

# Downturn in J'Bay denied

**JOHN VILJOEN**

SPECULATION that the world economic crisis is slowly but surely seeping into Jeffreys Bay with various businesses closing down, other planned ones not opening at all and large developments being put on hold, has been denied by local business.

At the new Equinox Mall the official launch of the second phase of the development, scheduled for the last weekend in March, has been postponed indefinitely.

According to Peter Reed, project's manager at Pambili that developed the mall, this was done purely for logistical reasons and not because of any economical pressure.

"There was still a lot of work to be done and we would never have been able to finish it before the end of March.

The timing was just not right and that is why we postponed the opening of the second phase," he said.

According to Reed they are now thinking of opening the second phase towards the end of August or beginning of September.

"Sort of like a Spring Opening," he said.

There is still a 1200m<sup>2</sup> section to be built on, a lift to be installed, a passage to be broken through and quite a lot of other construction work to be done, he said.

Reed said the eating places destined to open are all aiming to be up and running before the Easter holidays.

"Maxi's has started installing their equipment and there are three or four other

eating places that will open," he said.

The general opinion among smaller businesses is that February is normally a quieter month after the holiday rush.

Usually business starts picking up towards the end of March or a bit later after salary increases have been announced and buyers have been able to "recuperate" financially.

Neville de la Mare, co-owner of Tony's Appliances in Jeffreys Street that closed its doors after six years in the town, says they just relocated to Port Elizabeth.

"The business was not doing very well and it was not viable to keep it running any longer," he said. It had always been part of the business in Port Elizabeth.

He said, however, it had nothing to do with the world economic crisis.

Paul Versfeld, owner of the Sports Boutique at the old Pick n Pay Centre in Jeffreys Bay, said the business just died down after Pick n Pay, the anchor tenant, moved to the Fountains Mall.

The Sports Boutique was started by Basil Cox and had been running for more than 20 years. He took it over from Basil in the 90s. The world economic crisis was not to blame.

"When Pick n Pay moved, the passing trade just stopped.

When no other anchor tenant could be found, it was just not viable to keep the business open," he said.