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Saks Off Fifth to open at Merrimack outlet mall

Good news for Granite State fashionistas: The luxury-clothing retailer Saks Fifth Avenue has announced that it will open an off-price department store in the new Merrimack Premium Outlets next year.

The outlet store will be New Hampshire's first Saks Fifth Avenue Off 5TH, which sells designer clothing and accessories at a discount.

Saks said it is opening in Merrimack and four other U.S. markets that it believes will have "the greatest demand for our distinct merchandise offerings."

The outlet store - which will be between 25,000 and 28,000 square feet - will feature an open-air, loft-like environment and no hard aisles, with all fixtures on casters to keep the layout of the store changeable, the company said.

Among the store's offerings will be designer sportswear, handbags, shoes, fine jewelry and a beauty department, the company said.

The outlets are currently slated to open in June 2012, according to an Aug. 1 project update posted on the Merrimack town website. Current project goals include having all the buildings weather-tight by Christmas of this year in anticipation of the arrival of tenant interior build-out contractors in January 2012.

The estimated \$100 million Merrimack outlet project won approval from the town planning board in September 2008, and ground was broken on the 170-acre shopping center just off exit 10 on the F.E. Everett Turnpike in June 2010.

When complete, the outlet center will have 12 buildings and approximately 560,000 square feet of retail space. -- KATHLEEN CALLAHAN/NEW HAMPSHIRE BUSINESS REVIEW<

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