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FEATURE

Guest Authors: **Nicole Truso & John Polley, Faegre & Benson LLP**

# RECENT OSHA DIRECTIVE MAY IMPACT RETAIL AND OTHER COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

On September 8, 2011, OSHA issued a compliance directive (the "Directive") on workplace violence that outlines enforcement procedures for OSHA field officers in determining whether and how to investigate employers for instances of alleged workplace violence. This Directive will have implications on how employers and building owners view, design, and use their facilities in ways to reduce workplace violence, especially those facilities most prone to workplace violence, such as retail and hospital facilities.

## OSHA and Workplace Violence

Relying on OSHA's General Duty Clause (which requires employers to maintain workplaces "free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm"), OSHA may cite and fine employers for failing to provide workers with adequate safeguards against workplace violence after an investigation. The

Directive is the latest in an extensive history of OSHA examining the issues associated with workplace violence. In 1996, OSHA issued a set of guidelines for preventing workplace violence for health care and social service workers, followed by a set of recommendations for late-night retail workplaces in 1998. However, there were few citations publicized in the years after these guidelines were issued. Under the Obama administration, OSHA has issued several citations addressing workplace violence, demonstrating a heightened interest in the subject.

Many commercial and retail buildings could be included in the categories of workplaces that OSHA is most concerned with. The Directive identifies several broad categories of workplaces that OSHA says are prone to workplace violence, including sites where employees work with the public or volatile, unstable people, sites where employees work alone or in isolated areas, sites where employees handle

SNAPSHOT

## CROSSROADS OF CHANHASSEN



**Location:** SWQ of the new Hwy 212 and Hwy 101  
**Month/Year Opened:** Kwik Trip is now open, and Primrose Schools will open 2012. Additional retail/restaurants projected to open summer 2012.

**Owner:** Kraus-Anderson, Incorporated  
**Developer:** Mike Korsh, Kraus-Anderson Realty Company  
**Leasing Agent:** Dave Stalsberg & Jim Stimmler  
 Kraus-Anderson Realty Company; (952) 881-8166

**Architect:** Architectural Consortium, LLC  
**Construction Contractor:** Kraus-Anderson  
**GLA:** Approximately 75,000 sf of freestanding and multi-tenant retail and professional/medical office space  
**Demographics:** 113,194 residents within a 5-mile radius with a median household income of \$123,925

**Market Area Served:** Chanhasen, Chaska, Eden Prairie, Victoria, Shakopee, Minnetonka

**Additional Facts/Narrative:** New development, now pre-leasing, along Hwy 212 at Hwy 101. Located across from the SW Transit Park & Ride and near the Chanhasen High School. BTS opportunities and pad sites available for sale. Fantastic median household incomes.

## Recent OSHA Directive - continued

money or valuables, and sites at which employees provide services and care. The Directive goes on to describe other factors that can create the likelihood of workplace violence, such as working late at night or working in areas with high crime rates.

OSHA's directive focuses on two primary questions to determine whether or not an investigation or citation is appropriate:

(1) Did the employer recognize potential hazards in the workplace? and (2) Are there feasible means of preventing or minimizing such hazards?

Building owners and managers can take preventative steps prior to any incidents to keep employees safe and minimize the risk of investigations or citations by OSHA.

### Analyze potential workplace hazards

A significant portion of the Directive encourages field officers to investigate an employer's recognition of the risk for workplace violence. Building owners and managers should conduct assessments of the risk of workplace violence at their facilities. A simple walk-through can reveal potential hazards, such as burnt-out lights, isolated employee parking facilities, and broken door locks.

OSHA says that employers should be aware of potential hazards because of specific past incidents, characteristics of the facility, or general industry-wide knowledge of the potential of workplace violence. Employers in late-night retail industries or retail stores where employees work shifts alone should pay particular attention to potential risks, as OSHA will likely deem these industries to be on notice of the potential for workplace violence in light of OSHA's published guidance. Employers will also be deemed to know that a workplace is prone to violence if multiple incidents of violence have occurred in the past. The directive instructs field officers to look beyond OSHA-reported events to evaluate workers' compensation records, insurance reports, police reports, security reports, first-aid logs, and accident logs in order to determine whether or not an employer had notice that violence was a hazard at the facility. Additionally, employee complaints may cause OSHA to conclude that the employer

EMPLOYERS IN LATE-NIGHT RETAIL INDUSTRIES, OR RETAIL STORES WHERE EMPLOYEES WORK SHIFTS ALONE, SHOULD PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO POTENTIAL RISKS...

knew of potential hazards. Employers should note employees' concerns about workplace violence and analyze whether or not a complaint presents a legitimate risk that the employer should seek to remedy.

