

NEWS**STAPLES THINKS THERE'S ROOM FOR 3RD OFFICE SUPERSTORE CHAIN**

By Todd Pack of The Sentinel Staff
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Office Depot and OfficeMax won't have a lock on Central Florida's office-superstore market for long.

Staples Inc. opened its second area store Saturday and plans to open nine more by mid-July. The company, which already has a store in Altamonte Springs, opened the second outlet in Ocoee.

Staples' expansion will put it on par locally with both its rivals. Office Depot has 11 stores in the area; OfficeMax has 12.

Staples, based in Framingham, Mass., thinks the Orlando area can support all the office-supply superstores because of the region's small-business boom.

FEEDBACK



The number of businesses with fewer than 50 employees rose 21.7 percent in 1999 to 63,400, according to the Economic Development Commission of Mid-Florida.

Staples' stores will average 24,000 square feet - about the size of a typical Office Depot or OfficeMax - and offer services ranging from on-site copying to payroll processing. It has 1,100 stores nationwide.

OfficeMax has 830 stores; Office Depot has 700.

Staples' stock fell 94 cents a share Friday, closing at \$22.94 on the Nasdaq Stock Market.

Office Depot's stock rose 25 cents a share to \$12.06 on the New York Stock Exchange.

OfficeMax's stock fell 19 cents to \$6.06 on the New York Stock Exchange.

Briefly . . .

BP Amoco PLC recently opened its first Split Second convenience store in the Orlando area, on Lake Underhill Road at Alafaya Trail. ...

BMR Capital Inc. has signed a five-year lease on 10,800 square feet of retail space for a carpet store in Fern Park Plaza in Fern Park. Kevin Hipes of Kimco Realty Corp. made the deal. ...

Lakeland-based Publix Super Markets Inc. is the first tenant announced for a planned 134,000-square-foot shopping center at Cypress Parkway and Doverplum Avenue in Poinciana. SEC Commercial Realty Group Inc. of Coral Gables is developing the center, which is expected to open by year's end.

FEEDBACK