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Waldorf makes room for new shopping, retail projects

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Waldorf, MD., is no longer about crab-houses, slot machines and car dealers.

In the 1960s and 1970s, "it was a great out-of-the-way place to go," says Jim Farrell, a principal at Madison Retail Group in D.C. "That perception stuck with Charles County for a long time."

Take a peek these days and you realize a new world order has spread almost as quickly as the affordable housing developments. And three Washington-area companies have big plans for the growing community.

Bethesda's Faison Enterprises (www.faison.com) is well into building the second phase of its 440,000-square-foot Waldorf Marketplace. Madison Retail Group (www.madisonretailgroup.com) is repositioning the massive Festival at Waldorf and adding about 100,000 square feet there. And Fairfax-based Peterson Cos. has the Stardust Motel under contract, a site planned for a town center project.

The epicenter for all this development is the intersection of routes 301 and 228.

Office Depot, Petco, A.C. Moore and Safeway have opened at Waldorf Marketplace,



with Kirkland's Home, Jared's Galleria of Jewelry and Chico's coming soon. The second phase's 165,000 square feet of shops is under construction and expected to deliver in the fall of 2006.

Waldorf Marketplace is the first retail center to be built in Waldorf in more than 10 years, says Drew Gorman, managing director of Faison.

But it looks like it won't be the last.

At the Festival of Waldorf, whose name will change to The Shops at Waldorf, Madison plans to relocate some smaller players and introduce a big-box retailer to join Staples, Michael's Arts and Crafts, Modell's Sporting Goods and Marshalls.

Peterson's plans for the Stardust Motel, on a 40-acre parcel on Route 301, call for 175,000 square feet of retail including a bookstore, upscale



WALL-TO-WALDORF: Peterson Cos. plans a town center on the grounds of the Stardust Motel in one of three major projects changing the face, and pace, of Waldorf.

shops and several restaurants. Construction is expected to start this summer.

In 1990, the Simon Property Group was one of the first to open in the market with its St. Charles Towne Center. At the time, only the Festival at Waldorf was under construction.

By the mid 1990s, retailers started coming in the form of big boxes. Lots of them.

"When we built St. Charles Towne Center, everybody said, 'Why are you doing a mall down there?'" says Tom Maskey, senior vice president at Peterson, who worked for Simon in the '90s. "Honestly, it's one of the most successful malls they ever opened."

Other development is on the way, too. The St. Charles Towne Center is updating its Loews Cineplex movie theater by adding three screens, bringing the total to 12, and installing stadium seating. Across the

street at St. Charles Towne Plaza, Shoppers Food Warehouse added 23,000 square feet to its store, TJ Maxx is doubling its size, and a K&G Fashion Super-store is opening later this month.

And the American Community Properties Trust is building the O'Donnell Lake Restaurant Park on a 14-acre parcel adjacent to the movie theater. It will include five restaurants — two are said to be Bonefish Grill and Cheeseburger in Paradise — and a 70,000-square-foot retail and office building.

"The guy who makes out is the consumer," says Gorman. Waldorf is "a classic bedroom community. The county population is about 140,000 people, but the trade area pulls in a quarter of a million, 300,000 people."

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