

# Prospects For Downtown Mall Rise, Fall Again During 1979

**BY ALISON POWER**  
When it came to the Ogdensburg Mall, the year of 1979 was one of often-maddening ups and downs.

As attempts were made to turn the Urban Development Corporation (UDC)-owned facility over to private hands, hopes for that end alternately blossomed and faded with frustrating regularity. Negotiations began and then became stalled; offers were made, and then rejected; one purchase seemed a certainty, and then fell through.

If anything was learned during the past year, it was perhaps that until the proper papers are signed, any "tentative" development in the mall situation should be taken for just what that word means.

But that cautious approach should not become a pessimistic one; for with the city and the UDC now working together and with other developers at least interested in the mall, patience seems to be the only ingredient needed for 1980.

**Driscoll And Teicher**  
Early in 1979, former mayor Joseph P. Denny began hinting that a private developer was interested in purchasing the mall. Denny, along with City Manager Gerald Johnson, primarily conducted the subsequent negotiations between the city, UDC, and the mysterious potential buyer.

It was finally revealed that that developer was Richard Driscoll of Fairport. Strangely enough, as that deal was pursued, the mall, which had never been a particularly hot selling item, suddenly had yet another interested party: Fred Teicher, a former UDC employee and an employee of the Sutton Real Estate firm, leasing agency for the mall.

Teicher claimed that his proposal to UDC was being made on behalf of a group of investors. While Denny, who perhaps in 1979 had reached the peak of his frustration with the situation, cautioned UDC about the Teicher deal, the city maintained that any and all offers should be given serious consideration by UDC.

The city's prodding of UDC stemmed from its less than ideal relationship with the corporation since the mall's inception. The UDC's apparent lack of concern for the future of the facility was the main reason for that shaky relationship, and when the UDC rejected both Driscoll's and Teicher's proposals in April, that shaky relationship completely broke down.

A by-this-time-tough Denny demanded a complete explanation for



**ACCESS TO MALL**—The new double bridge and arterial leading into and out of downtown Ogdensburg was designed to give quicker and easier access to the city's mall project, which again had its ups and downs during 1979.

the rejections, and subsequent meetings in New York City were held between city officials and corporation representatives.

**UDC Called In**  
By late May, the city decided to pull out all the stops and an invitation to visit the mall was made by Denny to new UDC president Richard Kahn.

At this time also, the talks between the city and the corporation began to lead to the overcoming of a major obstacle in the selling of the mall, the determination of a reasonable selling price for the facility.

That price, offered to Driscoll, was some \$675,000. The new administration at UDC apparently did begin to listen to the city, and in early June it was confirmed that Driscoll's purchase proposal had been accepted by UDC.

President Kahn took up Denny's invitation, and visited the mall on the heels of the sale announcement.

At that time, in June, Driscoll estimated that the deal to buy the mall would be finalized within 30 days. Unfortunately, the deal was never to come to fruition.

If a purchase price had been the

stumbling block in attracting proposals, it appears that the future of Chicago Markets in the mall is the stumbling block in seeing those proposals through to completion. For as the weeks and eventually months went by, it became clear that Driscoll was having difficulty in obtaining financial backing as long as the status of the mall's major tenant was less than crystal clear.

That basic problem was exacerbated by several other factors, including the city's agreement to spend as much as \$750,000 on a cover for the mall, if Driscoll successfully leased 90 percent of the space there.

That plan was met by protest from several sectors, and as the summer drew to a close and the city elections grew nearer that issue became one of many political footballs. While it was rumored that the city would pull out of its deal with Driscoll for the cover, those behind that action never made any formal move.

**Deal Falls Through**  
The council did take steps, however, as Driscoll's deal dragged on and on. In October, then-councilman and now Mayor Richard Lockwood introduced a plan which gave the developer 30 days to

complete his deal with UDC. If that deadline was not met, Lockwood's resolution stated, the city would not be obligated to fund the mall cover when the deal finally did go through.

Driscoll's deal did not go through, and instead of only pulling out of its obligation to the developer the city also instructed UDC to once again open up the marketing of the mall to any and all interested parties. It was maintained, however, that as long as Driscoll remains interested in the mall, any proposal from him would also be welcomed.

That was in October, and the situation has basically remained the same. At the end of 1979, it was agreed that UDC would begin an aggressive marketing

campaign, and reports of several tentative proposals began to crop up. It appears at this point that at least two parties, one group from Albany, are interested in the mall.

Another deadline has been set, however, which is about to run out. It was agreed that if no firm offer is made to the UDC by around the end of this month, more emphasis would be placed on better management of the mall as it exists now, under UDC's ownership.

As most city officials at this point feel

that until the lease of Chicago Markets is either renewed or given up this spring, no developer will be able to finalize a deal, it is perhaps a good guess that the management problem will be addressed for the time being.

