Area retailers gird for early start on Black Friday

By YOSHIA SKETO and DUSTIN RICKETTS
Florida Daily News Reporter

Friday is the official kickoff of the hectic and highly profitable Christmas holiday shopping season, and it is one of the few times of the year that Black Friday cannot come soon enough.

“We’re actually expecting a better turnout than last year,” said Angela Doolittle, public relations manager at Silver Sands Factory Stores in Destin. “Everyone is in a hunt for a value right now, which makes the market extremely popular.”

Shopping centers, such as Silver Sands, are opening their doors early and offering discounts on popular items they hope will be sold for shoppers to pass up. Silver Sands will open all of its stores at 6:31 a.m. Friday for a midnight Madison剁手夜 that includes the $5,000,000 sweepstakes and 1 a.m. A Dillard’s Robins will spin music outside the Tommy Hilfiger store.

This is the second year Silver Sands has opened at 6:31 a.m. for Black Friday. Although most stores at Santa Rosa Mall on Mary E. Lou Cut-Off will open at 6 a.m., Friday’s sales businesses, such as J.C. Penny and Old Navy, will open at 6:30 a.m. East River Smokehouse, a restaurant in the mall’s food court that usually opens at lunchtime, will open for breakfast Friday. The Best Buy will also be open in the parking lot.

“We’re going to have a lot of giveaways for them,” said Loren Moss, the mall’s marketing manager. “We’ve got the only one sweepstakes in the Emerald Coast, so it’s the only place you can come and find several stores and get a nice breakfast at the same time without having to leave the elements. We’re on the coast, but it’s still a 6 a.m. It’s going to be a bit chilly out there.”

Wal-mart stores will start their Black Friday sales at 5 a.m.

“We believe that it’s another retailer is better positioned to succeed in this reason than Wal-mart,” said Kelly Cheeseman, a spokeswoman for Walmart’s corporate office in Bentonville, Ark. “Families trust Walmart for low prices, and we are planning to do all we can to deliver those savings this year.”

Best Buy in Destin will open its doors at 3 a.m. with sales expected to be hot items such as flat screen television sets, computers and laptop computers.

“We think the growth in stores is going to be a lot stronger than last year,” said Stephen Watford, Best Buy’s general manager. “There’s still a lot of potential out there in the market.”

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of the five local bases that would have been affected. Boys, Ray, Sanborn, Brad, Martin, Cox, Jimmy Patton, Greg Evers, Dave Murray and Clay Ford all voted in favor of the bill.

In recent interviews, Col. Patro- nis and Ford took credit for pushing through an amendment designated to protect military missions.

Even with the amendment, the Sen. Doug Gaetz, R-Niceville, said he never has opposed drilling for Camorra's. "I'm just saying, it did not properly take into account our bases and missions," he said.

This time around, Cannon, who is next in line to be speaker of the House, should expect more resistance to his drilling bill from the Northwest Florida delegation. Each member says the military mission is a priority that must be addressed in 2010.

"We need to ask somebody to go up and ask the military specifically if they are OK with offshore drilling in particu- lar geographic areas," Murzin said.

Sen. Mike Haridopolos, R-Mel- bourne, next in line to be Senate presi- dent, but we don't want to see land set aside just to set it aside," he said. "We'll sit down and see what is in the best interest of Florida. We're not going to overlook the mission of the Air Force, the Army, the Marines." Gaetz said the military's interests in the drilling debate is "for me, the gatekeeper issue." You can't kill the goose who laid the golden egg," said Gaetz, reinforcing the military's estimated $80 bil- lion impact on Florida's economy. 'And you don't want the golden goose to fly away."

Lawmakers championing drilling next session also can expect opposi- tion from local groups that have gotten offshor...