

Centrum helps downtown business

By Kathy Stokebrand

Since the opening of the Centrum shipping and parking complex, the change in business for downtown stores has been like the difference between night and day.

H. Kirk Langer, regional manager of the western division of J. L. Brandeis, said the Centrum has been a tremendous catalyst for traffic through the store and increased sales. He added that the lower, first and second floors of Brandeis downtown were remodeled to coincide with the grand-opening of the Centrum.

Brandeis extended its store hours to coincide with the Centrum hours when it opened. Langer said all the stores in the "system" are doing this on a trial basis until the Christmas season is ended. He said the principals of the stores probably will meet at the end of December to



Photo by Mark Billingsley

Downtown Lincoln shoppers enjoy protection from nippy, November winds inside one of Centrum's skywalks.

decide whether to continue the longer hours.

Merchandise manager Ardis Ward of Miller & Paine said it probably would be better if all downtown merchants could keep the longer hours after the beginning of the year, but added that some businesses might not be able to.

"It takes a concentrated effort on the part of all of the merchants to get hours that are common," he said.

CUSTOMER TRAFFIC is good and seems to increase every day, Ward said. He was sure that as the weather worsens, the skywalks will be used more.

Development of the downtown core into a unit was needed for the whole community, said Bob Durrie, president of Magees. So far, he said, the opening of the Centrum has not affected sales of the Magees Gateway store.

Durrie said the opening of the Centrum probably delayed the development of other Lincoln shopping centers for four to five years. The main thing the Centrum has done, he said, is to answer the "no parking" complaint that has been voiced in the downtown area for so many years. The parking facility adjacent to the shopping mall has about 1,000 parking spaces available, he said.

The tenant mix in the Centrum itself is not perfect, Durrie said, but added that a few spaces are still open and this will hopefully get better.

THE OPENING OF the Centrum caused the Magees downtown store to change its traffic patterns and customer mix, Durrie said. Their junior merchandise and young career and contemporary merchandise has been separated in order to more fully serve females between the ages of 25 and 45. This market group is where the biggest growth in sales comes, Durrie said.

Tracey Hilsabeck, an employee of the downtown Magees store, said the sales in the Juniors department have increased 400 percent since the Centrum opened. "Everyone is totally amazed by its effect," she said.

Hilsabeck and Suzanne Harbour, another store employee, agreed that the Centrum is especially nice for employees because they too can go out to eat or shop without having to put on a coat or go outside. Parking was very convenient for them too, they said.

Mrs. Ivn Sunderman, 4330 Sumner St., said that she had only been in the Centrum twice, but thought she probably would come downtown more often because of the convenience and additional stores.

SUNDERMAN SAID the development of the Centrum was a good idea because she hates to see the downtown of any town deteriorate.

Rod Wagner, 3205 West Pershing Road, said his family used to shop at Gateway a lot because of parking convenience. Now they will probably come to the Centrum more often, he said. The parking and walkways will be a big factor drawing people to the Centrum, he said. Wagner said there was a good selection of stores in the Centrum and thought it was important to keep the downtown area active, even if Gateway business is hurt. He didn't think it would be, however.

Carol Reiloyo, 1265 South 45th St., works in an office downtown and was glad to see the Centrum developed. She said she likes to be able to go to a lot of stores without having to go outside. The selection of stores was nice but Reiloy said she would like to see a good restaurant come to the downtown area.

Cathy McMahon, a UNL junior, said the most interesting thing to do in the Centrum is to watch the elevators.

More work study positions open

By Alice Hrnicek

An increase in federal money and in student requests have caused expansion of the Work Study program at UNL, according to Don Aripoli, director of the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aids.

The number of students placed in the program by Sept. 1 increased to 1,025 from 754 the same date last year, Aripoli reported. By Oct. 18, 918 had started working and, the director said, he expects 1,400 to participate by the end of the spring semester.

Work Study is a federal financial aid program allowing needy students to earn up to the amount they need by working on the university campus. Financial need is determined by filling out a computerized Financial Aid Form, the same process used to determine needs for loans and grants, Aripoli said.

The federal government will pay up to 80 percent of each student's salary and the educational institution makes up the other 20 percent, Aripoli said.

Money allotted by the government for UNL Work Study was raised by more than 12 percent from last year because of the Middle Income Student Assistant Act, he said. Federal money this year is \$885,000, up from \$779,329 last year. Nationally, the amount increased from \$435 million to \$550 million.

Aripoli noted the program has been popular with students, the university and the federal government. "The work ethic is in," he said, explaining that students want to work to earn their financial aid.

Work Study eliminates default problems because students do not have to pay money back after graduation, as they do for federal loans.

Aripoli cited a study that reported that Work Study students do better academically because they budget their time wisely. The type of job a student has may also influence him in his career choice and his employers may help him with plans for graduate school or employment in that field, he said.

Not all students who are eligible for financial aid can get Work Study, Aripoli warned, because of limited money.

"We make every effort to get jobs for those with high needs and those who have worked with the program before," he said.

The office tries to match students with work that suits their interests or requests, although that is not always possible, he said.

Positions are available in clerical, administrative, lab assisting, tutoring, food service and other positions. Applications for Work Study for next semester will be accepted until Dec. 1.

Dr. Barbara I. Cook

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Sophomore wins Cather 2 raffle

Carlton Bruett will receive \$360 for tuition after having his name drawn first from Cather 2's tuition raffle. Bruett is a sophomore in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Tickets were sold during the past few weeks by residents of Cather residence hall's second floor. More than 1,300 tickets were sold at three-for-\$1, according to Steve Hardy, a floor resident.

The floor intended to give 10 percent of the profits to the All-University Fund and use the rest for floor improvement, Hardy said.

After figuring totals, however, the floor lost 20 cents, he said. Hardy added that a tuition raffle may be a first of its kinds for UNL, but said he was not positive.

The floor may decide to hold a similar raffle next year in spite of the lost revenue because the residents will be experienced and better able to plan such a project, Hardy said.

Second prize was awarded to Karen Gustin, an undeclared freshman. She will receive a student survival kit containing several gift certificates and movie passes at a total of \$84.50.

Third prize was awarded to Roxanne Skoda, a sophomore in the Teacher's College. She will receive a student survival kit worth \$32.60.

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