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Covington Rouses that closed last month to be redeveloped as two family entertainment venues

Trampoline park and swim school will open next November

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Urban Air Adventure Park will open in Covington next year in former Rouses Market, along with the Goldfish Swim School. The location is the second for Urban Air franchise in Louisiana.
Photo provided

A Rouses Market in Covington that closed last month will reopen next year as a new family entertainment venue.

Urban Air Adventure Park and Goldfish Swim School are expected to draw from a 60 mile radius to the location on U.S. 190 just north of Interstate 12, according to Mike Saucier of Gulf State Real Estate and Construction Services.

It will be the first Louisiana location for Goldfish Swim School, which teaches swimming to young children, and the second for Urban Air, which has a location in Denham Springs, Saucier said.

Saucier's company bought the 58,000-square-foot building, located at 50 Park Place next to Home Depot, in what he described as a multi-million dollar acquisition. Rouses left the building at the end of October and is in the process of removing its equipment, he said.

Construction, which is also being handled by Gulf States, will begin at the first of the year.

Rachelle Nurse, who owns the two franchises with her husband, Joe Goodly, said plans call for opening the Goldfish Swim School in the summer and the Urban Air Adventure Park next November.

Years in the making

Saucier, who is a partner in the venture, said the plans have been in the works for four or five years. Rouses approached his company, which has

built several stores for the Louisiana grocery chain, to say it had some stores in its portfolio that it wanted to exit eventually.

The company decided that the Park Place location, which it had acquired in a purchase of a number of stores, was too close to its other locations, Saucier said. Rouses operates another store nearby, at 1200 N. U.S. 190.

Other retailers were interested in the location, Saucier said. But his company passed on some potential deals that he described as "kind of blasé."

"We patiently waited, and Rouses worked with us," he said.

Chris Masingill, CEO of St. Tammany's economic development agency, praised the grocery chain for offering employees at the closed store jobs at its other locations.

January construction start

Construction on what Saucier described as a multi-million-dollar redevelopment will begin after the first of the year. The building will be broken into two spaces: 48,000 square feet for Urban Air and 10,000 square feet for the swim school, where a 3- to 4-foot-deep indoor pool will be built.

Urban Air is particular about where it locates, Saucier said, and looks for sites that can provide a regional draw. The park includes trampolines, a

zip line, climbing walls and virtual reality, among other features, and the building had to be tall enough to accommodate that equipment.

Nurse and Goodly own two other Urban Air franchises, one in Beaumont, Texas, and the other in western New York state. But for years they had been working with a development group to get to Louisiana— where Goodly grew up and went to college — and will move here, Nurse said.

Considerations for a location include how many children are in the market, she said, and St. Tammany has a growing population of young families. They also viewed the swim school, which teaches swimming and water safety for infants to 12-year-olds, as a good fit.

Saucier sees the projects as enhancing St. Tammany's ability to draw corporate relocations and other business. Urban Air will draw teenagers and corporate events as well as families with younger children.

"This checks the entertainment box," Saucier said. "It fills a gap and brings us up to the level of other cities."