

BUSINESS

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↓ Dow Jones: 8,418.77 +
-155.88
↓ S&P 500: 909.24
-19.99
↓ Nasdaq: 1,731.24
-7.76

Store closings plague busy route to Bedford Twp.

By LARRY P. VELLEQUETTE
BLADE BUSINESS WRITER

The wait for a table Sunday at the **Scrambler Marie's** in Temperance was in excess of 30 minutes at times as customers stood outside in anticipation of a Mother's Day breakfast.

But yesterday, no one stood outside the Lewis Avenue eatery — or inside, either. After eight years, the former **Cafe Marie's** closed its doors Sunday, the latest business to falter along a two-mile stretch that is the busiest thoroughfare between Toledo and its largest suburb, Bedford Township.

Another former retail draw, **Sears Appliance and Hardware**, which opened more than a de-

cade ago near Lewis and Alexis Road, is scheduled to close by the end of June.

And Value City Department Store and Fazoli's Italian Restaurant closed within the last several months.

An employee of Scrambler Marie's who would not give her name said the staff was told that the Temperance restaurant was closing because of slow sales.

She said the location — the only one of the chain's 14 stores in Michigan — did just half the daily business of its sister restaurants on Secor Road near Executive Parkway and in Columbus.

A spokesman for the restaurants' owner, **Ten Star Enterprises**



THE BLADE/ANDY MORRISON

Sears Appliance and Hardware, open more than 10 years on Lewis Avenue near Alexis Road, is to close by the end of next month.

Inc., of Springfield Township, could not be reached for comment yesterday.

The Sears Hardware store opened in a former grocery store in the late 1990s, filling a void left by the departures of both **Handy Andy** and **Builder's Square**.

The neighborhood hardware and appliance store concept filled a niche until national home improvement chains **Home Depot Inc.** and **Lowe's Home Improve-**

ment Inc. built stores close by Sears.

Kim Freely, a **Sears Holding Corp.** spokesman, said the store is "closing for business reasons," but did not elaborate.

It is one of approximately 110 such stores in the corporation's portfolio and "the only one closing this year that we've announced," she said.

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Closings

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According to the Monroe County Road Commission's traffic counts, Lewis Avenue is the busiest north-south road into the township, with 14,460 daily round trips during the most recent count last fall. That number is about 240 more round trips a day than on Secor Road, the township's second-busiest route into Toledo.

While development is continuing, albeit slowly, along the Secor corridor

— a new Walgreen's Drug Store and a Kroger Fuel Center opened recently and a Taco Bell is planned for the intersection with Sterns Road — that doesn't seem to be the case along Lewis.

"I think a lot of traffic that goes up and down Secor is from people in that general area, while Lewis tends to be more of a corridor for people from the north to get into Toledo," said Dennis Jenkins, the planning and zoning coordinator for Bedford Township.

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