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# Snow no woe as shoppers descend on Northfield

The Stapleton retail center celebrates its main-street segment with celebrities and a laser light show.

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Snow and frigid temperatures didn't derail the opening of Colorado's newest shopping center.

The main-street segment of the Northfield development at Stapleton opened under a blanket of snow Thursday morning, but the storm eased in time for evening events that included a laser light show and celebrities.

Some events, including a concert by American Idol contestant Ace Young and meet-and-greets with former Denver Broncos star Karl Mecklenburg and Olympic skier Caroline Lalive, were moved indoors.

Earlier in the day, organizers watched the sky warily as the overnight storm continued to dump wet, heavy snowflakes.

"We had crews out here this morning, but we had contingencies in place for something like this," Northfield general manager Kem Blue said.

Shoppers and onlookers who attended the evening events at the center near Interstate 70 and Quebec Street were spared the snow. Many took advantage of the free Starbucks coffee being handed out.

"The coffee definitely helps," said Janna Miller of Aurora, who attended the opening with friend Lisa Kuelzto of Commerce City.

The pair said their journey was less about pageantry and more about the grand-opening discounts offered by clothing retailer Lane Bryant. Nonetheless, they were impressed with the outdoor shopping center.

"It's phenomenal," Kuelzto said.

Miller marveled at the changes that have occurred on the site of the former Stapleton International Airport, which is being redeveloped as a mix of housing, shops, offices and parks.

Prior to the laser light show, representatives from Stapleton developer Forest City were awarded a Silver Certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. The award recognizes the environmentally sustainable construction and energy-saving aspects of Northfield.

Roughly 40 retailers and restaurants, including Ann Taylor Loft, Claire's Boutique, Heidi's Brooklyn Deli and La Sandia restaurant, opened at Northfield on Thursday.

They join SuperTarget, Circuit City, Bass Pro Shops and an 18-screen Harkins movie theater already operating. Retailers are still being added, and the completed project is expected to generate \$10 million a year in sales, property and business-license taxes.

Staff from Borders Books & Music were on-site even though the store doesn't open until next week and grand-opening events aren't scheduled until Nov 17.



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"I'm pretty surprised. We had a good turnout considering the weather," store general manager David Hauck said. "Come this weekend, it's going to be crazy."

Borders district marketing manager Jeffrey Neuman, also a Stapleton resident, said excitement about the center has been building for some time.

"People have been drooling for this," he said.

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