

# Buellton center gets next-door neighbors

## Strip mall will open by Yule, backers say

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More stores will be built this year next to the bustling Buellton Town Center anchored by Albertsons and Longs Drugs.

Shoppers are seeing the first signs of Buellton Town Plaza's development this week as bulldozers are demolishing five old houses along the center's west side to make way for commerce. By Christmas or earlier, two new buildings housing a variety of shops should be erected.

The center next door, which opened in 1997, has changed shopping patterns in the Santa Ynez Valley.

"Buellton is ground zero in terms of North County development, and this site couldn't be a better location," said Greg Hohman, president of RPL Management Co., a commercial management company in Santa Barbara County.

His company is developing and leasing the plaza project, which totals 16,000 square feet and 56 parking spaces.

Though the architecture and colors will be the same, the project is owned and is being developed separately from the adjacent 80,000-square-foot shopping center.

Shoppers, however, won't need to bother with that difference.

Hohman said half of the plaza space has been leased and he's talking with other interested businesses.

Signed tenants so far include:

- A cellular phone and car audio company
- A rotisserie chicken restaurant
- A national sandwich franchise
- A flower shop
- A high-end beauty salon and gift shop
- A wholesale bakery and baked goods restaurant
- RPL Management, which is developing the project

Construction will begin in spring.

The \$2 million-plus project will be built by two local contractors, Young Construction and McCoy Construction.

The principal architect is William Wolf of Pacific Architects in Santa Barbara.