

METRO BUSINESS

BIZ BUZZ



ALEXA WELCH EDLUND/TIMES-DISPATCH

Kyra Oliver Hitzeman, executive director of the Hayes Hitzeman Foundation, and John Carrico, president of Ukrop's Dress Express, hold up baby clothing printed with a message to parents.

From son's tragedy, parents embark on safety mission

Kyra Oliver Hitzeman wants to put "This Side Up" bodysuits for newborns in the hands of as many parents as she can. "We want to get the message across," said Hitzeman, executive director of the Hayes Hitzeman Foundation, which she founded with her husband, Ezra, in

honor of their 4½-month-old son Hayes, who died of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome in 2002.



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She is well on her way with her goal. The "This Side Up" onesies help remind parents and others that babies are at less of a risk for SIDS if placed on their backs for nap or bed time, she said.

She has joined with Ukrop's Dress Express, Ukrop's Super Markets and the governor's Smart Beginnings initiative to distribute the bodysuits to all newborns.

Ukrop's Dress Express, which makes and supplies uniforms and related products to retailers and other companies, designed the infant bodysuits and will make them at one of its contract manufacturing plants overseas. The company also will store the product and ship it to hospitals when needed.

In April, more than 15,000 garments will be included in the Smart Beginnings' new parent kits for every new parent in central Virginia. The outfit also will be available in a Spanish version.

"We never made an item for a baby, but we determined we could make a product that is a lot nicer than the sample she had," said John Carrico, Dress Express'

president. Dress Express is an affiliate of the grocery chain.

The supermarket chain also is involved in trying to help secure funding for the project with some of its vendors. It also will put a coupon in each kit for a first birthday cake for free.

And Ukrop's will give a "This Side Up" onesie to each employee who has a baby.

"This is a great, tangible way to get the word out and reduce the number of children affected by SIDS," said Scott Aronson, the chain's marketing vice president.

All of the awareness makes Hitzeman happy. "I feel very proud for my son ... in that we have saved the lives of babies by doing this. We feel more people will be educated," Hitzeman said.

Posh Wal-Mart

The Wal-Mart Supercenter on Parham Road, scheduled to open Jan. 22, will be one of the chain's seven experimental stores. At 104,000 square feet, it also will be about half of the size of a typical Supercenter.

The store will have a sushi bar (first one for Wal-Mart in the Richmond area) and an expanded wine and electronics department.

In the front of the store, customers will be able to buy coffee, soft drinks and newspapers on the honor system.

And Wal-Mart is thinking about providing carryout service to customers' cars.

"We have things in this store that we don't put in a normal Wal-Mart," said Jeff Kraus, the market manager for Wal-Mart's Richmond-area stores.

New Kroger coming?

Look for Kroger to put a store in the Rutland Commons development along U.S. 301 at Atlee Road in Hanover County in 2008.

Kroger won't confirm it, but real estate sources say the chain is either close to signing a deal or has recently signed one.

The store would be between 73,000 square feet and 103,000 square feet.

The shopping center, being developed by Charlotte, N.C.-based Crosland, would have an additional 27,000 square feet for other stores and restaurants.

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