### Implement reasonable safety mechanisms

Following a review of potential hazards, OSHA posits that the employer should take reasonable steps to implement safety

mechanisms to minimize or eliminate those risks. For existing buildings, implementing safety mechanisms may be as simple as adding lighting, door locks, or security alarm systems, or instructing employees to park within view of the building. For new facilities, safety can be taken into account when designing and planning areas where employees interact with the public or limiting isolated areas. Employers should take care to document the potential hazards and the steps that were taken to minimize the risk of such hazards.

Employers should also consider whether or not a formal workplace violence prevention program is appropriate. (Violence prevention programs are not mandated by federal or Minnesota law, but California, Illinois, Maine, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Washington, and West Virginia all require various forms of such programs for all or certain kinds of employers.) A formal violence prevention program may not be practical for all facilities; however, employers should consider whether a simple version could be implemented in their organization.

### Training and Recordkeeping

Beyond pursuing building improvements to minimize the risk of workplace violence, OSHA encourages training programs to educate employees on the known risks for workplace violence and the steps that can be taken by employees to minimize the potential for workplace violence. Employers should make employees aware of the known risks that an employer has identified in the workplace (such as isolated employee parking areas) and instruct employees on the procedures and mechanisms in place to help them diminish risk and the appropriate response should an

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**TEASOURCE**

TeaSource, a Minnesota-based specialty tea wholesale and retail company, was founded by Bill Waddington 14 years ago. He imports some of the finest teas from around the world, provides tea services in three retail locations and sells tea to 450 wholesale customers all across North America.

Bill discovered the tea world when he was in college and, for 10 years, he conducted research to find a world-class tea. Through this research, he developed relationships with tea brokers and growers around the world. At the time, he was working as Director of Training at Supervalu which led him to a thorough understanding of managing a retail business. He decided to take his knowledge of tea and his experience with retail and open the first TeaSource in Highland Park.

Originally TeaSource was intended as a retail business that provided tea service and sold bulk tea. Six months after he opened his first TeaSource, he was approached by chefs, restaurant owners and coffee shops wanting to serve world class tea because they could not find a place to purchase high quality tea in the United States. So he launched his wholesale business which currently makes up 30% of his revenues. Six years later, he opened his second location in St. Anthony and will open his third location in Eden Prairie by the end of this year.

TeaSource carries high end teas and sells them by the quarter pound, which will brew 50 cups of tea. Prices range from \$5 per quarter-pound to \$75 per quarter-pound. Every day there are seven teas brewed for tea service and 250 different types of tea to purchase in bulk.

TeaSource has been recognized numerous times for the quality of its products and its efforts at educating the public about high-end loose tea. For instance, TeaSource was a first place winner in the 2010 North American Tea Championships, and TeaSource has been selected Best Tea Store in Minnesota by *Minnesota Monthly*, *Minneapolis/St Paul* magazine, and *City Pages*.



Highland Park store



**STATS:**  
**Hot Items for the Holiday**

**Top Ten Hot Items for this Holiday Season**

TMX Elmo	\$40
Barbie and the 12 Dancing Princesses	\$25
Sony PlayStation 3	\$499
Wolford Velvete de Luxe Legging	\$38
Gap Skinny Fit Black Jeans	\$58
Cole Haan Village Weave Small Tote	\$425
Victoria Secret Flannel Pajama Gift Set	\$49.50
Digital Lifestyle Outfitters Black Action Jacket for iPod	\$30
HP Photosmart R967	\$350
Gift Cards (12% of holiday purchases in 2010)	

Source: [Forbes.com](http://Forbes.com)

