mix to attain the synergy necessary to stabilize the asset.

Ultimately the goal is to make an environment where tenants thrive and customers have stores and services that did not previously exist.

The quest to bring Ventnor Plaza back to life has been a passion for Mark Greco. He has owned a home in Ventnor since the early 1990s. He and his family shopped at Ventnor Plaza and saw what everybody else saw; that it needed much TLC, but it had potential.

Greco said he has a great team of professionals that build and redevelop properties throughout New Jersey and the region. They know the challenge and they are proving that they are capable of turning Ventnor Plaza into a first-class retail center.

Greco indicated that there are nine new tenants coming to the plaza with only a couple of vacant spaces remaining. The pad sites are under construction and the overall “elevation”

of the property is nearing completion on the eastern side of the property. They are currently paving a portion of the elevated area to allow for parking.

The new tenants include Pickle Juice, an indoor pickleball court with a juice bar and pro shop; a well-known local restaurant PJ Buckets; Ivy Nails; Little Sprouts Day Care and Provenza restaurant and event center.

They will be welcomed by existing tenants including the U.S. Postal Service, anchored by Acme Markets; Island Gym and Dollar Tree, which is expanding; AutoZone; DC Sports; Shore Thrift; Atlantic City Electric Customer Service; Smokin Aces, also expanding; H&R Block; Buy Rite Liquors; Chubby Chicks Restaurant, and Community Dental,

There will be a Burger King pad site on the newly elevated portion of the parking area. The foundation and pilings will be starting shortly. This will be followed by new curbing, sidewalks, and paving.

The building will take a few months to complete. They expect to have it up and open to the public later this year. It will be complemented by a separate building which will be occupied by Starbucks and Greens and Grains. It should be ready to occupy by the end of this year or early next year.

Greco said before the property purchase you could not buy a cup of coffee anywhere in Ventnor Plaza.

"No sandwiches, no slice of pizza, nothing. That has all changed with several new restaurants and other innovative offerings to make it a destination of all of the consumers' needs.

"By the end of the year you won't recognize Ventnor Plaza," he said. "It will feature new unique restaurants, second-to-none in the area along with retail services that will meet the customers' needs. The new façade will give you a truly welcomed feeling."

Greco said the project is not about him, his partners or their company.

"It is about the city, the plaza, and the residents," he said.

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