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## **Woburn Mall retailers' sales are up despite the slowing economy**

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Despite a slowing economy, sales are up for a majority of merchants in the revitalized Woburn Mall. Woburn Mall officials point to recent improvements, the addition of strong tenants and the mall's ideal location at the junction of I-95 (Rte. 128) and 93 as reasons for increased sales compared to last year.

"We were pleasantly surprised to see that the Woburn Mall appears to be bucking a trend in this sluggish economy," said Lori Medeiros, general manager of the Woburn Mall. "My sense is that shoppers are responding in a positive way to the improvements we've made and the solid tenants we've added. There's a really positive feeling here, which is great when you consider the difficult economic situation."

DSW Shoe and Talbot's Outlet led an influx of strong new retailers over the past two years. In addition to the newer retailers, tenants such as T.J. Maxx, Home Goods and Panera Bread renovated their stores. Market Basket added 8,000 s/f and completely renovated its supermarket. For Talbot's Outlet, its Woburn Mall store is one of the highest in sales per s/f even though it is one of the outlet chain's smaller stores.

Sales also are up at DSW Shoe, a national shoe retailer known for its wide selection and good prices. DSW opened as an anchor tenant in the Woburn Mall in early 2007.

"We have been extremely pleased with our Woburn Mall location," said Deb Mitchell, a DSW spokesperson. "We have seen excellent customer response to our vast offering and, of course, value pricing."

In recent years, the Woburn Mall simultaneously underwent a \$25 million modernization, both inside and out. Improvements include an updated facade, better traffic flow and upgraded parking lot lighting, plus an interior makeover featuring café seating at Center Court.

The success of the retailers has encouraged a greater number of smaller vendors to rent kiosks and carts in the common area, Medeiros said. They include Sisa Sweaters (hand-knit and Boston-themed apparel), Dale Begley (portrait artist), DEBBEE'S (jewelry and accessories), Avon and Rudolph's Toyland and Gifts.

"We were encouraged to take a space in the Woburn Mall because of its growing customer base," said Debra Davis of DEBBEE'S. "There are a lot of really positive things going on here, which makes us optimistic about the future."

The Woburn Mall is located at 296 Mishawum Road, at the junction of the region's two primary arteries, Routes 95 and 93, with ease of access from virtually any direction.

KGI Properties, which purchased the Woburn Mall in 2001, is the owner.

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