## EVENTS

- Nov 17 **Third Thursdays Networking**
- Dec 6 Year End Program and STARR<sub>SM</sub> Awards (afternoon/evening)
- Dec 15 **Third Thursdays Networking**
- Jan 11 Trends
- Jan 19 **Third Thursdays Networking**
- Feb 1 Retail Focus
- Feb 16 **Third Thursdays Networking**

[www.msca-online.com](http://www.msca-online.com)

## 2011 LEADERSHIP

### OFFICERS

#### President

**Peter J. Berrie**, Faegre & Benson LLP

#### 1st Vice President

**Paula Mueller**, Northtown Mall/Glimcher Properties

#### 2nd Vice President

**Ronn Thomas**, Cushman & Wakefield/NorthMarq Real Estate Services

#### Treasurer

**Eric R. Bjelland**, Cushman & Wakefield/NorthMarq Real Estate Services

#### Secretary

**Dana Andresen**, Chuck & Don's Pet Food Outlet

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**Tony A. Barranco**, Ryan Companies US, Inc.

**John Dietrich**, RLK Incorporated

**Jen Helm**, Cushman & Wakefield/NorthMarq Real Estate Services

**Andy McDermott**, Shea, Inc.

**Robert B. Pounds**, Colliers International | Minneapolis-St. Paul

**Hans A. Rasmussen**, Robert Muir Company

**Jeffrey R. Wurst**, Caribou Coffee Company, Inc.

**Immediate Past President** (as Director):

**Stephen H. Eggert**, Target Corporation

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

#### Golf

**Ryan Burke**, Kraus-Anderson Companies

**Cindy Weber**, Engelsma Construction, Inc.

#### Learning Session

**Will Matzek**, Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.

**Cindy MacDonald**, Kraus-Anderson Companies

#### Legislative

**Jack Amdal**, JAmDal Architects LLC

**Leah Truax**, Cushman & Wakefield/NorthMarq Real Estate Services

#### MSCA Cares

**Zachary Stensland**, Colliers International | Minneapolis-St. Paul

**Herb Tousley**, Exeter Realty Company

#### Newsletter

**Andy McDermott**, Shea, Inc.

#### Program

**Tom Goodrum**, MFRA, Inc.

#### Retail Report

**Jane Goossens**, Kraus-Anderson Companies

**Michael Broich**, Target Corporation

#### Sponsorship

**Janele Taveggia**, LEO A DALY

**Shelly Muelken**, Marketplace Commercial

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**Tony A. Barranco**, Ryan Companies US, Inc.

**Derek Naill**, Associated Bank

#### Technology

**Mark Robinson**, Paster Enterprises

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## MN MARKETPLACE

Press releases are printed based upon availability of space and relevance to the local market.

- Site work has begun on the long-awaited **Shingle Creek Crossing**, replacing the former Brookdale Center, which will include a **Walmart Supercenter** as an anchor tenant.
- **Athleta** is opening a store on the corner of 50th & France in the space previously occupied by Ann Taylor Loft. Athleta offers women's yoga clothing, swimwear, running clothing and athletic clothing for fitness, golf and tennis.
- **Aspen Medical Group** has leased 11,500 sf of retail space in Highland Park on Ford Parkway. The space was previously occupied by Old Country Buffet.
- **Whole Foods Market** has opened a 32,000-sf store in Minnetonka on Plymouth Road & Wayzata Boulevard next to Office Depot. Whole Foods is also under construction on France Avenue in the Centennial Lakes Center.
- **Total Hockey** has opened a store on France Avenue & I-494 in Bloomington in the Southdale 494 Shopping Center. The new Total Hockey will be the company's fourth store in the Twin Cities.
- **Firehouse Subs** has opened the first Twin Cities store on White Bear Avenue & Highway 36 in Maplewood. The Firehouse website states there are 445 locations and growing.
- **Totally Tan** just signed a lease for a 1,750-sf space in The Shops at Wedgewood in Maple Grove.
- **The Blue Door Pub**, home of the Juicy Blucy, is planning to open a second location in Minneapolis' Longfellow neighborhood.
- Popular women's boutique **Houndstooth** has opened a second location near Eden Prairie Center, featuring Current/Elliott, Hudson and J Brand jeans, tops by Joie and Alice + Olivia, and flats and wedges by Sam Edelman.
- **Patina** is taking over the former Hollywood Video space at Highway 55 & Winnetka Avenue in Golden Valley.
- South Minneapolis' **Colossal Cafe** is adding a new location in the St. Anthony Park neighborhood of St. Paul this December that will be five times bigger than the original.
- The restaurant in Eden Prairie's Lifetime Fitness has undergone another change, from The Herb Box to **Rare Steak & Sushi**, a more casual version of the one recently opened in the Minneapolis Grand Hotel with a lighter menu and grab-and-go meals.
- Wayzata Eatery, the Taher Corporation's first foray into the restaurant business, has shut its doors. Taher, however, just opened **The St. Louis Park Woodfire Grill** in the building that previously housed a Timber Lodge Steakhouse, the Alaska Grill and Shelley's Woodroast. The Woodfire Grill has a varied menu with a global influence and a full bar and there are plans to open for breakfast soon.
- **Technique** is the new student-run restaurant of Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts that "features elegant food prepared by the next generation of great American chefs." Technique is open for lunch and dinner Tuesday-Friday, and reservations are recommended.

