

Ikea will invest \$36M in new store

Town Center location set to open in fall 2017

By Karen Brune Mathis
Managing Editor

Ikea will invest almost \$36 million into its Jacksonville location, which the globally popular Sweden-based furniture retailer expects will open in fall 2017.

The Town Center area store will feature almost 10,000 exclusively designed items, 50 room-settings, three model home interiors, a supervised play area for children and a 325-seat restaurant serving Swedish specialties such as meatballs with lingonberries and salmon plates, as well as American dishes.

Ikea paid \$13 million in May for the 25-acre site at 7801 Gate Parkway at north-west Interstate 295 and Gate Parkway.

It also applied for a building permit for the 294,203-square-foot store in June that shows a construction cost of almost \$22.7 million.

Furnishings, equipment and other costs, not to mention inventory, will boost that investment to more than \$36 million.

Ikea said Thursday it will break ground in November on the store, which it announced two years ago. It said at the time it would start construction this summer and complete it in fall 2017, so the project appears to be closely on track.

Ikea also announced the construction team Thursday.

Lakeland-based Marcobay Construction Inc. will be the construction manager for the site work and store development project.

The CBRE real estate firm provided site selection work; Prosser Inc. is the civil and traffic engineer; Bushra Tsai Inc. is the structural engineer; RPM Engineers Inc. provided mechanical, electrical and plumbing design; Universal Engineering Sciences provided geotechnical services; Environmental Services Inc. and Gemini Engineering handled environmental resources; GreenbergFarrow is the development coordinator; Driver, McAfee, Peek & Hawthorne was the local land-use coun-

IKEA CONTINUED ON PAGE A-4



This mural being created on the parking garage at 25 W. Forsyth St. is the first of 14 that will pop up around Downtown in the next several weeks. They are part of Art (Re)Public, an artistic festival coming Nov. 11-13.

Empty walls, blank canvases

Downtown event will use murals as backbone for November art festival

By David Chapman
Staff Writer



Case Maclaim, the alias for artist Anders von Chrzanowski, and his wife, Samira, began working on the mural Wednesday.

The walls that form Downtown's many buildings come in all sizes, ages and conditions.

Some are newer, like the broad and barren light brown western wall of the Blackstone Building on Bay Street.

Some are older, like the narrower, dirt-flecked southern side of the former Jones Bros. Furniture company that still bears its name on the Hogan Street building.

In three weeks, those two walls along with another dozen, will be more than just sides of buildings. They will be art, sprawling murals of colors and scenes installed by nationally recognized artists. Passers-by in the heart of Downtown might already have seen one take shape.

The effort is part of Art (Re)Public, a three-day mural and art festival set to take place in the urban core Nov. 11-13.

It's being staged by a nonprofit that shares its name with the event, all of which was founded by fine art curator and consultant Jessica Santiago.

The goal, she said, is to bring an international eye toward Jacksonville's burgeoning art environment and attract economic development to the Downtown area.

"Anywhere you put interesting art, interesting people want to be there," said Santiago.

The buildings that will house the murals are privately owned and the project won't use public funding. Sponsors include Preston Haskell, Pilot Pen and Estee Lauder. Santiago declined to say how much the program will cost.



Santiago

MURALS CONTINUED ON PAGE A-4

CSX operated from secret site during hurricane

Large operations center on Southside can withstand Category 4 storm

By Mark Basch
Contributing Writer



Ward

As you might expect, Jacksonville's largest company is also one of the most well-prepared for hurricanes and other disasters.

In fact, CSX Corp. operates a 76,000-square-foot data and operations center at a secret location on the Southside that may be the safest place in town during a hurricane.

It was designed to withstand a Category 4 storm and make sure the Jacksonville-based railroad company can maintain its opera-

tions throughout the Eastern U.S.

"We basically locked about 30 people in during the hurricane," CSX Chairman and CEO Michael Ward said Thursday in an interview following the company's third-quarter earnings report.

He said everything went according to plan during Hurricane Matthew and the company was able to get its operations basically back to normal in Florida by Monday.

