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NE NEWS

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Rehab work to begin on Ftn. Hills Bashas'

By Beth Duckett

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FOUNTAIN HILLS — A Phoenix developer known for revitalizing Valley shopping centers is about to break ground on a new Bashas' in Fountain Hills.

The store closed Saturday for the Pederson Group's \$20 million overhaul of the supermarket and shopping center at Palisades Boulevard and La Montana Drive.

Fountain Hills Plaza will have a "brand new" look when it re-opens in February or March, a development official said.

The 21-year-old store — one of three supermarkets in town — will be razed and rebuilt from the ground up.

"We made the decision to completely demolish the existing store and start from scratch so there would be no impediment to build a state-of-the-art facility," said President Jim Pederson, who is also behind the grandiose Promenade shopping center in Casa

Grande.

Pederson bought the 124,500-square-foot Bashas' center to make it the town's "premier shopping destination," increasing its bid in the battle for shoppers.

"We've got to bring this back to the dominant neighborhood center that it once was," said Margaret Lloyd, Pederson's vice president of leasing.

Fountain Hills' has two other supermarkets: Fry's Food near Shea Boulevard and Eagle Mountain Parkway, and Safeway at Fountain Hills and Palisades boulevards.

Pederson said the renovation stems from conversations with Bashas' officials, who expressed a need to modernize.

The finished store will resemble the company's newest prototype with a gelato bar, lounge area, self-checkouts and organic goods.

Plans also call for a 6,000-foot expansion of a Paul's Ace Hardware at the

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THE PEDERSON GROUP

An artist's rendering shows the renovation of Fountain Hills Plaza in Fountain Hills. Ground is due to be broken soon on the project.

Bashas' center getting new look

REHAB

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center, which will stay open during construction. A Bedmart store will relocate in town later this month.

As a finishing touch, officials plan to fill up several vacant buildings at the center.

"We would like to have the center full when they open," Lloyd said.

Bashas' spokeswoman Kristy Nied said the plans have been in the works for years.

"Because we wanted to expand our offerings at this store, we had to wait until the space was available," Nied said.