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HOLIDAY PARTY

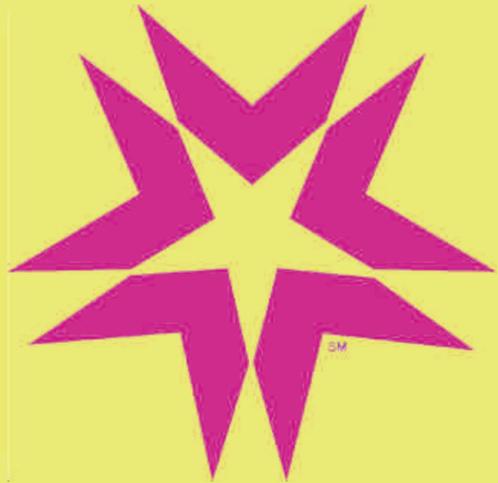


STARR<sup>SM</sup> AWARDS



YEAR END CEREMONIES

# 2011 STARR<sup>SM</sup> awards



Tuesday, December 6, 2011

Golden Valley Country Club

7001 Golden Valley Road ~ Golden Valley

4 p.m. Registration & Networking  
5 p.m. Year End Ceremonies & Awards Presentation  
6 p.m. Holiday Party

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MINNESOTA SHOPPING  
CENTER ASSOCIATION

## MEMBER PROFILES

### Emily Becker

Cushman & Wakefield /  
NorthMarq Real Estate Services



**Primary Career Focus:** Property Management

**Hometown:** Family farm rural Lakefield, Minnesota. Currently live in Bloomington.

**Education:** B.S. in Business – Real Estate, Minor in Mass Communications from St. Cloud State University, Real Property Administrator (R.P.A.) designation from the Building Owners and Managers Institute International.

**Family:** Husband, Dan, Baby Becker (we're expecting our first child on November 11). Two German Shorthair Pointers, Forrest and Rosco.

**Hobbies:** Boating, remodeling our home, cooking, trying different restaurants.

**Very First Job:** Dishwasher at the Hi Lo Supper Club, Lakefield, MN.

**Dream Job:** Owning my own investment property.

**Secret Talent:** Cooking—I sometimes surprise myself!

**Favorite Food:** Any seafood, followed closely by grilled cheese and tomato soup.

**Favorite Book:** *The Biography of John Adams*

**Favorite Quote:** "The only place success comes before work is in the dictionary." ~Vince Lombardi

**Mentors:** My parents, my aunt, Wendy Aaserud, Louie Bowker and my team at NorthMarq.

**Favorite Place Traveled:** Maine and Montana have some of the most beautiful places on Earth. While in college, I traveled to Ireland and Greece and really enjoyed them as well.

**MSCA Involvement:** MSCA Cares Committee

### David Carland

Stonehenge-USA



**Primary Career Focus:** Development

**Hometown:** South Minneapolis

**Education:** B.S. in Business from University of Minnesota (Ski U Mah!)

**Family:** Son, John (9), yellow lab Puck (9 months)

**Hobbies:** Cabin life, broomball, high handicap golf, fishing, running, pheasant hunting, fantasy football/baseball, and coaching sports I can't play.

