

BIZfact

208,300

Number of government jobs on LI, out of 1.23 million total. Teachers hold most of the local government jobs.

Source: Long Island Association

ONLINE HOLIDAY SALES UP 15%

U.S. online sales this holiday shopping season are up 15 percent compared with last year, after what may have been the busiest week of the season, research firm comScore said yesterday.

Shoppers spent \$30.9 billion online from Nov. 1 through this past Friday, up from \$26.9 billion at the same point last year, said the Reston, Va., company, which tracks Web use. Online sales surpassed \$1 billion on four days last week. Total sales for the week were \$6.31 billion, up 15 percent compared with last year.

The five days that ended on Friday "will almost certainly be the heaviest week of the online holiday shopping season," said comScore chairman Gian Fulgoni. Online spending will slow as Christmas draws closer, he said.

But "Cyber Monday," the Monday after Thanksgiving, is still the largest online shopping day ever, according to comScore. Sales rose 22 percent from last year to \$1.25 billion. Cyber Monday sales topped \$1 billion for the first time last year.

The holiday shopping season can make up to 40 percent of retailers' annual revenue. The online sales data point to Americans' growing comfort with using their personal computers, tablets and smartphones to shop for the holidays.

Discounting and promotions have also boosted shopping this year. ComScore said yesterday that shoppers have received free shipping on at least half of their purchases in each week of this holiday shopping season. — AP

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POPPING UP at the mall

■ **Funky Monkey** toy store takes up Manhasset digs

■ **Holiday pop-up** testing demand in upscale locale

BY JAIME LEVY PESSIN
Special to Newsday

Stanley Greenman is bringing some funk to Americana Manhasset this holiday season.

He's opened a pop-up version of his Funky Monkey toy store across from the upscale mall's Chanel boutique. He's hoping the temporary digs draw lots of holiday shoppers.

The original Funky Monkey toy store opened in 2004, about four years after Greenman sold his Noodle Kidoodle Inc. national chain of 59 toy stores to Zany Brainy Inc. for \$35 million. The shop, in the Wheatley Plaza shopping center in Greenvale, specializes in what he calls a "well-edited" collection of unique and interesting toys.

After being retired for three or four years, Greenman, 60, says he got back into the toy business because "it got pretty boring. Golf became like work. I needed a new project, a new challenge."

His merchandising strategy is to order small quantities of potentially hot toys to test demand. Now he's using the pop-up store at the mall to test demand for a new location.

"This is more of a regional shopping experience," he says of the Americana, even though it's only three miles away from his Greenvale location. "People come from a much wider area and travel a lot farther."

Pop-up concept growing

Pop-up stores — which have short-term leases, for a few days or a few months — have become increasingly widespread since Target introduced the term with its Isaac Mizrahi collection in 2003, says Christina Norsig, a marketing expert and author of "Pop-Up Retail: How You Can Master This Global Marketing Phenomenon."

She says growth has surged since 2009, especially among Halloween and holiday-season stores, with 15 percent more pop-up shops in 2011 than in



Hailey Impastato, 5, of Howard Beach, browses in the Funky Monkey temporary pop-up at the Americana Manhasset mall last week. A branch of a Greenvale store, it is packed for the holidays.

2010. Helping the trend along, she adds, is a national retail vacancy rate of 13 percent.

A vacancy accounted for the origin of the Funky Monkey pop-up: After a lingerie store's lease expired, the Americana found itself with a few months of down time before a new tenant, Max Mara women's fashions, moves in next spring, says Deirdre Costa Major, president of Castagna Realty Retail Group. Castagna owns both the Americana and Wheatley Plaza.

Major says the Americana reached out to Funky Monkey about trying a pop-up in the vacant shop. Once Greenman agreed, it took him 10 days to open the new store, he says.

The pop-up space is less than a third of that of the Greenvale location, Major says. But Greenman spent in the "four digits" to ensure the pop-up stayed true to the Funky Monkey brand: It's painted in Funky Monkey's signature colors of orange and yellow on the ceiling and green on the walls. He added

a counter with space for gift-wrapping, which he considers a key service. And he's rotating employees between the two stores, to maintain the same level of customer service, although he did add two salespeople to ensure enough coverage.

Holiday splurges

As for merchandise, because the Greenvale store was already well-stocked for the holiday season, Greenman was able to transfer toys to fill the pop-up store. But the pop-up focuses more on big-ticket items — the sorts of things buyers want for the holidays. Two of his hottest items are the \$100 LeapFrog LeapPad Explorer Tablet, a computer built for young children, and the \$59 Fijit Friends, a robot that responds to voice commands by dancing and telling jokes.

The higher price points mean the pop-up can maximize its dollars per square foot, Greenman says.

He says he's not yet sure what he'll do after the pop-up



Owner Stanley Greenman has big-ticket toy items at the mall.

closes in early January. If it's a hit, he may consider opening a permanent store at the Americana, or even opening several holiday pop-ups at other locations next year.

"We wanted to see how it would work," he says. "Right after the first of the year, we'll analyze the situation and be in a better position to tell if the concept is successful."