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Goodwill expands in Bonita

New location provides jobs, more affordable shopping

While many businesses are downsizing because of the economy, Goodwill Industries of Southwest Florida just celebrated an expansion. The grand opening of Goodwill's new Springs Plaza store, located at 8951 Bonita Beach Road in Bonita Springs, took place May 22. That same day, Goodwill converted its existing Bonita Springs store into a Clearance Center. Goodwill's expansion in Bonita Springs has created 30 jobs and will provide additional affordable shopping in south Lee County.

The new Springs Plaza Retail and Donation Center features approximately 14,000 square feet of retail sales area, making it nearly three times larger than the previous Bonita store.

"The opportunity to expand in the Bonita area came to us earlier this year," says Jennifer Swift, Goodwill's vice president of retail operations. "We made the decision to move based on community needs. The Bonita community has been very supportive of our store and generous with their donations. We wanted to thank them with a bigger and better store."

At the nearby Clearance Center, every item in the store will be sold for 50 percent less than the marked price, a welcome change for many shoppers who are struggling through a tight economy.

"It's a new concept for our Goodwill," Swift says. "We wanted an opportunity to offer even more value to our customers. This economy has prompted an

increased need for stores like Goodwill, as we offer low prices on quality merchandise."

Goodwill also sees the current economic conditions as a reason to expand its reach, because Goodwill stores support job training and placement services.

"The unemployment rate here in Southwest Florida shows that the need for Goodwill's Career Development and Job-Link services is continually growing," says Bob Haenggi, vice president of Goodwill's Career Development Services. "Our help is needed now more than ever to assist individuals in stabilizing their lives."

In addition to employment services, revenue earned at Goodwill stores also is used to support affordable housing for people with disabilities and low-income seniors, a vehicle assistance program, mentoring for high school students, and a charter school for students with developmental disabilities.

Goodwill Industries of Southwest Florida builds lives, families, and communities — one job at a time by helping people with disabilities and other barriers to employment discover and develop their full potential through work and career development services. The organization's five-county service area consists of Collier, Lee, Charlotte, Hendry, and Glades counties.

For more information, call 995-2106, ext. 211. ■

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