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*Retailers have high hopes.*



## Stores count on outdoors enthusiasts

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STAFF WRITER

Retailers focused on outdoor lovers are targeting Philadelphia and the region.

Eastern Mountain Sports, L.L. Bean and Patagonia are all seeking to expand their marketplace here, according to the retailers and real estate officials. But don't expect to see them on Rittenhouse Row.

"Outdoor enthusiasts don't need to shop on Walnut Street," said Larry Steinberg, a leasing agent at Center City-based Michael Salove Co., which is representing Patagonia in this market.

The retail push comes at a time when Philadelphia is spending more money to promote its appeal to outdoor enthusiasts, including runners, hikers, rock climbers, rowers and bicyclists.

Eastern Mountain Sports of Peterborough, N.H., is seeking a Center City location and is considering a planned condominium development on the 1500 block of Vine Street, according to developer David Grasso of Grasso Holdings in Center City.

EMS plans to expand in Philadelphia, but the retailer has not yet made any new sites public, according to spokeswoman



L.L. Bean's newest store, the first to open in Pennsylvania, is at The Promenade Shops at Saucon Valley in Center Valley, Lehigh County.

Heather Hennessy. At present, EMS has stores in Exton, Haverford, North Wales, University City and Marlton, N.J. In October, it opened a 17,000-square-foot store in Newark, Del., and has plans for at least seven new stores through next year.

L.L. Bean, which has a store in Marlton, N.J., last month opened a store at the Promenade Shops at Saucon Valley, in Center Valley, Lehigh County. The store is open 24 hours a day and features apparel, footwear and gear for camping, hiking, backpacking, kayaking, cycling, fishing and cross-country skiing.

Other outdoor retailers, including Cabe-

la's and Bass Pro Shop, have opened in eastern Pennsylvania in the past two years, in Hamburg and Harrisburg, respectively. Like L.L. Bean, they want to make the stores destinations worthy of a long drive.

The region is spending big dollars to become known among outdoors types. Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corp. launched a \$1 million "Boundless Philadelphia" marketing campaign this year. Efforts have been made to build a following for everything from the Philadelphia Marathon to Philadelphia Distance Run to the Schuylkill Banks Regatta.

In recent years, retailers like L.L. Bean,

EMS and REI (Recreational Equipment Inc. of Kent, Wash.) have set up shop or expanded their base here. EMS plans to expand three existing stores in the area and possibly open new ones. It is opening a 17,000-square-foot store in Newark, Del.

In the case of Patagonia, the Ventura, Calif.-based company hopes to open a Philadelphia store within two years and is considering a 12,000-square-foot space at The Hoopskirt Lofts, at 313 Arch St., according to developer Leo Addimando of Old City-based 806 Capital.

"[Patagonia] adds cachet to a neighborhood, cachet to a building," Addimando said.

"They are looking," said leasing agent Steinberg. "What has attracted them is they want something of architectural significance. [The Arch Street property] has plank floors and high ceilings, so it's not just of interest to Patagonia, but all retailers of that ilk that are not in the mainstream. They want to keep an edge."

Patagonia sells apparel for rock climbing, trail running, surfing, backcountry skiing and so on. Whether those activities are common here is beside the point. The company thinks that people who live here and take part will outfit themselves here.

Elsewhere, Patagonia has urban stores in Boston, Atlanta, New York, Washington and Chicago. With a Patagonia store, retailers with a similar focus would likely follow, Steinberg said.



Addimando