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**HEADLINE:** SMALL BUSINESS / JANE APPELATE: SPACE OFFERS NEW START AFTER RIOTS

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**BODY:**

For businesses damaged or destroyed by the devastating Los Angeles riots, re-suming operations quickly and finding new space close to existing customers are among the greatest challenges.

One way to achieve this is to locate at a swap meet-style shopping complex.

Shoppers World, on south La Brea near Jefferson, is one such complex specifically reaching out to business owners who lost everything in the rampage.

Although there are other complexes in the area that can also house displaced businesses, Shoppers World prides itself on being truly multicultural, with black, Latino, Asian, Middle Eastern and white business owners sharing the 200 spaces.

Through a series of radio announcements on ethnic stations, the indoor complex is offering any displaced business owner a 50% discount on rent for the first two months. It also is waiving the requirements for paying a security deposit and first and last month's rent.

"Our program allows people with burned-out businesses to come in here and set up shop immediately," said Allan Davidov, one of the owners of the 250,000-square-foot complex. "If their stores get rebuilt, they will not be stuck with a lease, but hopefully they will like it here and stay."

Kevin Mayes, manager of African Queen Enterprises, said he is considering a move to Shoppers World because his shop -- which sold African fabrics, jewelry and accessories -- was looted before rioters set fire to the building.

"I was at the library and when I got back to the store, there wasn't a store to go back to," Mayes said.

About 10,000 small businesses were destroyed in the melee, with once bustling strip shopping centers throughout Los Angeles now resembling war-torn areas of Beirut.

"The main issue is where do we go from here?" asked Pat Johnson, who owns a tie-dyed clothing store and a wig shop in the Shoppers World complex. "We have to live in this world together and we have to learn to get along."

Johnson, who began her clothing business after being laid off from an \$18-an-hour job with a big company, said she is concerned that there are not enough black entrepreneurs serving as mentors in the black community.

She and other tenants suggested that Shoppers World could build on its multicultural mix of tenants to try to ease tensions between Korean business owners and the black consumers they serve. Eleanor Williams, promotions director for Shoppers World, said she was planning a series of events aimed at encouraging respect for different cultures.

"We have about 30 black and 20 Hispanic-owned businesses here now," said Shoppers World co-owner Davidov. "Our customers are about 40% black, 40% Hispanic and 20% white."

He said about a million people live within a three- to four-mile radius of Shoppers World, which opened in December, 1991. Davidov, a native of Israel, owns about 15 acres in the urban neighborhood. He and his partners invested \$5 million to convert the former Thrifty Drug warehouse into a small-business complex.

Tenants need a resale permit and a business license to move in. Rents range from \$400 a month for a 200 square-foot space, to about \$10,000 a month for a prime, 10,000-square foot location.

Meanwhile, as worried tenants prepared to reopen their stores, Davidov increased the armed security force and planned to install a metal detector to screen for weapons. Rifle-toting security guards barred entrance to the complex while it was closed for nearly a week after the riots.

"We think the area has a bright future and still do," Davidov said. "There are some problems in the area, but this community is completely underserved and it's even more imperative that we try to stay here now."

Rachel Perry, president of Rachel Perry Inc. in Chatworth, will be honored today as the small-business person of the year by the Los Angeles district of the U.S. Small Business Administration.

The awards luncheon, at the Biltmore Hotel, kicks off observance of national Small Business Week, celebrated May 10-16.

Other local winners include:

Accountant advocate: J. Alan Rosen, a partner in the accounting firm of BDO Seidman. Financial services advocate: James E. Whitney, senior vice president, American Pacific State Bank in Sherman Oaks. Media advocate: Ginger Conrad, founder and publisher of Inglewood-based Minority Business Entrepreneur. Minority advocate: Harold Martinez, president of Able Industrial Products in South El Monte.

Veteran advocate: James Stanley of Santa Barbara. Women in business advocate: Bonnie Barnett, founder and president of Collection Consultants in Glendale. Exporter of the year: Jeff Gleckman, president of Tech-Ni-Comm Inc. in Valencia. Young entrepreneur of the year: Yvonne Cucci, president of South Bay Screen Print in Torrance. Entrepreneurial success award winner: Vincent Schaub, president of Medi-Ride Inc. in Glendale.

Jane Applegate is a syndicated columnist and author. She welcomes your letters and story ideas. Write to her through the Los Angeles Times, Times Mirror Square, Los Angeles, Calif. 90053.

**GRAPHIC:** Photo, Allan Davidov, Michael Katz and David Cha at **Shoppers World**, which escaped last week's violence. JOSE GALVEZ / Los Angeles Times