# RETAILERS: The phrase 'Black Friday' was popularized by police in Philadelphia

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eration owners of the business, which started in 1948 — predating the Black Friday craze. The phrase "Black Friday," as it pertained to post-Thanksgiving shopping, was popularized in Philadelphia in the 1960s by police in the city who dreaded trying to manage crowds of holiday shoppers coming in to the city. By the 1980s it had spread nationwide, and retailers had come up with a more positive connotation for the name by noting that the profits from holiday shopping put them "in the black" financially for the year.

Beverly Harris, manager of the Hermiston Walmart Supercenter, said Walmart has officially shifted the start of its special deals from Friday morning to Thursday night in response to customer demand.

"Thursday is just a gigantic day for us," she said.

She said as businesses have spread out their biggest holiday deals, it helps customers save money. Instead of choosing which store to hit first on Friday morning and possibly missing out on the best deals elsewhere, they can be there when the doors open at multiple locations.

Harris, who has worked for Walmart for 13 years, said there is also less congestion in the store because many customers are ordering things online instead.

"It won't be like you saw it back in the day when we opened at 4:00 or 5:00 (a.m.) and people were waiting in line outside the doors and run through the doors," she said.

While some see the holiday shopping frenzy the weekend of Thanksgiving as a negative display of commercialism, Harris referenced Walmart's motto of saving people money so they can live better.

"Walmart is proud to be able to provide an opportunity for people to give gifts they wouldn't otherwise be able to afford," she said.

**Small Business Saturday**

While retailers of all sizes often offer deals the weekend after Thanksgiving, small businesses have been getting an extra focus over the past few years as Small Business Saturday has caught on.

Goss Family Jewlers, located on Hermiston's Main Street, is one of the small businesses participating in Black Friday and Small Business Saturday, with 20 percent off jewelry. James

Staff photo by Jade McDowell

**Darlene Clark, left, Wyatt Johnson, Randy Smith and Carla Hoyt of Smitty's Ace Hardware in Hermiston stand under a banner at the store proclaiming Small Business Saturday.**

Goss said he doesn't usually see a big rush the weekend after Thanksgiving, because people tend to be traveling out of town for the four-day weekend.

"We get a few, but I think people go up to the Tri-Cities," he said.

But because he does custom work, overall he does see an increase around the holidays from people who are interested in a unique gift for their loved ones. Elk ivory jewelry is especially popular, he said.

Kathy Baker of Fun Fashions Boutique in Stanfield said she is doing Black Friday and Small Business Saturday sales. She said in the past she has seen a definite uptick in business the weekend after Thanksgiving. But she also knows that a lot of local shoppers head straight to the bigger cities that weekend instead.

"People think they are going to find better deals in the Tri-Cities," she said.

Sometimes they will, she acknowledged, but they won't always find the same personal touch of customer service, or unique items. People come to Fun Fashions Boutique for the line of Christian T-shirts Baker carries, for example, that wouldn't be found at the mall.

Debbie Pedro, director of the Greater Hermiston Area Chamber of Commerce, said for Small Business Saturday people should be able to find out about plenty of great deals by checking out the Facebook pages of local businesses, and radio and newspaper advertisements.

"It's really exciting to see each one of our businesses really participate," she said.

Pedro put in a plug for shopping local year-round, but particularly during the holiday season. It's an opportunity for people to support their friends and neighbors, she said, and make sure that money continues to circulate throughout the community.

"There is an opportunity to buy just about anything you need right here in Hermiston," she said.

Hermiston will have even more shopping options once the long-awaited Ranch & Home opens on South Highway 395. A manager at the Hermiston store confirmed on Monday the business is planning to open in mid-December, and job listings are prominently displayed on its website.

# COUNCIL: I & E Construction incentives to include property tax reduction

Continued from 1A

the lease starting.

• Makad Corp. must provide a bond assuring completion of the construction and payment of material and labor costs.

After meeting behind closed doors at the meeting, the council eliminated an incentives package that included civil and environmental engineering work, water and sewer connection fee waivers, and up to a 50 percent permit fee reduction.

While the council didn't discuss why it had significantly altered or eliminated key provisions of the lease, Makad Corp.'s development history in Eastern Oregon includes a power plant project that got wrapped up in a lawsuit and other projects that never got off the ground.

The council previously agreed to a 30-year land lease to Makad Corp. for a data center, but that project hasn't started construction either.

There has been public opposition to both the airport hotel and the Westgate housing project, but the apartment complex had a lot easier time passing the council's muster.

The council paved the way for I & E Construction of Clackamas to acquire the 9.25-acre property from the city to build more than 200 apartment units.

The city valued the property at $231,250, but I & E won't have to pay the city any cash as long as it completes the project. As an additional incentive, I & E will also get a 50 percent discount on its system development charges.

But the unique incentive to the deal is a provision that could reduce I & E's property tax expenses through 2023.

The payment formula is based on the amount of vacant units divided by the number of completed units, but payments are only activated if the occupancy rate is below 95 percent. The incentive only applies to property taxes owed to the city.

Doing some quick math, Councilor Paul Chalmers, the Umatilla County director of assessment and taxation, calculated that I & E would be assessed approximately $380,000 in property taxes once the project was complete. The city would lay claim to a little less than one-third of that amount.

The deal earned a rebuke from Pendleton resident Larry Platek, who argued that I & E should pay for "the dirt" and all of its property taxes, especially when others haven't gotten similar incentives.

"You're not giving me money back on my taxes," he said. "But you're willing to give (I & E owner Karl Ivanov) money back on his taxes because he can't rent his apartments."

But the council would go on to unanimously approve the land deal, tipping their hand when multiple councilors defended it against Platek's criticisms, citing the boost it would give to the city's tight housing market.

Pendleton Mayor John Turner said the development could help existing residents and incoming residents find a decent place to live, in turn increasing enrollment in the Pendleton School District and participation in commerce and "the life of the city."

"There's a lot more to this than what he's paying us or not paying the city for 'the dirt,'" he said.

I & E intends to build the apartment complex in multiple phases over three years.

The complex is projected to include 72 two-bedroom, two-bathroom units, 36 studio units, 36 one-bedroom, one-bathroom units, 36 three-bedroom, three-bathroom units, and 24 two-bedroom, one-bathroom units. Floor plans range from 549 square feet to 1,204 square feet.

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