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Developers unafraid of IMAX plans

$295 million development still alive

By Nan Lundeen
STAFF WRITER
nlundeen@greenvillenews.com

GREER — The prospects for a $295 million mixed-use complex off Interstate 85 that legislators have said was intended to include a Bass Pro Shop has taken its lumps, but is still alive.

Among the lumps — Gov. Mark Sanford opposed special tax breaks for magnet retailers such as Bass Pro; a state attorney general's opinion called the law creating the breaks unconstitutional, and the state wouldn't implement it; and now, a satellite cinema, which is part of the Greer development, faces competition from a Great Escape Theater off Interstate 385 in Simpsonville.

The project has been delayed by current market conditions and other constraints, but the developer is still planning a theater at State 14 and I-85 as part of the project, according to Joe Philpot, a Greenville-based attorney and spokesman for the developer.

Meanwhile, Otis Rawl, president of the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, said, "I think that all that's happening around Sanford and depending what Sanford does will lend itself positively to whether Bass Pro Shop decides to locate here. It's awful hard for a company to look at South Carolina and your governor, who's supposed to be your biggest cheerleader, not supporting trying to get a company that would create anywhere from 500 to 1,000 jobs in the community."