"I think we got somewhat lucky in Florida and in Jacksonville," he said.

However, Ward said the storm

impacted about 2,600 miles of CSX railroad tracks in Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas, and operations are still not back in parts of North Carolina.

"There's so much power out, we can't run full normal operations" in North Carolina, he said.

Besides CSX facilities, the company's customers in North Carolina also are experiencing issues getting back into business.

"We'll probably be ready to move before the customers are ready," he said.

Ward said it's too early to say what the financial impact will be

from the storm, but he's happy CSX did not experience any injuries or accidents related to the storm and the aftermath.

The company has had to remove about 5,000 downed trees from its tracks and deploy about 1,000 generators, many to make sure that crossing signals are operating properly.

While storm-related losses could impact fourth-quarter earnings, CSX late on Wednesday reported higher-than-expected third quarter results.

CSX had already projected that

CSX CONTINUED ON PAGE A-4

Murals

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She and her board started making headway on recruiting building owners, artists and sponsors in March.

The pieces won't include advertising elements or solicitation — that's against city code.

Jim Klement, redevelopment coordinator at the Downtown Development Review Board, said rules dictate the type of art that can be placed on buildings and that groups are encouraged to approach the city department about their plans for guidance. However, the city is more reactionary when it comes to enforcement for violations.

And while city and Downtown officials haven't needed to be involved up-front, they've been supportive of the concept, said Santiago.

The building owners who have signed on are enthusiastic about the possibilities.

The George Doro Fixture Co. building at 102 A. Philip Randolph Blvd. in the Sports Complex is one of the murals slated to begin in several weeks.

Paul Grainger, vice president for building owner Iconic Real Estate Investments, said he believes the "very ambitious" project can change the perception of how people see buildings.

"We talk a lot about how important public art is and how that can kind of change the image," he said.

The southern wall of the building will become the blank canvas, with Grainger saying the work largely will be left up to the artist and nonprofit.

Grainger said the mural will help the building's visibility. He hopes the project can become an annual event.

Downtown Vision Inc. CEO Jake Gordon compares the effort to that of Wynwood Walls, the Miami warehouse district that's been transformed into an artistic haven for street art and has drawn international attention.

"It's an amazing aesthetic," he said of Wynwood.

Gordon appreciates the effort to infuse more arts and culture Downtown.

Santiago also noted the Wynwood project that started in 2009



The mural on the side of the parking garage at 25 W. Forsyth has its preliminary work done. By Thursday afternoon, the scene was of someone carrying a stack of multicolored books.

as an inspiration, but said Downtown's effort will have more of a local vibe with its "Modern City of Dreams" curatorial theme for the artists.

The three-day festival will encompass a fashion show, lecture series and curated dinner in addition to the spotlight on the murals.

Santiago and others with the nonprofit since March have worked to secure the artists, the buildings and sponsors to make the inaugural event a reality.

For the majority people, the most recognizable portion will be the murals that will be created Nov. 1-9.

One, however, already is in progress and had curious onlookers throughout the day Wednesday.

Artist Case Maclaim, who Santiago describes as one of the most respected street artists in the country, began working on the western wall of the parking garage at 25 W. Forsyth St. Both he and his wife, Samira, are using

Mural project coming to vacant Downtown walls

Here's a list of the 14 Downtown walls that will be receiving an art infusion for the inaugural Art(Re)Public event Nov. 1-4.

- 421 N. Laura St.
- 100 E. Adams St.
- Akel's Deli, 315 W. Forsyth St.
- Atticus Bar, 325 W. Forsyth St.
- Blackstone building, 233 E. Bay St.
- George Doro Fixture Co. building, 102 A. Philip Randolph Blvd.
- Jones Bros. Furniture building, 520 N. Hogan St.
- Magnificat Café, 231 N. Laura St.
- Parking garage, 541 Water St.
- Parking garage, 20 W. Adams St.
- Parking garage, 45 W. Bay St.
- Parking garage, 25 W. Forsyth St.
- Regions Bank building, 200 E. Forsyth St.
- Unity Plaza shipping containers at Unity Plaza in Brooklyn

lifts to craft the piece.

