

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

Regina Centre Crossing

*Former Superstore building now has new occupants*By TIM SWITZER
Leader-Post

The old, green building on the edge of Regina's downtown has come a long way in the past decade.

Regina Centre Crossing, which now occupies the old Superstore building at the corner of Albert Street and Dewdney Avenue, held its grand opening Thursday, almost 10 years since the grocery store closed its doors.

"You get a lot of people asking 'What's here?' so it's nice to get everyone together here and the businesses that already are in it to show what is actually happening," said Francis Bast, development manager and president of Century West Development Corp.

"Getting it started was the tough thing. Now when (prospective tenants) come in, they're in awe."

Currently the building has six tenants — Century West, Walker Projects (the Centre Crossing architects), Tourism Saskatchewan, AECOM, the Phoenix Group and the Saskatchewan Roughriders' training facility — but several others could soon occupy the space.

SaskPower is setting up a permit office and Regina Centre Crossing will be home to Canada's first Subway Cafe, an upscale version of the submarine sandwich chain.

So far, 75 per cent of the space has been leased, leaving about 28,000 square feet in the building still open for development.

The original plan for the building aimed to include both office and retail space. Bast said he is still open to retailers coming in, provided they "fit in with the business community we have here."

Century West has been in talks with a few potential tenants — including one retail outlet — to set up in the space still up for grabs. A large section in the middle of the building is still undeveloped, save for the finished, outer wall, but Bast sees it as the potential retail area for which the walls could easily be opened up.

"Most of it will be occupied by the end of the year," said Bast.



ROY ANTAL/Leader-Post

Milt Walker (left), engineer and project manager, and Francis Bast, development manager, were all smiles on Thursday when Century West Development celebrated the grand opening of Regina Centre Cross.

Development is also on the horizon for the property outside the old Superstore building.

The northeast corner of the property has been leased to a group that plans to build a Four Points Sheraton hotel. As well, plans for a restaurant facing Albert Street are in place and there is room for another hotel.

"We haven't actively pursued (another hotel group)," said Bast.

Along with 450 parking spots, the four buildings would fill up the

entire property.

After the Superstore closed in fall of 2000, several rumours of the future plans for the building circulated — including groups with ideas for ice rinks and a post office — before it was purchased and put under redevelopment in 2007.

Much of the area is likely to see more development in the future with the CP Rail yard being relocated west of the city at the Global Transportation Hub.

The old yard is now the site for the

proposed stadium and entertainment facility.

Bast said Regina Centre Crossing stakeholders would be happy with whatever is developed in the space.

He said he would be pleased with a new stadium or, if that doesn't come to pass, more office or multi-family dwellings, or a combination of both.

"We just want it developed," Bast said. "That's all we want is it (be) cleaned up and a better neighbour."