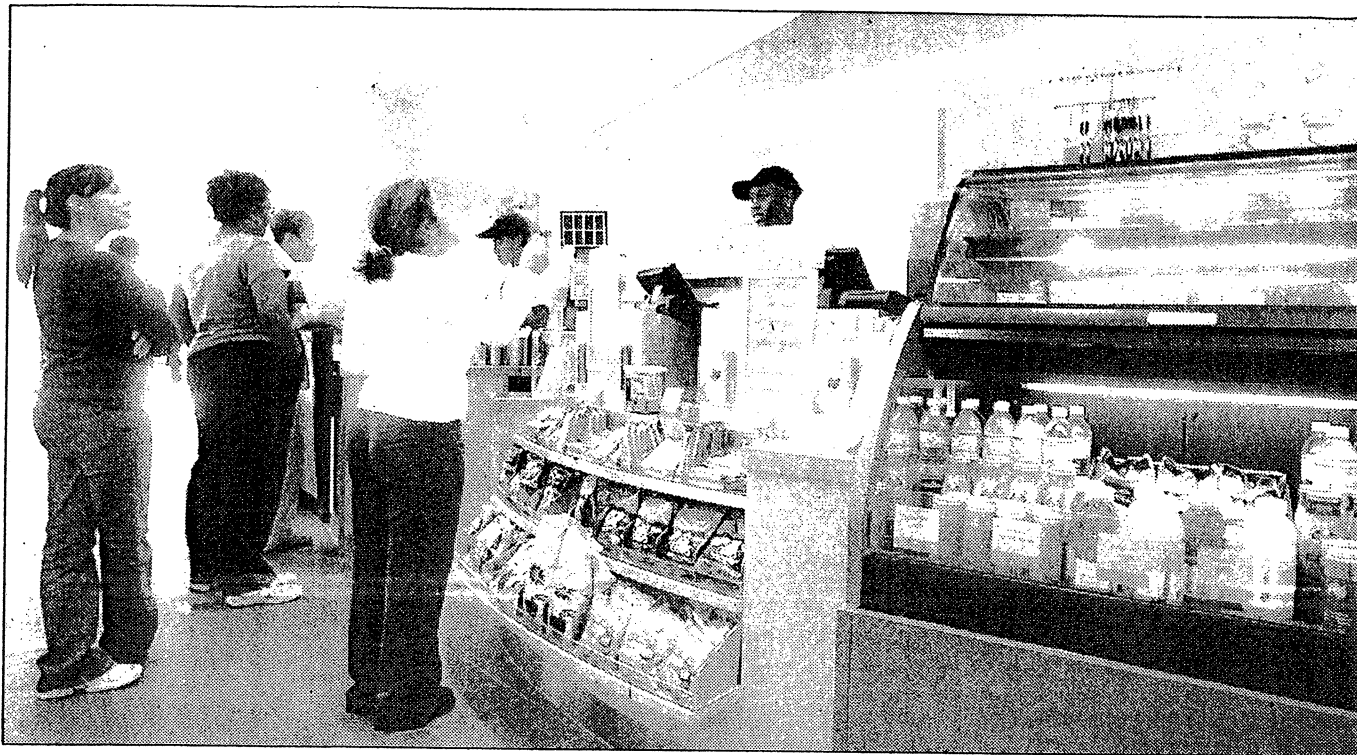


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Adding vitality



Staff photo by LEO JARZOMB

JAMBA JUICE is one of three businesses already open at The Shops at The Alhambra. The center will hold a grand opening Wednesday. A Kohl's Department Store is planned at a neighboring lot within a few months.

The Shops at The Alhambra expected to generate sales from business and university park

By Andrew Blazier
STAFF WRITER

ALHAMBRA — With an instant market of 3,500 shoppers right across the street, **The Shops at The Alhambra** could hardly be in a better location.

The first three stores already have opened at the \$10 million, 2.2-acre retail center owned by Los Angeles-based real estate developer **The Ratkovich Co.** Judging by early returns, the result has been positive.

"It's just growing and growing," said Joaquin Clay, who manages the center's **Starbucks** outlet.

The first store to open at the 17,750-square-foot center on Sept. 30, **Starbucks**, employs 20 part-time workers. According to Clay, it has been a big hit with employees and students at **The**

Alhambra, **Ratkovich's** 13-building business and university park.

The Shops at The Alhambra will host a grand opening celebration from 10:30 a.m. to noon Wednesday. Current tenants include **Starbucks**, **Jamba Juice** and **Nextel Communications**. A **Subway** sandwich outlet is expected to open in time for the grand opening, to be followed in January by the **Pickup Stix** and **Red Brick Pizza** franchise restaurant chains. Three spaces remained unleased.

Because there are no other retail centers within several blocks of the business park, The Shops is expected to become an instant oasis for The Alhambra's 2,000 students and 1,500 professionals and university employees. The 1-million-square-foot office campus includes the USC Keck School of Medicine, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the county Department of Health

Services and **Tenet Healthcare Corp.**

Within a few months, a 98,000-square-foot **Kohl's Department Store** will be completed on the lot immediately south of The Shops, adding to shoppers' options.

"We want to make everything right within stepping distance to the campus," said Michelle Aldridge of **The Ratkovich Co.**

Phil Smith, general manager of **Jamba Juice**, said the center is a much-needed addition to the western end of the city. The store, which opened next to **Starbucks** on Oct. 27, is Jamba's first site in Alhambra.

"It brings a lot more life and vitality to this area," Smith said of the shopping center.

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