On Wednesday morning, the wall to the common person was just a series of markings.

By that afternoon, it had begun to take shape, a person carrying a stack of books with shades of blue and brown in the early stages.

And by Thursday afternoon, the book-holder's clothes had

more definition and atop his pile rested a lime tome.

It's a sign of what's to come in the next several weeks, when walls just like it will be transformed.

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CSX

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earnings would be below last year, because of lower volumes of freight shipped through its system. Its earnings per share of 48 cents were 4 cents lower than the third quarter of 2015, but that was 3 cents higher than the average forecast of analysts, according to Thomson Financial.

Ward said CSX's ongoing efforts to cut costs offset the volume declines somewhat and the expense cuts were higher than analysts were expecting.

"That was the primary driver," he said.

Revenue fell 8 percent in the quarter to \$2.71 billion, with volume declines in almost every merchandise category. The exception was the automotive sector, where shipments rose by 6 percent.

"That is the one area of strength," Ward said.

Economic conditions could get better in the coming months. After declining in the first three quarters this year, the Federal Reserve Board's industrial production index is forecast to be flat in the fourth quarter, Ward said.

"At least they think it's going to be somewhat better, which will help," he said.

Declining coal shipments have been a big drain on CSX's freight volume in recent years, but Ward said there are signals of a turnaround coming in the export coal market, which also will help.

Ward said CSX will continue to seek ways to control costs to offset continued challenges in freight volume, because the company can do something about its expenses.

"While we don't like the volumes, we can't control that," he said.

In a research note Thursday, Stifel, Nicolaus analyst John Larkin said he is maintaining a "hold" rating on the company's stock but CSX is doing what it can in the current business climate.

"We have consistently believed that CSX has been the most realistic of the major railroads when it comes to assessing the future, providing guidance to the Street, and taking concrete actions to offset the impact of the end of the bull commodities market," Larkin said.

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Ikea

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sel; and Ware Malcomb is the project architect.

Ikea said again that more than 500 jobs will be created during the construction phase and about 250 workers will be hired to staff the location. The store will have 950 parking spaces.

Job openings will be posted in the spring at IKEA-USA.com.

A second phase could add more than 40,000 square feet of space.

It will be the fifth Ikea in the state and the first in Northeast Florida. The others are in Orlando, Tampa, Sunrise and Sweetwater, serving Central and South Florida. There are more than 380 Ikea stores in 48 countries, including 42 in the United States.

Ikea was founded in 1943, offering home furnishings for customer assembly at low prices. Assembly service is available for a fee. Its U.S. base is in Conshohocken, Penn.

It sells residential, office, retail and hospitality furnishings as well as lighting, textiles, rugs, decorations, cookware and more. It also sells children's and baby furniture.

Membership in the Ikea Family loyalty program is free.

Ikea's menu shows it is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner at the Restaurant and Bistro and stocks the Swedish Food Market for take-home meals and other food.

A current Food Market special is three bags of Swedish, chicken or veggie meatballs for \$19.99,



An architectural rendering of the Ikea store to be developed at 7801 Gate Parkway.

down from a regular price of \$24-\$27.

At the restaurant, the current special is a chicken breast stuffed with apples and brie cheese along with mashed potatoes and seasonal vegetables at \$5.99 for members and \$7.99 for nonmembers.

You can buy two hot dogs and a soda for \$2.

It also posts recipes in case you want to make Ikea dishes at home, such as veggie balls with tomato and spinach or waffles Benedictine.

This summer, Ikea was in the news for a recall in the U.S. and Canada of almost 35 million chests and dressers after six fatalities of toddlers who were pinned or trapped after chests tipped

over on them. Ikea also received reports of injuries.

According to the Reuters news service, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission said the chests or dressers could topple over if not anchored securely to walls, posing a threat.

None of the furnishings in the fatal incidents had been anchored to a wall. As part of the recall, Reuters said Ikea was offering refunds or a free wall-anchoring kit.

Ikea has sold about 147.4 million chests of drawers globally since 1998, Reuters said.

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