

Three Treasure Island Stores to Open in Area Thursday

By ROSS M. DICK
Journal Business Editor

Three Treasure Island department stores will open in the Milwaukee area Thursday, putting to test a wide variety of retail merchandising and operating techniques.

To J. C. Penney Co. the stores are "valuable working laboratories" into which it has put some millions of dollars for buildings, fixtures and merchandise. The specific cost of the investment was not available.

The simultaneous opening of three stores in the same community by one organization possibly could be a first in retailing.

The store openings further establish the strong position Penney Co. has in Wisconsin since it purchased General Merchandise Co. here in 1962. Through this acquisition, Penney obtained a merchandising operation which it since has made into a continuously growing catalog sales facility, and the nucleus of what is now the

The three new Milwaukee stores now expand that concept, which is to sell high quality merchandise at savings to customers, said Jack F. Behrendt, director of the Treasure Island division. Behrendt and Maurice Segal, operating manager, both from the division headquarters in New York city, are here to supervise the details to be worked out before the openings.

The new stores, each situated on a site of several acres, are identical in design, interior layout and merchandise stocked. Each store occupies 125,000 square feet of floor space plus an additional 8,000 square feet of space in separate automotive service centers.

Stores Spread Out

They are located at N. 124th st. and W. Capitol dr. in Brookfield; highway 100 and W. Cleveland av. in West Allis and S. 27th st. and W. Loomis rd. in Milwaukee. There is parking for 1,200 cars at the Capitol dr. and Cleveland av. stores and for 900 at Point Loomis.

A 20,000 square foot supermarket is a major segment in each store, along with 39 other departments such as hardware and paint, prescription pharmacy, beauty salon, dry cleaning, optical and the conventional merchandise lines.

Treasure Island division of the company.

General Merchandise, sold by the David Kritzik family interests here to Penney's for a reported 11 million dollars, had started the Treasure Island store chain. One store had been opened in Appleton at the time of the sale and a second was then being completed in Madison.

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Because the stores constitute laboratories for retailing experiment, "we felt we should have a food market," Behrendt said.

"We're not in the food business but the supermarkets will operate under our Treasure Island concepts and be supervised very closely," he said. "No one selling a product or providing a service in these stores will operate any differently than our concepts."

"Excellent Test" Area

Behrendt said Milwaukee was selected for the three store experiment because "it is a market served by fine stores and would be an excellent test for our theories."

"Having operated for two years in Wisconsin (in the Madison and Appleton stores), it presented us opportunity to expand our experiment in a very comparable geographic area. It also made for ease in operating problems. If we had picked some other part of the country, we would have had to cope with the wants and needs of those areas as well as Wisconsin's," he said.

For the time being there are no plans to extend the Treasure Island operations beyond the five stores, President W. M. Batten of the Penney Co. said last month in a talk at a financial analysts' meeting in St. Louis.

"Valuable Information"

He told that meeting: "We have gained significant experience in the two stores now in existence, and the opening in October of the three units in a very competitive metropolitan area—Milwaukee—will provide us with additional valuable mer-

chandising information with which we can compare our present Penney operation."

The Penney Co. also will open four Penney stores about the country this week. The growing company, operator of nearly 1,700 stores across the country, this year probably will exceed two billion dollars in sales for the first time in its 62 year history, Batten said.

James Cash Penney, founder of the chain, no longer is active as an officer, but remains a director.

Behrendt and Segal pointed out various experimental concepts on a walking tour of the Capitol dr. store. "Nearly everything in this store has a conscious reason for being where it is," Segal said. "None of it was done haphazardly. This laboratory concept constantly will be evaluated."

500 to Be Employed

While more than 500 persons will be employed in the three stores, the Treasure Island division is experimenting to find which types of goods customers prefer to serve themselves and for which they want clerical assistance. To facilitate self-service; displays and packaging and counter labels and signs are used to provide customer information.

Experiment such as this can lead to cost controls, changes in fixtures and other steps to effect further price savings to customers, Behrendt said. Each item of merchandise is keyed by number and purchases are automatically recorded on tape at the checkout counters. Stock replenishment thus is based on this information.

A decorative panel at the main entrance identifies for custom-

ers how each department can be reached quickly. Near the supermarket area is a separate entrance leading onto a car lane where food purchases can be loaded from a conveyor.

Feet Measured

In the shoe department is an electronic foot measuring device which is one of the first such installations nationally. A customer, of any age, places a foot in a tray and size and width immediately are read on a meter.

The stores will handle both national and private brands. In the latter a cradle to retirement spread has been created under

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