

OKC outlet mall beats revenue projections while drawing out-of-state visitors

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Cynthia Nguen, Linh Vong and Amy Bui at the Outlet Shoppes Wednesday. (Maiké Sabolich)

OKLAHOMA CITY – Retailers at Horizon Group Properties' new 348,000-square-foot Outlet Shoppes at Oklahoma City raked in about \$17.9 million in sales during the mall's opening month, beating revenue projections by double digits.

Horizon Group Properties CEO and President Gary Skoien said the regional draw of the shopping center is even bigger than the company originally anticipated. Sales at the outlet mall have been strong since it opened the first week of August, topping projections by as much as 20 percent to 25 percent, he said.

"I think the thing that has made it more successful than we anticipated is that

more people are coming from longer distances to shop there," Skoien said. "They're coming from Wichita, Kansas, Arkansas, and northern Texas."

Horizon has aggressively marketed the outlet mall through billboards and radio spots hundreds of miles away from Oklahoma City to lure shoppers.

The outlet mall has been attracting about 40,000 cars a week since it opened, Skoien said.

It's difficult to say how much positive impact the mall is having on Oklahoma City's sales tax revenue, said Craig Freeman, city finance director.

"A lot of those sales may have shifted away from other shopping centers," Freeman said. "Instead of buying something at Penn Square, people are spending money at the outlet mall instead."

The city estimates that about 50 percent of sales tax revenue it receives from the mall is new revenue that shoppers would otherwise spend outside Oklahoma City, Freeman said.

There has been an upswing in the city's sales tax revenue from apparel and accessories since the mall opened.

Sales tax revenue from apparel and accessories was up 20.6 percent for October from a year ago, and revenues from miscellaneous retail are up about 13 percent from the same period last year.

Oklahoma City anticipates the outlet mall to generate about \$4 million in sales tax revenue for the city in its first year, about \$2 million in new revenue.

Oklahoma City invested \$3.9 million in public improvements to help lure the outlet mall to the city.