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Construction starts on Premium Outlets stores

By Mike Boyer
mboyer@enquirer.com

MONROE - Chelsea Property Group formally launched construction Wednesday of its nearly \$100 million Cincinnati Premium Outlets project just east of Interstate 75.

The 400,000-square-foot center spread over nine buildings will include about 120 outlet stores with stores such as Polo, Ralph Lauren, Crate & Barrel and Calvin Klein. No leases were announced at the groundbreaking, which included community officials.

1,000 new jobs

Mark Silvestri, senior vice president for Chelsea, a unit of Simon Property Group, said the center, slated to open next summer, will employ about 1,000 and generate \$150 million in retail sales and \$1 million in annual property taxes.

The 117-acre site, southeast of I-75 and Ohio 63, has been mentioned as a site for anything from an auto plant to a casino over the last 50 years.

The groundbreaking was especially poignant to Middletown real estate broker Leonard Robinson. His father, the late William K. Robinson - a developer who had a hand in projects including Kings Island in Mason and Miller Brewing Co. in Trenton, bought the original 200-acre farm in the late 1950s that eventually became part of the 510-acre Miami Valley Industrial Park.

The land was sold in the mid-1960s to Chrysler Corp., which was interested in building an automotive stamping plant. The land changed hands again before Leonard Robinson and Cincinnati's Guttman family acquired it in 1996 shortly before William K. Robinson died.

"If he was here today, he'd be smiling from ear to ear," said Jane Robinson, his widow.

The Premium Outlets site is adjacent to Vandercar Holdings' Corridor 75 Industrial Park, which envisions up to 11 warehouse and distribution buildings that could employ several thousand people.

The first 657,000-square-foot distribution building under construction at the industrial park is for home improvement retailer Home Depot, which expects to employ up to 500 supplying merchandise to 120 of its stores in the Midwest.

More construction

On July 10, Vandercar will hold a reception in the industrial park to mark the start of construction on a second, 650,000-square-foot building. No tenants have been announced.

Monroe Mayor Robert Routson welcomed Chelsea, which has been working on the Monroe site for two years, to the community.

Chelsea officials said they expect the outlet center will draw shoppers from a 60-mile radius and be a regional attraction.
