

**MAYOR**  
Lamar Scroggs

**CITY COUNCIL**  
Sam Evans  
Gary Anderson  
Martha Collins  
Ron McFarland  
Montie Robinson, Sr.



**CITY MANAGER**  
Stan Brown

**ASST. CITY MANAGER**  
Patti Doss-Luna

**CITY CLERK**  
Tangee Puckett

## **NEWS ARTICLE: Gainesville Times on October 25, 2009**

### **Aging Oakwood shopping center gets face-lift**

Developer hopes area road work will boost business



**Oakwood's Merchants Crossing Shopping Center is getting a face-lift. The developer is hoping a fresh look and hot location will stir up renewed activity in the 20-year-old shopping center.**

It'll give a very nice, pleasant look to the property."

The work should be completed in late December. He wouldn't say how much the project will end up costing.

"As you can imagine, it's not exactly cheap," Bartlett said. "But you have to do some things occasionally, and we're certainly doing that now to make (the shopping center) more presentable and attractive to the area."

Many businesses have come and gone from the center over the years, including A&P grocery store, a Subway restaurant and CVS pharmacy. The Subway and CVS moved to new locations on Mundy Mill Road.

One staple through the years has been Golden Buddha restaurant.

"They are quite excited about the changes and the uplift," Bartlett said.

**OAKWOOD** — The 20-year-old Merchants Crossing Shopping Center off Mundy Mill Road is getting an updated look, with the company that operates the center hoping new and upcoming area road improvements will stir up business.

London Feldman Properties in Atlanta now is busy renovating the center's grocery location to make room for a Goodwill of North Georgia operation.

"We're going to go ahead and redo the entire front, refurbishing and remodeling it," said Charles Bartlett, a company representative. "... It'll be a more modern look with stucco, some brick, stone accents, and the awnings will be redone.

A chain-link fence now stretches across the front of the single-story, white stone structure, with covered wooden walkways leading to store entrances.

“We’re fortunate in one regard with the new Thurmon Tanner Parkway that has created an emphasis and greater focus on that section of Mundy Mill Road, along with the Sam’s and Walmart (built in the past couple of years),” Bartlett said.

The final leg of Thurmon Tanner Parkway will be built between Plainview and Mundy Mill roads, running beside Merchants Crossing as it connects to Mundy Mill Road.

The Georgia Department of Transportation project is expected to be finished in December 2010. In its entirety, the four-lane parkway will run from Atlanta Highway at the Exit 17 exit ramp to Phil Niekro Boulevard in Flowery Branch.

And with Mundy Mill Road just expanded to three lanes from two the entire width of the shopping center — which is fronted by Burger King and Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurants — Merchants Crossing could be sitting in a prime location, especially as the economy begins to rebound.

“We’re hoping it will be,” Bartlett said. “We’re excited about it. We struggled through the widening of Mundy Mill — we’ll continue to struggle while they do the Thurmon Tanner piece.”

Oakwood city officials have long said they expect new growth and redevelopment to occur off Mundy Mill Road as the road projects are completed.

“I’m thinking (Merchants Crossing is) getting prepared for when Thurmon Tanner Parkway comes in. They’ll have access on that side, as well,” said City Manager Stan Brown.

The shopping center also spills out onto Mundy Mill Drive, which leads to Oakwood Road and older sections of the South Hall city.

Bartlett said Brown and Assistant City Manager Patti Doss-Luna “have been very supportive and encouraging of our renovation project and are obviously excited to see Goodwill come in.”

Rashida Powell, spokeswoman for Goodwill of North Georgia, said the operation should feature a store and career center and should be open by mid-December.

Typically, Goodwill decides on a location after “a team goes out, researches the area and (determines) how much of a community need there is for a Goodwill center,” Powell said.

The nonprofit corporation provides job training and employment services to people having trouble finding work and who may possibly want to change careers or start their own business.

Stores featuring donated clothing, books, furniture and other items help pay for the operation.

Some other tenants may be on the way to Merchants Crossing, Bartlett said.

“We have several (prospects) we’re in negotiation with, but we’re not far enough along to make an announcement on them,” he said.