

# Oak Cliff People

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## **Marshalls Adds to Revitalization of Illinois Avenue**

Store joins array of businesses changing the face of Westmoreland intersection

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Sierra Vista Plaza is buzzing with even more business as Marshalls opens its latest store at 3434 Illinois Ave.

Oak Cliff residents braved the long lines and heavy crowds gathered early Nov. 13 to scope out the merchandise and take advantage of the store's opening day deals. Neighboring clinic Dental Dreams capitalized on the crowds by setting up a balloon-laden table full of flyers, stickers, and toothbrushes on the sidewalk.

One of the nation's leading off-price retailers, Marshalls is expected to attract an influx of shoppers to the 3-year-old, 160,000-square-foot shopping center, which added an Applebee's restaurant a year ago.

"When we first started working on this property three years ago, it was just 4,000 square feet of old office and warehouse buildings," said Derek Ferem, of Vista Property Company.

Ferem said things started to change after Carnival Supermarkets agreed to put in a grocery store, which is now leased to Fiesta Mart.

"Stores want to move into a shopping center that has the right environment," Ferem said. "The growing Hispanic community in this area could be home to successful businesses in the right atmosphere. This shopping center brings in a great amount of traffic and has become a central point in the community.

"These businesses saw that the fastest growing demographic is Hispanic and they needed to move into the area and thrive."

The Marshalls store will add about 75 full- and part-time jobs to the area, further revitalizing the economic climate along Illinois Avenue, said Marshalls representative Thea Houghton. Sierra Vista Plaza already includes other low-cost clothiers such as Payless Shoe Sources and Melrose Family Fashions.

"When Marshalls is considering a new location, one of the first things we look for are areas where shoppers are fashion-conscious, yet value-conscious," Houghton said.

The store was a big hit with consumers who showed up on its first day.

"I just heard about the opening on the radio and wanted to stop by and check out all the nice things," said Dennis Flannigan. "You can get some real good things here. Most of my clothes come from Marshalls."

As part of its community relations effort, Marshalls has created local partnerships with charitable organizations including Domestic Violence Prevention, the United Way Campaign, and the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

"There are some great deals going on here," said Oak Cliff resident Savia Siddiqi. "Everyone was really helpful. I think this is going to be a great thing for Oak Cliff."

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Staff Photo: Chelcey Adami  
Marilyn Thomas shops for a purse at the new Marshalls store, which opened Nov. 13 on Illinois Avenue, just west of Westmoreland Road.