

Festive Season Rush Of Retailers To Pe 'Jingle Tills' season kicks into gear

Few would have thought it, but Port Elizabeth appears to be the belle of the Christmas ball as leading retailers, several of which are new to the Eastern Cape market, are flocking to the coastal city in time for the busy Festive Season – a big earner for the industry.

At Baywest Mall alone, 26 new retailers will be opening their doors before year end. Since opening in May, the R1.7bn mall has become a major retail force in the region, with about 750,000 visitors monthly. Speaking of the influx of stores, Baywest Mall marketing manager Samantha Hewitson said many brands were keen to invest in the rapidly growing consumer market in the city.

“Port Elizabeth is no longer seen by leading retailers as a second rate market to Cape Town or Johannesburg. The influx of new stores and brands is testament to this,” she said.

Stores opening in the coming months include leading jewellers Swarovski, popular food franchise Subway, and leading clothing outlets La Coste and Kids Emporium – all firsts for the province.

According to Swarovski Partner Boutique owner, Aashir Narandas, the city’s charm made the decision to open up the first store of its kind in the province a simple one.

“When we heard about the scale and design of Baywest, we embraced this exciting opportunity to open a Swarovski partner in the charming city of Port Elizabeth,” said Narandas. “We will open just in time for the special gift giving occasion of the year.”

Other popular outlets include Soda Bloc, Schwarma Grill, Jimmy’s Killer Grill, Dischem, and Timberland, among others (*see a full list of the new stores below*).

With the mall being the catalyst to the Baywest City rollout – a project which will unfold over the next 10 to 15 years, similar to Cape Town’s Century City – ground has broken on the next project: the first green star rated commercial office block for the Eastern Cape, which will open

its doors towards the tail end of 2016. Residential developments and more retail outlets will break ground during the course of next year, say co-developers Abacus Asset Management and Billion Group.

According to Baywest City MD Gavin Blows, the green office block is the first of many more to come for the precinct.

“There is immense interest in developments of this calibre,” said Blows.

“Port Elizabeth has nowhere else to grow but into the western suburbs, which is why Baywest City is ideally located for the future of the city.”

Unlocking the economic potential of the city’s western suburbs, where Baywest City is located, is the completion of Phase Two of the R300-million Baywest road network next month, linking Port Elizabeth’s Walker Drive with Cape Road via a new bridge over the N2.

Market research has shown that the city will grow into the western suburbs over the coming years, making Baywest City ideally located to provide a much-needed “live, work, play” environment for the region, with cutting edge office blocks, retail outlets and modern, safe residential developments.

Phase One of the R6-billion Baywest City development includes 2,000 residential opportunities, office and commercial space, light industry, a private school and hospital, and a hotel.