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CAPTURING VISITORS

New Aberdeen Centre Offers Broadening Opportunities for Business

WHEN THOMAS FUNG chose to tear down a just 12-years-old and profitable mall to build another on site, it's likely more than a few eyebrows were raised. But with prominent universal spiritual leader Professor Lin Yun's endorsement on the new Aberdeen Centre's perfect Feng Shui environment, and its designation as a Public Art Project Pixel by the Public Art Commission of Richmond, suffice it to say, the decision seems to have been a sound one. Designed by top architect Bing Thom, famous for his work on Vancouver's Chan Centre and the Hotel Georgia, the newly designed Aberdeen Centre promises to be not only a pre-eminent shopping destination for Greater Vancouverites, but a stunning architectural feat of multi-coloured glass and organic design.

Twelve years ago, the Aberdeen Centre in Richmond was the first and largest Asian shopping mall in North America. The move to rethink the concept—and rebuild the structure—comes from the

Fairchild Group's Chairman and CEO Thomas Fung. With a vision to take Aberdeen's creative concept to both Asian and Western audiences, Fung enlisted Thom and the world's top shopping mall designer, Toronto design firm Design International. Fung started from scratch on the six-acre site, the result being a new Aberdeen Centre four times larger than the original, including a hotel component. A fusion of Asian and North American brand-name outlets capture customers of East and West, the Aberdeen Centre will be celebrating public holidays such as Christmas, Halloween and Valentine's Day, as well as traditional Asian celebrations, such as Chinese New Year and the mid-Autumn festival, creating more peak shopping periods for its tenants.

The inner workings of the Centre are a technological marvel. Streaming video screens in the mall will project feeds from around the world: the streets of Toronto, San Francisco or Hong Kong can be broadcast live to its visitors. Even the covered parking lot will have web cam surveillance, should a friend or loved one be traveling alone to the mall. The atrium will feature a projected ceiling, the first of its kind in Canada, that will take Centre visitors slowly from daylight into an evening sky, complete with twinkling stars. And a fountain, similar to the one found in Bellagio Hotel in Las Vegas, will

