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Mayor's message: Warwick Mall a sign of recovery process

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The Warwick Mall became, for many, a symbol of the devastation and havoc wreaked by the flood this spring. Today, as thousands of workers continue to converge on the Rte. 5 facility, it has become a hopeful sign of the recovery process.

Already, new asphalt, curbing and landscaping have been installed in and around the property, along with large, "Count on Us" signs that the mall owners have put up around the perimeter. The Sports Authority recently reopened, and a cinema and restaurant within the mall complex are also up and running. The Target store, one of the mall's anchors, is slated to reopen this month, followed by a newly redesigned mall concourse, food court and other common areas the first week of August. JC Penney - which is also undergoing a remodeling - is slated for an October opening and Macy's - the other anchor - should be open in early 2011, with a revamped design and expanded store area. Other businesses throughout the city are likewise taking the rebuilding process as an opportunity to modernize equipment and facilities. Our Dept. of Tourism, Culture and Development continues to offer assistance to companies post-flood.

In other news, we recently celebrated the official grand opening of the Ironworks Tavern, across the street from the Warwick Intermodal Train Station site. The restaurant and the adjacent Hilton Garden Inn are the first private development projects completed in the Warwick Train Station District and currently employ 100 people between them.

A few miles further along Jefferson Blvd., crews are completing the \$900,000 expansion of Kearflex Engineering, Inc. In addition to providing the family-owned manufacturing company with more space for operations, the expansion is expected to lead to job creation.

We have also recently celebrated the grand opening of several small businesses, from a combination gift shop and online consignment store, to a store for bicycle enthusiasts.

As the state's economy slowly begins to rebound, and as we continue to recover from the flood, these developments are hopeful signs of more prosperous days ahead.

Our Dept. of Tourism, Culture and Development is ready to help your business succeed. Call them at (401) 738-2000, ext. 6202 or visit them online at movetowarwickri.com

Scott Avedisian is the mayor of Warwick.

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