

Retailers take a shine to downtown Tulsa

by Kirby Lee Davis

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TULSA – Five retailers who tested downtown Tulsa’s retail waters during the Christmas season have decided to stick around a little longer.

Rachel Simons, the owner of the Candy Castle at Tulsa Promenade Mall, has signed a long-term lease to open a second shop at 511 S. Boston Ave., according to a press release issued Monday by the [Downtown Deco District Business Association](#).

Targeting a spring opening, Simons will pursue not only walk-in consumer traffic, but also company gift orders and wholesale candy sales to restaurants.

The other four retailers come from those 10 that tested the downtown market as part of the Deco District’s “Pop-Up Shops” Christmas promotion. Those 10 finished that effort with \$100,000 in combined sales, said Deco District President Libby Auld, while spurring a 23-percent rise in sales at Elote Café and Catering and a 72-percent jump at Mod’s Coffee and Crepes.

Indie Emporium, Bison and Bear, Hood Design and Earthly Delights have agreed to continue operating their small individual stores on a month-by-month lease under a shared Fifth Street storefront in Kanbar Properties’ Philcade Building. They will hold a grand reopening Wednesday, operating from Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

“We’re trying to keep it through Valentine’s Day to see if the momentum continues and if people continue to support their shops,” said Kanbar Vice President Lisa Brandes.

Since each one occupied only about 250 square feet, Brandes said it made little dent in Philcade’s occupancy. But it validates the Pop-Up Shops experiment that sought to demonstrate to outsiders the potential retail successes available downtown.

Brandes said Kanbar hopes to duplicate that success in other ground-floor sites across its 2 million-square-foot office portfolio.

“We would like to try this in some other locations if we can find the right people to go into some more ground-floor spaces without there having to be a big change in how the space looks or a big build-out,” she said in a telephone interview Monday evening.