

Thavhani Mall geared to support community business

The Thavhani Mall in Thohoyandou is ready for its big opening on 24 August 2017, when local businesses, as well as national companies, will benefit from the 50,000 sqm regional shopping centre's economic opportunities.



From the beginning, it has been a local initiative. Seven years ago, local businessman Khosi Ramovha of Thavhani Property Investments had the vision for a regional mall in Thohoyandou. To achieve this goal, this local owner collaborated with South African shopping centre developers and investors, Flanagan & Gerard Property Development and Investment, which secured the co-investment of JSE-listed retail REIT Vukile Property Fund.

Ramovha explains, "Thavhani Mall's founding vision was inspired by the positive impacts a large mall can have on its community. This foundation has ensured the golden thread of community runs throughout all areas of the initiative. We have gone to great lengths to invite and enable local participation in the mall."

The mall's representation of local retail brands with strong roots in the region includes VBS Mutual Bank, Zoe Exclusive, PIB Holdings, Vhutambo Edu-Toys, Next-fashion, Spectacle Hut and Zwawe Restaurant, with more to come.

In addition, local franchisees operating from Thavhani Mall include MultiChoice, PostNet, Link Pharmacy, Spar Pharmacy, News Café, Spur, Steers, Debonairs, Fishaways, Milky Lane, Romans Pizza and Sausage Saloon joining its leasing mix.

The mall owners have appointed three local companies as service providers for its major operational areas: the security services of Gwala Security, cleaning and hygiene provider Musukume Investment Holdings and landscapers Gauflora.

Local opportunities

Showing continuing community commitment, the mall has nurtured key local relationships, including its relationship with the Thulamela Business Forum (TBF). “As part of our local stakeholder outreach, we pass on numerous opportunities at the mall to the TBF, which then distributes the opportunities to its stakeholders,” explains Paul Gerard from Flanagan & Gerard Property Development and Investment. TBF also provides Thavhani Mall with insight into the needs of local business, their concerns and suggestions.

Thavhani Mall has already created jobs throughout its construction process. To secure local employment, Thavhani Property Investments issued a call for CVs on radio and social media. Prospective employees were asked to submit CVs to the Thavhani Mall website, which generated 97,000 job applications. Each job applicant’s name, ID, contact details and residential address are included on a database of CVs. The 137 retailers coming to Thavhani Mall have access to this database.

“There is virtually infinite demand for a finite number of job opportunities. Looking at these numbers, every job that is created is needed and makes a difference. The mall is having a positive impact on the jobs it has created. We have also made it very clear to the mall’s retailers that they need to ‘employ local’,” emphasises Gerard.



Larger plans

This is only the beginning of the opportunities that Thavhani Mall holds for its community because it is the heart of a much bigger development. It is the focal point of the large mixed-use urban precinct mega development, Thavhani City, which is being developed on a 27 ha site in Thohoyandou. As a shared vision between Thavhani Property Investments and the Thulamela Local Municipality, it will add the Thavhani Office Park, a motor-city and private healthcare facilities to the existing facilities, which will include a library, community centre, information centre and the 40 000-seater Thohoyandou Stadium.

“Thavhani Mall will be a significant boost to the local economy and its future. It will also offer the community the biggest and best selection of shopping and leisure options in a mall they can be proud of,” concludes Gerard.

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