

# CHAIN STORE AGE

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## Victory in Victorville

By Katherine Field



A California community attracts jobs in a recessionary climate

Last July, a wall went up in Victorville, Calif.

But rather than illustrate division, the wall offered satisfying evidence of a town determined to attract jobs and residents.

The first wall of the Dr. Pepper Snapple Group's manufacturing and distribution facility went up on July 8, signifying the home stretch toward the completion of a \$120 million, 850,000-sq.-ft. Western distribution hub.

The facility will bring 200 new jobs to the city. "This city's economic development policies and incentives are in place to attract corporate locations, like Dr. Pepper Snapple Group, to bring jobs and economic stability to the region," said Keith Metzler, City of Victorville, director of economic development.

The economic development department has been working overtime. Last year, Victorville was named the second-fastest-growing city in the country.

Victorville is located about 90 miles northeast of Los Angeles. Its population numbers more than 100,000 and, though manufacturing dominates the business community, the retail sector has survived quite well.

A Wal-Mart supercenter will break ground this year, Forever 21 took over a vacant Mervyn's space and opened in February 2009, and a retail center is undergoing a major expansion effort.

The 434,767-sq.-ft. Desert Plazas is adding 360,000 sq. ft. New tenants include In-N-Out Burger and Panda Express. Current retailers include The Home Depot, Starbucks, Quiznos and Nestle Toll House Cafe.

Then there is Old Town Victorville's revitalization project, which will convert a dilapidated area of the city into a vibrant mixed-use district with residential, office and retail uses. The Victorville Redevelopment Agency is in the throes of acquiring the land and demolishing hazardous buildings to complete the major renovation.

The climate in Victorville supports a recent report by Atlanta-based Jones Lang LaSalle. The company's "Mid-Year Retail Outlook 2009" points to a gradual economic recovery beginning 1Q 2010, based on key indicators such as slowing job losses, heightened financial institution stability, housing sales increases, a better-than-projected GDP and improving consumer sentiment.

"Because the speed and intensity of the recovery will largely be determined by consumer psychology and a willingness to spend, I envision true economic stability won't take root until the first quarter of 2010," said Greg Maloney, CEO and president of Jones Lang LaSalle Retail. "Consumer confidence will play the biggest part in our return to normalcy, and retailers that offer 'value' options will be at the forefront of the recovery."

And, as in the case of Victorville, cities that offer “value” options that include jobs, economic stability and needed amenities will likely be at the forefront of the recovery as well.

For more on the City of Victorville, visit [www.victorvillecity.com](http://www.victorvillecity.com). For details on Jones Lang LaSalle’s Mid-Year Retail Outlook 2009, e-mail me at [kfield@chainstoreage.com](mailto:kfield@chainstoreage.com) and I’ll send you more information.