

## **Town Center building gets first tenant**

By MELISSA HAYES  
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WILLINGBORO — The state Division of Youth and Family Services will be the first tenant for the newly renovated former Sears building on Route 130.

Site Developer Thomas Juliano, senior vice president of Delco Development LLC of Mount Laurel, said DYFS signed the paperwork last week and will occupy about one-third of the building, now called Parkway Plaza.

"That was really a big deal," Juliano said.

Mayor Jeff Ramsey said he had not officially heard of the agreement, but he was "pleased" with the news. "We tried years ago really to get the state to put something in the Sears building, but it fell on deaf ears," he said.

Renovations on the former Sears store began last year. The building has been vacant since 1982 when Sears moved to Burlington Center Mall on Route 541 in Burlington Township. Sears was an anchor store in the former Willingboro Plaza, which closed in 1995.

Delco will relocate next year from Mount Laurel to the second floor of the building. Juliano said he is looking for smaller tenants, such as doctors and accountants, to take the remaining office space.

The Sears building was one of three phases in the conversion of Willingboro Plaza into the Town Center.

The first was the south phase where Starbucks, Hollywood Video and Ruby Tuesday's are now located, Juliano said.

The north phase includes construction of two buildings totaling 30,000 square feet of retail space in front of the Sears building. That construction is under way and is expected to be completed in the fall, he said.

Juliano said a Sleepy's Mattress Store has agreed to lease space in one of the buildings.

Juliano said a pad site also is available for a restaurant, and he is looking for a tenant and will work with the township to acquire a liquor license for it.

He also plans to add a town clock at the main entrance to the Town Center, which would also serve as signage for the anchor tenants in Parkway Plaza.

Ramsey said he's pleased with the progress. "It's fantastic," he said. "In fact, it's sensational. I'm ecstatic."

Under development for seven years, the 56-acre Town Center includes a 216-unit apartment complex, the township library, an Acme supermarket, a Burlington County College satellite campus, the Medco Health Solutions pharmaceutical plant and a mix of retail and office space.

