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City Mill branches out into new retail venture

The 109-year-old company is opening a home storage and organization store

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The owners of **City Mill Co. Ltd.** are launching a new retail venture that will be the anchor tenant of a shopping center being built in Kapolei.

Simply Organized, a home storage and organizational products store, is the first major expansion in a decade for the 109-year-old company, and comes at a time when other Hawaii businesses are shutting down or scaling back amid fears of an economic downturn.

"We're potentially at a very risky time, when we might be going into more difficult economic times," said Carol Ai May, owner of Simply Organized. "We're taking a risk and we're growing our business."

The 12,000-square-foot retail store will be one of the anchors of the Crossroads at Kapolei shopping center, a 40,000-square-foot retail complex set to open this fall at Kamokila Boulevard and Wakea Street.

Honolulu-based **Crocodile Partners** is partnering with Lettuce Expand LLC, a subsidiary of City Mill, to develop the three-acre center, which also will be anchored by a locally-owned restaurant.

Organizational products have been a popular item at City Mill, and are a growing business, Ai May said.

"We just saw that there was a need for a store like this in the market, especially in Hawaii where everybody is living in a postage stamp-size house," she said. "It's a solution to small living spaces and organizing your space."

The company, which is investing several millions of dollars in the startup venture, plans to initially hire 15 to 20 employees, she said.

The shopping complex is expected to have about 10 to 12 tenants, in addition to the two anchors.