



**TUNNEL VISION:** Big Al's Aquarium Supercenter will include an 8,000-gallon fiber-optic tunnel with freshwater and saltwater display tanks. Company photo

## Tamarac lures Canada's Big Al's fish superstore

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Something's fishy in Tamarac. Or will be in late March when **Big Al's Aquarium Supercenter** is slated to open at 6820 N. University Drive.

The 19,000-square-foot store is the Toronto-based chain's first in the United States, joining 20 in Canada; three corporate stores and 17 franchises.

More than a goldfish stop-and-shop, Allan Saul, president of Big Al's, said the store will have almost everything available on the market, fish-wise, plus draws such as a 12-foot-round predator tank with sharks and other denizens of the deep. Shoppers would be able to view a shark feeding at 7 p.m. every Tuesday.

The \$1.8 million project is being undertaken with Fort Lauderdale-based **Aquarium Retail Holdings Inc.**, a firm formed by Dana Parham,

who also owns **Living Color Enterprises Inc.** in Fort Lauderdale, and **Living Color Property Development**, in Delray Beach.

Living Color Enterprises designs and makes custom aquariums and Living Color Property Development is involved in buying and developing land. Saul and Parham are friends, said Susanne Mandel, director of marketing at Living Color Enterprises.

Saul said he opened his first store 29 years ago as the outgrowth of a family hobby. He focused on fish, rather than all pets, and emulated the big-box style of chains such as **Home Depot Inc.** With a home in South Florida, Saul said he had been thinking for some time of expanding in the United States.

Along with gilled and watery pets, the store will stock aquarium supplies. It also will have a room called "The

Deep," showcasing hundreds of species of fish, approached through an 8,000-gallon fiber-optic tunnel fitted out with freshwater and saltwater display tanks.

"Kids love it," Saul said in a phone interview. "We will have just about anything available in the market from little guppies to sharks, moray eels and live corals."

Saul said the plan is to continue expansion in the United States. The store would join dozens of other fish supply stores in the area. It is a growing part of the pet market with more fish owned than any other pet. According to the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association, there are 192 million fish owned in the United States.

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