

But Thursday stealing some of the spotlight

Black Friday conjures up images of malls and big box stores full of shoppers vying for deep discounts. Things can sometimes get so hectic that fights and arguments take place over who can get one item faster than someone else.

Marriah Silversmith, store manager at Bealls at Rio West Mall, pictures it well. It was Silversmith's first time working Black Friday at Rio West.

"I've seen people wait for hours until the store opens," Silversmith said. "Once inside, they buy clothing and some buy shoes. But there weren't that many people this year."

Gallup resident Pooler Vasey's turkey barely had time to settle before he brought his daughter, Delores, 14, to Rio West Mall on Thanksgiving Day. Bealls opened at 10 am on Thanksgiving Day to give shoppers more time to shop before the annual Black Friday.

Vasey said he and Delores had already taken advantage of shopping deals at WalMart prior to coming to Bealls. WalMart is within walking distance of Rio West Mall.

Vasey said they didn't have any other plans to shop elsewhere besides Rio West Mall and WalMart.

“There were a lot of customers, but down a little from last year,” Silversmith said. “I think it was the economy or people just waiting until later to shop for Christmas.”

A few stores away, JCPenney opened at 3 pm on Thanksgiving Day as opposed to its normal traditionally opening hour of 4 am on Black Friday.

JCPenney’s early opening and sales made it an easy second stop for the Vasey’s.

“Things were not that bad at Penney’s,” Pooler Vasey said. “We did find a lot of what we were looking for. We left happy.”

Cynthia Mort, general manager of JCPenney at Rio West Mall, said shoppers bought a variety of items, from clothing to appliances.

“I don’t think it was just one thing that people wanted,” Mort said. “I think they targeted a variety of things.”

Black Friday is the day following Thanksgiving in the United States. Since 1952, it has been regarded as the beginning of the shopping season and most retailers open early and offer competitive shopping deals.

By Bernie Dotson
Sun Correspondent