



RENEE BYER/Journal Star

at Kresge's 31 years  
next month. Kresge's in

Sheridan Village, which opened in 1954, is the  
only Kresge's left in Illinois.

the way out and that one-stop discount shopping centers with big parking lots and long lines were the coming thing in mainstream America.

The Kresge company tried this new mass merchandising concept in 1962 with a new store in Garden City, Mich.

Soon after, it seemed like two Kresge stores closed for every K mart that opened. The Kresge store in downtown Peoria, which had been in operation since 1916, was converted to a K mart in 1962 before it closed. Brochures from the headquarters in Troy, Mich., pump the growth of K marts from that one store in 1962 to more than 2,000 in 1986. Expansion plans include 30 or 40 new K marts a year for the next several years. Although Kresge has no new store openings planned, it is described as an excellent training ground for future K mart managers.

The S.S. Kresge Co. name was changed to K mart Corp. in 1977 to show its interests, like the public's, had moved to suburbia. The honchos in Troy didn't totally forget the roots: the "K" in K mart stands for Kresge. Even the bags at the Kresge store in Sheridan Village have K mart emblazoned across the front.

Despite occasional rumors, there are no plans to close the Sheridan Village store, says Wayne Keller of Chicago, regional manager of the K mart Corp. "Every time a lease comes due, we look at a store's profitability and we still have several years to go on that particular lease."

Keller makes no secret of the fact that the corporate focus is on other holdings, like K mart's, Waldenbooks and Builder's Square. But Kresge hangs on, continuing to show a profit.

One of the reasons it has survived is because it's located in the same kind of area as a K mart or a Venture.

But unlike them, it is a throwback to the downtown dime-store era.

Doye O'Keefe, general manager of K mart in

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