**Very First Job:** McDonald's on Lake Street

**Dream Job:** Major League Baseball General Manager

**Secret Talent:** It's such a secret, I don't even know it.

**Favorite Food:** Chipotle chicken burrito with black beans, hot salsa and a little cheese

**Favorite Book:** *Flat Stanley Adventures*

**Favorite Movie:** *Goodfellas*

**Favorite Quote:** "I woke up this morning and grabbed myself a beer" ~Jim Morrison

**Mentors:** Gary Holmes and Bill Franke

**Favorite Place Traveled:** Australia

**MSCA Involvement:** Pay dues and attend programs

## NEW MEMBERS

### Carl Runck

Alatus LLC

### Jesse Hodapp

Schafer Richardson

### Luke Fellows

Benson-Orth Construction

### Nate Erickson

Cushman & Wakefield /  
NorthMarq Real Estate  
Services

### Laura Moore

Moore & Co. Commercial  
Real Estate, LLC

### Aaron Wheatcraft

Arcon Solutions Inc.

### Mike Collins

Cutting Edge Property  
Maintenance

## MEMBER NEWS

**Shea Moves Headquarters.** Shea, Inc. inked a 10-year lease deal with Zel-Wel, LLC, and will be moving its company headquarters to the former Shinders building at the high-profile intersection of Hennepin Avenue and 8th Street in downtown Minneapolis. As part of the deal, Shea will work on the redevelopment and design of the 64-year old, two-story building, which has been shuttered since 2007. The building will house Shea's offices on the second floor and a potential restaurant tenant on the lower level, first floor and rooftop. Welsh Construction will commence work on the building core and shell in early 2012 and Shea is planning to occupy the new space by July 2012.

**Faegre Partners With New Firm.** Faegre & Benson LLP is delighted to announce that its partners have voted to combine with Baker & Daniels LLP. The new firm, to be inaugurated on January 1, 2012, will be called Faegre Baker Daniels LLP.

**Jordan Joins Caribou.** Margaret Jordan has joined Caribou Coffee on the real estate team.

**NorthMarq & Cushman Partner.** NorthMarq Real Estate Services and Cushman & Wakefield have reached agreement to merge their operations in Minnesota. The new joint venture will operate as Cushman & Wakefield/NorthMarq Real Estate Services.

# WHAT'S YOUR CENTER WORTH?

## AN UPDATE ON THE RETAIL INVESTMENT MARKET

The MSCA October program featured a panel of experts in retail debt and equity investments:

- Murray Kornberg, Senior Vice President with CBRE Capital Markets;
- Eric Bjelland, Senior Vice President - Retail Assets Investment Services with Cushman & Wakefield/NorthMarq Real Estate Services;
- Rick Plessner, Vice President of Inland Commercial Property Management, Inc.
- Bob Pounds (moderator), Senior Vice President - Investment Services with Colliers International | Minneapolis-St. Paul.

The freewheeling program began with a discussion of "PIGS" and how they affect the Midwest retail real estate industry. The speakers explained that "PIGS" is an acronym for Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain and how their financial instability affects our industry here in Minnesota.

The speakers then discussed the asset classes that institutional investors remain interested in, with grocery-anchored sites trailing only multifamily facilities as attractive investments. Some power centers can still be attractive, but investors are underwriting based on fair market rents, not necessarily the current lease rates that were negotiated in 2005-06, for example.

In the discussion of pricing, the panelists agreed that lingering uncertainty in the financial markets continues to drive the "flight to quality." But the core properties that most institutional investors want comprise only 10% of the market. For non-core properties, the keys to attracting



Speakers - l to r  
Eric Bjelland, Cushman & Wakefield/NorthMarq Real Estate Services  
Bob Pounds (moderator), Colliers International | Minneapolis-St. Paul  
Murray Kornberg, CBRE Capital Markets  
Rick Plessner, Inland Commercial Property Management, Inc.

investment are vacancy rates, quality of the project owner (and likelihood of filling vacancies), quality of existing tenants, condition of the center, site layout and location. In other words, investors are back to the key fundamentals of underwriting. If a shopping center does not have good fundamentals, the only way to attract investment is for borrowers to use banking relationships and provide personal guaranties.