However, the Albany parties interested in the mall have told the city that, within several weeks, they may be able to decide if their deal is feasible. That statement, as 1979 pointed out, should be met with caution, but not without hope.

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## Audrey's Offers Varied Products

**BROCKVILLE**—Audrey's in Brockville is considered a unique shopping experience.

In June of 1979, Audrey Wiebe, formerly of Capreol, Ont., made the trek south and opened Audrey's Gift Shop.

While in Capreol, a small town in Northern Ontario near Sudbury, Audrey successfully operated her own gift shop called "The Blue Hen." So Audrey's gifts in Brockville was no new venture to this ambitious woman.

Shopping at Audrey's is truly a unique experience. In the back of the store is found the Bed and Bath Shoppe, filled with sheets, pillowcases, comforters, wicker shower curtains and assorted bathroom accessories, in all the latest colors.

In the china department there are Paragon, Royal Albert and Noritake, with a good selection of old and new patterns. One of the most attractive sections is Audrey's gleaming brass and copper display, always a favorite with everyone that comes in the shop.

There is a bar section with all sorts of accessories to complement one's bar, including coasters, bar stools, glasses and bar lamps.

Pictures of every description, some with beautiful pine frames, cover Audrey's walls. Included among the pictures are Norman Rockwells and Paul Peel prints.

There is also a clock wall with Bulova battery operated wall clocks and a special selection of Bulova watches for both men and women.

Always a favorite with tourists are the figurines.

Audrey believes in promoting her business and has had several special promotions and sales with many more planned for the future. Long before Christmas, there was a Christmas lay-away party with the store staying open until 1 a.m. Coffee, cookies and Christmas cake was served to all the customers.

Just prior to Christmas, an all-mens' shopping night was held from 9 p.m. to midnight. Free gift wrapping, which is always offered at Audrey's, proved to be a life-saver for the men.

The Bridal Registry at Audrey's is proving very popular.

## Standard Shade Looking For Better Times

Standard Shade Roller had its setbacks in 1979, including a number of layoffs, but the company is looking optimistically toward 1980.

A spokesman for the plant said that in the past year of inventory adjustment, "some layoffs did occur but 'we're bringing people back' at this time.

A new product line, a vertical cloth blind, will be manufactured at the plant in 1980 and will also be featured in the fall Montgomery Ward catalog.

In the woven wood products, the company added a new set of patterns, and have two new customers.

A major change at the plant in 1979 was the transfer of general manager John Donofrio to Chicago. Ronald Brink now serves as general manager of the plant.

It was also reported that the company is putting a new computer system on line in February, which will increase the capacity for certain company operations.



**SHURTLEFF EMPLOYEES**—Taking time out from their busy work schedule employees of Fred Shurtleff Auto and Home Supplies pose for a family portrait. From left first row are Wayne Randall, Ruth Wood, Anne Shurtleff, Shirley Kelley, Dale Moncrief, and Fred Shurtleff. Second row from left are John Bromley, Charles Cutwa, James Webb, Bill Jenne, Steve Bromley, Doug Hurteau, Lionel Thurston. Third row are Joseph Johnson and Bill Ames.

## Shurtleff's Sales Up

Sales were up about 10 percent in 1979 at Fred Shurtleff's Auto and Home Supplies, according to Fred Shurtleff, owner and operator.

"It wasn't what I would call an exceptional year," Shurtleff said, but it wasn't disappointing either.

Tires and the service repair station that Shurtleff's offers to customers proved to be the strongest area in sales during 1979.

Shurtleff, noted, however, that his store's remaining departments fared well and that sales were related to the weather and season.

"For example, our lawn and garden section did quite well during the summer months, while our winter section such as snowblowers aren't moving well, because of the mild weather we have had so far."

Shurtleff feels optimistic in talking

about 1980 saying, "It not only looks good for the store but for the entire community."

Shurtleff's employs 20 persons, according to its owner and noted that the business was not always located on Patterson Street.

"I started in the tire business in 1937 with B.F. Goodrich at Skelly's Auto. In 1950, I opened my own operation on Isabella Street and moved to the corner of Katherine and Washington Streets." Ogdensburg's urban renewal project forced Shurtleff to move his operation to its present location in 1974.

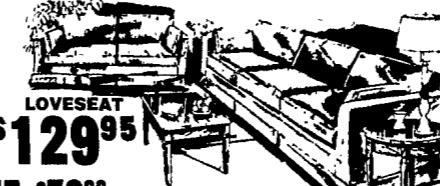
Shurtleff also noted that when he first opened his business, he sold only tires. Since that time, such items as appliances, radios, televisions, lawn and garden supplies and finally furniture were added to the business's inventory.



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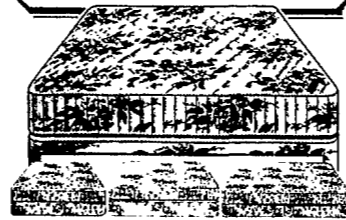


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