

Ventnor Plaza is proof that retail centers can thrive

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Business Buzz

To say that Ventnor Plaza has been a successful turnaround is an understatement.

When I was president of the Atlantic County Mainland Chamber of Commerce, we used to give out awards to people that made renovations similar to what local resident Mark Greco has done with Ventnor Plaza. He deserves an award for all that he has invested, and continues to invest into this great plaza. Locals and visitors alike love the new center.

Since the day Greco purchased the Plaza in 2022, there have been nonstop renovations, which in turn have resulted in a complete turnaround.

When he purchased the property it had over 50% vacancy, with the remaining tenants struggling. Since then, he has nearly filled up the plaza in three short years with a fantastic mix of complementary tenants that all seem to be doing very well.

In addition to the substantial amount of vacant space, the parking lot had significant drainage issues. It seemed like with every rainfall and flood tide, the parking lot became a lake.

Today the drainage issue is resolved. Greco said they have not had flooding since their engineer, Dan Ponzio, redesigned the system and raised the parking area.

Part of the renaissance in the parking area has included the addition of such well-known names as Starbucks, Burger King and Greens and Grains on the two pad sites. There are approvals for one more pad site, for which Greco is targeting a drive-thru bank.

The most recent addition to Ventnor Plaza is Caring, Inc., which has added a new 20,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art adult daycare center.

Another recent addition to the plaza is AC Breakz. This business has a tremendous collectables niche, with a focus on sports card streaming. Most notably, per owner Brian Strahl, the business is ranked the number one collectable channel on TikTok. They sell repacks of graded and ungraded cards in great condition. Lastly, they claim to have the highest buybacks anywhere.

The center encourages tenants to offer creative goods and services to customers. For example, Provenza Restaurant and Catering and Event Center offers free salsa dancing lessons every Wednesday from 6:30 to 8 p.m. They have also created a successful bingo night every Thursday from 5 to 8 p.m. The venue is large enough to accommodate weddings, parties and special occasions.

In a time when we have witnessed shopping centers decline and fail, Mark Greco has created a thriving 200,000-square-foot center of complementary retail stores and services. He has used thoughtful planning to establish a community where people can eat, go to the post office, get their favorite alcoholic beverages at Buy Rite Liquors, shop at Acme, or play indoor pickleball at Pickle Juice, a state-of-the-art facility, all in one place.

They can have pizza at Fratellis, beauty care at Ivy Nails and health services at Community Dental. People can drop off their kids at Little Sprouts Day Care while they get their taxes prepared at H&R Block. If that is not enough, the community can go to the Island Gym, buy something to wear at DC Sport, or find a favorite smoke at Smokin' Aces. The tenant mix has a little bit for everybody.

A big thank you goes out to Mark Greco for creating a town center that Ventnor deserves. Visit the newly renovated Ventnor Plaza at 5000 Wellington Ave., Ventnor.

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