

# Hobby Lobby craft store coming to northwest Fresno

By Bethany Clough



In a June 2014 file photo, customers walk to a Hobby Lobby store in Oklahoma City.  
SUE OGROCKI — Associated Press

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[Hobby Lobby](#) has confirmed it will open a store in Fresno early next year.



The highly anticipated craft, home decor and art supply store will build a new store in the shopping center at the northwest corner of Blackstone and Sierra avenues, said Hobby Lobby spokesman Vince Parker.



The company plans to tear down two buildings at the shopping center to make room for a 55,000 square-foot store, said Cheryl Aanonson, a marketing specialist with Newmark Grubb Pearson Commercial, which handled the leasing. The building most recently occupied by the Fashion Furniture Outlet Showroom and another building closer to the road that houses several businesses will be torn down.

The Fashion Furniture store is in the process of closing as its lease has expired. Other businesses, including a Fresno Firearms, have already moved or will move out of the other building.

The Bee confirmed in February that Hobby Lobby was searching for a location in Fresno. The retailer is a talker in the

community, with fans of the store raving about it and detractors citing last summer's Supreme Court decision on birth control involving the company.

Customers such as Kirsten Gould, owner of craft studio Craftopia, have been waiting for the store to open in Fresno. She has visited the Visalia store and others around the country.

"I love Hobby Lobby," she said. "It's just like a giant-sized craft store."

In contrast to competitors Michaels and JoAnn Fabric & Craft Stores, Hobby Lobby has a much larger home decor department, Gould said.

It's "almost like a HomeGoods store and a JoAnn's put together," she said. "Probably half of their store is home decor items."

Any news of the store brings up

blackstone

The Hobby Lobby spokesman did not go into details about its plans, but said in an email, "We feel that we can bring a very unique shopping experience to the area. We are looking forward to becoming part of the community."

It is scheduled to open in the first three months of 2016.

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