

HOME NEWS TRIBUNE

A GANNETT NEWSPAPER

MYCENTRALJERSEY.COM

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2008

50 CENTS

Barnes & Noble stated to anchor Gateway project

STAFF REPORT

NEW BRUNSWICK — A three-story Barnes & Noble superstore will anchor the nascent \$130 million Gateway redevelopment project along Somerset Street near Easton Avenue, officials announced yesterday.

The plan for the 46,000-square-foot store's main level will feature a large cafe space doubling as a venue for readings and book signings, university and community lectures, musical performances and other cultural events. The main level will also include a general-interest books section and a gift shop.

Another floor will be dedicated to textbooks, academic reference materials and school supplies. A "Scarlet Knights Shop" will occupy a portion of the store.

A "campus living room" and a children's book corner with space for entertainment and educational programs are also planned.

The store's entrance will be at Somerset and College Avenue, adjacent to the train station and across Somerset from the Queens College Campus, officials said.

The store's proximity to New York and Philadelphia will help attract readings by renowned authors, the university's president, Richard L. McCormick, said in a statement released yesterday by Rutgers, city officials and representatives of the New Brunswick Development Corp., which is spearheading the entire project.

"In addition to the new and

See GATEWAY Page A4

Gateway

From Page A1

enhanced services and programs Barnes & Noble will bring to the university bookstores, the superstore will be a destination in itself," McCormick said.

Both McCormick and Mayor James M. Cahill said the book store will serve as a bridge between the Rutgers community and the city.

While it will by definition cater to a large university population, The Gateway will also include so-called work-force housing, affordable to families whose breadwinners work as teachers, police officers, firefighters and office workers.

Within a few years, the neighborhood near the train station is expected to take on a very different look and atmosphere. An additional 2,000 people would be working and living in the area.

The Gateway, which is to extend from the southeastern cor-

ner of Easton and Somerset south to Wall Street and east toward St. Peter the Apostle R.C. Church, will include a roughly 200-unit condominium tower and an eight-story parking garage.

About 20,000 square feet of other retail shops, as well as public space within a transit village component, are also in the Gateway's designs.

"Having a major retailer like Barnes & Noble anchor The Gateway validates the success of the city's revitalization efforts," said Christopher J. Paladino, the Devco president. "It also proves that strong public-private partnerships — like that of Rutgers, the city and Devco — can bring a better quality of life to our larger community."

One of the Gateway project's thorniest obstacles, ironically, involved Jersey Books, the Somerset Street retail operation. That store's owner, Ed Mueller, who owns three properties along the Somerset strip on which the project would be built and has been in business

there since the early 1970s, long battled the city's redevelopment plans for the area.

An agreement among Mueller, Rutgers and Devco will allow Mueller to move his book business to a former university maintenance facility on Easton Avenue nearby. When it is complete, Mueller's business will move to an 18,000-square-foot two-floor store there.

Barnes & Noble operates more than 20 superstores nationwide. Barnes & Noble College Booksellers was selected by the university following a request for proposal process, which included submissions from several national firms, Rutgers officials said.

University officials said they are working to ensure a seamless transition as Barnes & Noble assumes management of all Rutgers University bookstores in New Brunswick on November 3.

Devco has pushed back the start of construction from this fall to early 2009. The project now has an anticipated completion date of fall 2011.