After discussing what sellers of centers should focus on, the panelists gave their predictions for 2012. Generally, there seemed to be an expectation that transaction volume may increase slightly, although this will be adversely affected by uncertainty around the upcoming presidential election. In 2012, cap rates may go down slightly and rental rates may improve, also slightly. Institutional investors should be more active but the CMBS market will remain slow at best.

These were just some of the insights into the retail investment market.

## OCTOBER 2011 PROFESSIONAL SHOWCASE



Pictured from l to r:  
Jeff Johnson, Angela Woessner,  
Kristi Riley, Mike Hurley

### Barna Guzy & Steffen, Ltd.

Barna Guzy & Steffen, Ltd. is a full service law firm which has served the real estate community since 1938. In the past 15 years, the real estate attorneys of Barna, Guzy & Steffen, Ltd. have assisted with the development and leasing of over 5.5 million square feet of retail space throughout the Midwest. Please consider Barna, Guzy & Steffen, Ltd. for your real estate legal services.

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Watch for 2012  
Membership Renewals  
to come via email  
mid-November.



## COMMITTEE CHAT

The 2011 MSCA Retail Report will be presented to those attending the monthly MSCA meeting on November 2, 2011. At that meeting, Commissioner Mark R. Phillips of the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, John Johansson of Colliers International, and Leah Maurer and Ronn Thomas, both of Cushman & Wakefield/NorthMarq Real Estate Services, will be speaking about the state of retail and the economy in Minnesota. The meeting will also include an interactive trivia challenge based on the contents of the Retail Report. The Retail Report is prepared by the MSCA Retail Report Committee, with the cooperation of MNCAR and numerous individual contributors, and provides opinions, an overview of Minnesota retail properties, information about vacancy and rental rates, and other useful information. The Retail Report is presented on a CD ROM for ease of use and printing. If you are unable to attend the November meeting, the Retail Report will be available for purchase on the MSCA website, or by calling the MSCA offices after the meeting.

## RETAIL REPORT



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## Recent OSHA Directive - continued from page 2

incident occur (such as calling a security escort if leaving the building late at night).

If an employer is subject to an OSHA investigation based on workplace violence, documentation will be a key factor in OSHA's determination of whether to cite and fine the employer. Employers should ensure that workers' compensation records, insurance reports, police reports, security reports, first-aid logs, and accident logs are complete and, where appropriate, match OSHA incident logs. Additionally, employers should keep detailed training logs and document any analysis of potential workplace hazards and the steps taken to minimize the risk associated with those hazards. Strong documentation can be crucial in demonstrating to OSHA that an employer has taken proper steps to identify and reduce the risk of workplace violence.

### Reassess hazards periodically

An initial evaluation and implementation of precautions to minimize the risk of workplace violence is a critical first step; however, periodic reassessment is also necessary. Frequent inspections of workplace facilities may be appropriate, as are regularly scheduled evaluations of whether or not the mechanisms in place to reduce workplace violence are effective and whether there are other mechanisms that can be introduced to further protect employees (such as new or updated trainings).

## MSCA "THIRD THURSDAYS"

**Who:** MSCA members and their colleagues

**What:** Casual networking hosted by MSCA members

**When:** Third Thursday of every month from 8:30–9:30 am

**Why:** Create synergy in the commercial real estate industry—share ideas and stories and make new effective relationships.

**Next meeting:** The next meeting will be: Thursday, **Thursday, November 17** at **Mountain Mudd Espresso-Twin Cities** (9712 63rd Av N, Maple Grove 55369). MSCA member hosts include **Brad Kaplan**, Cushman & Wakefield/NorthMarq Real Estate Services and **Steve Day**, J.L. Sullivan Construction, Inc.

There is no fee for this event. Food and beverage are not included.

RSVP to Stacey is preferred, but not required. Hope to see you there!

## RETAILERS PREPARING FOR PROMOTION-HEAVY HOLIDAY SEASON

Online retailers have plenty to be joyous about this holiday season. As new research shows, companies are adjusting their holiday plans based on expected growth and strong demand from holiday shoppers. According to Shop.org's eHoliday survey conducted by BIGresearch, nearly seven in 10 (68%) retailers say they expect their company's online sales to grow at least 15% or more compared to last holiday season, up from the 63.8% who had those expectations last year. The survey is supported by new data from the National Retail Federation, which found the average shopper plans to do about 36% of their holiday shopping online, up from 32.7% last year.

