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National Perspective

Interview by Beth Silverman

To get an idea of national retail trends, *Shopping Center Business* recently interviewed Claudia Sagan, principal of San Francisco-based retail consultancy Claudia Sagan, Inc.

SCB: What are you seeing as far as retailers go in 2010?

Sagan: We're starting to see more retailers broadening their real estate searches and increasing their annual new store programs for 2010 compared to 2009. Examples of retailers looking to expand in 2010 include: J.Crew, Betsey Johnson, H&M, Forever 21, Urban Outfitters, True Religion, Anthropologie, Vera Bradley, Love Culture. Most of these retailers did not over-expand previously, allowing them to take advantage of current conditions and grow. Something to note: Forever 21 has taken over locations previously occupied by Mervyns giving them store that are 80,000-plus square feet; considerably larger than the "normal" size for this retailer.

SCB: Any surprises among retailers?

Sagan: Companies that were focused on store closings last year are now cautiously looking for new locations. Ann Taylor Loft comes to mind.

SCB: You deal with projects and clients across the country. What types of centers are retailers looking for?

Sagan: Overall, the mood in retail real estate is still very conservative. Many specialty retailers continue to look for and expand in those locations that have historically been the best performers in their select regions with strong demographics resulting in a minimum amount of risk for retailers: Bellevue Square in Seattle, Washington; NorthPark Center in Dallas; Roosevelt Field in Long Island. Very few are considering new developments.