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The Buckle Inc. Q4 2008 Earnings Call Transcript

Question-and-Answer Session

Operator

(Operator instructions) We have our first question from the line of Margaret Whitfield of Sterne, Agee. Please go ahead.

Margaret Whitfield – Sterne, Agee

Hi, Dennis and Karen, I was wondering if you could talk about inventory situation given the strong February cost, what your plans are for inventories going forward, and how you might end the first quarter with inventories per square foot. And I wondered if you could talk about how some of the newer stores have performed, I think you gave (inaudible) on sales per store, and in terms of how the class of '07 did and the class of '08, as you have moved east into newer markets?

Dennis Nelson

Thank you, Margaret. You know, the February sales were excellent for us, so we ended up with a little less inventory than we probably planned. We are taking pretty much the same strategy as we have been, trying to be cautiously optimistic and careful with the inventory, but still trying to do business. And we think that our inventory levels will increase this spring. You know, it is difficult to say how much with – depending on the rate of business, but we would see – my best guess would probably be over the next few months kind of flat to low single-digit gains on the inventory.

Margaret Whitfield – Sterne, Agee

On a per square foot data?

Dennis Nelson

Yes, probably closer to flat on a per store – existing store base.

Margaret Whitfield – Sterne, Agee

Okay.

Dennis Nelson

And Karen you want the next part of the question or do you want me to –

Karen Rhoads

On how the stores are performing?

Margaret Whitfield – Sterne, Agee

The most recent stores, the stores opened last year, and the year before?

Karen Rhoads

I mean, in general, we would say we were pretty pleased with how those new stores have been performing. We don't ever speak to the specifics of individual stores or an age of store performance but we have been pretty pleased with that. If you want to add to that Dennis.

Dennis Nelson

No, I would agree. I mean, we've had – I was just trying to review last year. We feel good with our new stores, and we had a strong year in '07 and '08 was very good, but I think both classes overall performed pretty well.

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