One of consumers' most anticipated and favorite holiday promotions—free shipping—will be hard to miss this holiday season as nine in 10 online retailers (92.5%) say they plan on offering the service at some point, up from 84.8% in 2010. Eager shoppers can also expect these offers to start soon, as nearly one-third (31.4%) of those surveyed say their free shipping offers would start earlier in the season compared to last year. Additionally, 56.3% say their budget for free shipping promotions specifically is higher than last year.

"There's no question consumers are eager to hit the web this holiday season, and online retailers are prepping by optimizing their sites, beginning their marketing and promotions early, and planning plenty of free shipping promotions as they aim to provide value and convenience for their shoppers," said Shop.org head of research Fiona Swerdlow. "Online retailers will also leverage their social media and mobile platforms for savvy shoppers on the go, knowing how important customer reviews and comparison shopping applications are to holiday shoppers."

Like their store counterparts, online merchants say they will begin promoting the holiday season earlier this year. The survey found more than half (52.9%) plan to start their online holiday marketing and promotions by Halloween, up from the 40% who planned to do so last year. Another 37.2% will begin marketing by mid-November.

- **Allee Metro Chic** boutique has moved to the former L'atelier Couture space at 493 Selby Avenue in St. Paul near co-owner June Berkowitz's coffee house, Nina's Cafe. **Assez Bon** is a new home furnishings and accessories store on the lower level of Allee's space. **L'atelier Couture** has moved to a new space at 219 North Second Street in the North Loop neighborhood of Minneapolis.
- **Poppy Togs and Clogs**, in the former Peapods space at Snelling & St. Clair in St. Paul, is a new store stocked with baby and toddler apparel as well as colorful clothes for moms. Open just Thursday-Sunday.
- **Pacifier**, with its assortment of well-designed baby gifts, gear and toys, moved across Nicollet Mall from the street level of Gaviidae Common to a skyway storefront in City Center, near Macy's.
- **Big Lots** opened in Maple Grove at Dunkirk.
- **Maeve's Café**, from the owner of northeast Minneapolis's now-shuttered Audubon Coffee has opened on the corner of Third Street NE & 13th Avenue in Minneapolis.
- The Twin Cities has a few new fro-yo shops, including local company, **Freeziac**, in Plymouth and Minnesota's first **Menchie's Frozen Yogurt** franchise in St. Paul's Highland Park neighborhood.
- After a nearly ten-year run in Block E, **The Hard Rock Cafe**—part of an international chain of eateries known for their music memorabilia—has closed.
- **North Coast** restaurant, with its deck overlooking Wayzata Bay, has closed.
- **The Purple Sandpiper**, one of the south suburbs' more interesting restaurants, was recently forced to shut its doors due to "MUCH slower than expected sales and the lack of steady business," according to its owner.
- The **Lowe's** store in Rogers will close on Sunday, November 13.

## PROMOTION-HEAVY HOLIDAY SEASON - CONTINUED

When it comes to online retailers' holiday season priorities, many have already invested in new technologies and site and service features. More than half (51.0%) said they have significantly invested in mobile-optimized websites and 19.6% have invested in tablet device apps. Additionally, 35.3% said they have significantly invested in QR codes in offline advertising, such as magazine ads and billboards. Of those who regularly use social media platforms, nearly three-quarters say they have already invested in their Facebook (72.5%) and Twitter (41.2%) accounts in advance of the holidays.

When asked why they plan to spend more online this holiday season, four in 10 shoppers (43.2%) said 24-hour convenience is a main consideration. More shoppers this year are also interested in shopping online as a direct result of free shipping offers—36.3% will spend more online this year if shipping comes free. Other reasons include their lack of desire to fight crowds in the stores (37.2%) and the ease of comparing prices (29.6%).

Consumers will get information about retailers' sales and promotions from a variety of channels. The survey found nearly three in 10 (29.2%) will check out a company's Facebook page for more information and about two-thirds (65.1%) will read customer reviews on the company's website.

Source: [www.nrf.com/holidays](http://www.nrf.com/holidays)