

## Seasonal shops on the way

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IT'S A SURE SIGN that the holidays are just around the corner when seasonal kiosks and a seasonal storefront start popping up at Spotsylvania Towne Centre.

The first to appear this year will be a Go! Calendars, which will open Tuesday near Belk. A second one will open next Friday outside Charlotte Russe.

Go! Calendars is part of Austin, Texas-based Calendar Holdings Inc., which bought the Day by Day Calendar Co. from Borders Inc. earlier this year. Go! Calendars will look and function much like the Day by Day kiosks that were in the mall last year.



Go! Calendars will open its kiosk at Spotsylvania Towne Centre on Tuesday. Several other kiosks are coming soon.

New offerings this year will include a calendar featuring the flock from the trendy Angry Birds game, another from Legos and a third that's a partnership between Thomas Kinkade and Walt Disney. The last sets Disney characters such as Cinderella in Kinkade's dreamy, romanticized settings.

Calendar Holdings also owns Go! Games, a seasonal business specializing in family-friendly board games and puzzles. A Go! Games kiosk will open Oct. 24 near Belk.

Hot sellers there are expected to be plush versions of the Angry Birds characters and Hedbanz, a game where players stick a card on their headband and have to guess what's on it using clues supplied by their partners. The DVD game Harry Potter Scene It? also is expected to do well, said Rachel Dashnaw, Calendar Holdings' director of calendars.

Most of the other seasonal kiosks will open about the middle of next month in the mall. They include Finn McCool's Scarves, The Glass Gallery, Hickory Farms, Pillow Pets and ToyZam! Sheepskin Gifts won't open until Nov. 28.

Seasonal kiosks make sense, especially for toys and games, because the majority of these are sold in the fourth quarter of the year, said Calendar Holdings President Marc Winkelman.

"The cost of operating today is so high, particularly in a mall, and the margins in the toys and games business are so low that its very tough with the seasonality of the business," he said. "That's why toy and game stores have disappeared from malls across the county."

Winkelman used as an example KayBee, which used to be in the Spotsylvania mall and about 1,000 others nationwide. KayBee went bankrupt twice, and the second time Toys R Us acquired its remains, which consisted mainly of its website, trademarks and intellectual property rights.

Calendar Holdings does have another division, Go! Toys & Games, which have storefronts in some malls, including Potomac Mills.

"It's a matter of availability," Winkelman said. "Spotsylvania Towne Centre is a great mall, which is both an advantage and a disadvantage. Their leasing is so strong that it's tough to get an inline store there."

The mall will be getting a ToyZam! in an inline store near Costco where sister store Spirit Halloween is currently located. ToyZam! will carry Disney, Hasbro, Fisher-Price, Mattel and other popular brands.

Parent company Spencer Gifts started the seasonal toy store on a small scale elsewhere in 2009 to fill the gap left when KayBee Toys went bankrupt for the final time in 2008. It put one at Spotsylvania Towne Centre for the first time last year.

Finn McCool's Scarves, which is new to the mall this year, takes its name from a was a mythical hunter-warrior in Irish and Scottish mythology. It will carry scarves in a wide variety of colors, patterns and styles.

Glass Gallery, which is returning, sells hand-blown glass objects such as bears, birds and butterflies, as well as glass Nativity scenes and mounted glass cubes with a laser-cut design inside.

Longtime holiday standby Hickory Farms will carry a number of favorites, including include gift boxes of fruit, sausage and cheese; and the Traveling Snacker, a soft-sided cooler packed with summer sausages, cheese, crackers and mustard.

Pillow Pets will sell plush animals that have a strap that can be used to turn them into pillows, and Sheepskin Gifts specializes in sheepskin shoes, slippers, boots, rugs and accessories.

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