

Northtown Mall

Big-Time Shopping Comes to Blaine

Original Mall Facts—1972

- ◆ \$30 million cost to build—83 acres with 900,000 sq. feet
- ◆ 63,000 sq. feet of landscaping; more than 6,000 parking spaces
- ◆ Sunken rest areas amid tropical plants, a man-made waterfall and semi-circular, walk-down aquarium
- ◆ Architects: David Jacobson of CA; Thorsen & Thorshov of Mpls.



Mall construction in the early stages—as seen from modern-day County Road 10

When built, it was the 3rd largest shopping area in the Twin Cities and the first not owned by Dayton's



Scenes from a Mall (top) - Northtown Mall nearing completion (left) - Sunken aquariums at Woolworth; Mall entrance 1980s & 90s (right) Mall signage ca. 2010; Center court fountain



Blaine Mayor Roger Barnes and developer Robert Muir at the Northtown Mall Grand Opening—October 12, 1972

Thanks and acknowledgement for source material

Northtown Mall Archive Robert Muir Company
Linda Sell, Glimcher Realty Trust

NORTHTOWN TIMELINE

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| 1965 | California real estate developer Robert Muir purchased 137 acres at future mall site, based on roads intersecting in Blaine, Spring Lake Park and Coon Rapids |
| 1971 (Sept 1) | Construction on Northtown Mall began; Robert Muir Company as general contractor with 500 local workers |
| 1972 (Oct 12) | Mall's first phase opened with major department stores Montgomery Ward and Powers, followed a short time later by Woolworth and Young Quinlan. Walgreens opened the following year |
| 1972-1984 | 30-foot replica of the <i>Titanic</i> from the 1953 movie brought to Northtown and put on display near Woolworth's. The ship was donated to the Titanic Historical Society in Fall River, Massachusetts |
| 1975 -1985 | Glassblowing demonstrations were held for over a decade, by Cornelis "Hans" Kokx at Christmas |
| 1978-1993 | Model Railroad shows entertained thousands of visitors |
| 1985 | Robert Muir Company sold the mall to Rein Northtown Associates of New York for \$33 million. The company owned it for just nine months |
| 1985 | Angeles Corporation, a California investment management company, bought the mall for \$38.1 million |
| 1987 | Northtown's 15th Anniversary celebration featured a "Miracle Mile of Quarters", raising \$11,000 for the Children's Miracle Network |
| 1992 | Northtown's 20th Anniversary celebration featured a "Back to the 70's" theme—with a polyester leisure suit contest and prizes for the best plaid, among others |
| 1998 | Glimcher Realty purchased Northtown for \$54 million |
| 2001 | Montgomery Ward closed; store demolished in 2007 |
| 2008 | Herbergers opens in original Powers location |
| 2012 | 40th Anniversary of Northtown Mall |

Blaine Historical Society

www.blainehistory.org

