

Gallup shoppers snag bargains on Black Friday

Written by By Bernie Dotson For the Sun
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Shoppers less in quantity, spending more, official says

While most people from around greater McKinley County were still in the kitchen preparing Thanksgiving dinner at 2 pm on Nov.23, or perhaps getting up from the table after stuffing themselves silly with turkey, cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie, a brave few were lining up outside stores at Gallup's Rio West Mall hoping to snag deals in Black Friday sales.

Ella Cree and her 14-year-old-daughter, Nicole, were the first in line outside JCPenny at Rio West, arriving at around 1 pm. JCPenny didn't open until 6 am Friday morning, but getting there early is part of the holiday hysteria that the Crees have come to like, they said.

JCPenney opened at 2 pm on Thanksgiving and closed at midnight.

"There seemed to be less shoppers, but they appeared to be spending more," Cindy Mort, general manager at JCPenney, said. "I don't think there were as many people as there were last year."

Generally, Mort said shoppers mostly bought home products and clothing. Ditto at Bealls, also located at Rio West Mall. There, store manager Marriah Silversmith said clothing was the deal of the day.

"I think people bought a lot of clothing and a lot of fragrances, especially the women," Silversmith said. We had [Nike] clothing on sale. We also had some fragrances on sale."

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BLACK FRIDAY DEALS

A single parent, Ella said she was shopping for clothing and home appliances that she and her family needed. The deal the Crees were after: A coffee maker and women's clothing for under \$100 with the use of store coupons.

The next people in line, Diana and Andy Garcia, a newly married couple from Gallup, were also angling for the clothing and home appliance deals. "We definitely need stuff for the home," Diana Garcia said.

Most of the parking lot at Rio West Mall along West Maloney Boulevard was full late Thursday afternoon and through early Friday morning. Not only was JCPenney bustling with shoppers, but Bealls was busy, too.

"I'm shopping for my whole family," Keith Thomas, a tourist from Taos, said. "I try to shop in different cities in New Mexico each year."

The Washington, D.C.-based National Retail Federation released a survey a week before Thanksgiving which showed that 54 percent of consumers planned to spend about the same amount this Christmas as opposed to last, but 24 percent planned to spend more.

According to a Nov. 28 news release, the NRF stated that from Thanksgiving Day through Cyber Monday, more than 174 million Americans shopped in stores and online during the past weekend. The average spending per person was \$335, according to the release.

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