



Eagle building is sold

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— CLINTON — A major player in the furniture retail industry is bringing a store to Clinton. Chris Wilkins, a Realtor with Premier Partners, LLC, of the Quad-Cities, contacted the Clinton Herald on Monday to announce his clients had closed Friday on the purchase of the former Eagle Country Market, located in the 1800 block of Lincoln Way. Wilkins reported Louie Prenger, of Carroll, and Kurt Johnson, of Des Moines, both Slumberland franchisees, have purchased the Clinton store with the intent to establish a Slumberland furniture store in Clinton.

Wilkins stated the purchase of the \$1.05 million, 6.25-acre property from Tom Rudbeck of Windmill Hill Realty, LLC, provides for the co-owners to revamp and occupy one-half of the store, using 25,000 square feet. The other half of the site will be used by another retailer, and Wilkins indicated they are currently in negotiations with another prospective buyer. Additionally, there is a 1-acre outlot, separate from the existing structure, which Prenger and Johnson plan to market to prospective retailers.

The duo were the primaries involved in bringing a Slumberland store to Davenport this past year, and they also currently own Slumberland franchises in Sioux City, Fort Dodge and Iowa City. Wilkins estimated the purchase of the Clinton site took approximately six months to become a reality, adding Prenger and Johnson plan to make a “significant additional investment” in the former Eagle store to revamp the location. He indicated remodeling construction should begin fairly soon on the remodel.

Via telephone, new owner Louie Prenger had this to say about his and Johnson’s Clinton venture: “We are very excited about the purchase and the opening of the Slumberland furniture store in Clinton. We see Clinton as a great opportunity for opening a Slumberland and also are very excited about the prospects of leasing the balance of the building and developing the balance of the lot.”

Johnson started working as a delivery/warehouse person for Slumberland in 1982 in the Rochester, Minn., store while going through college. He opened his first store in Fort Dodge in 1989. Since then, he’s been involved in four new Slumberland franchises in the state of Iowa. “As Louie stated, we are very excited about opening up in Clinton and look forward to ... the future,” said Johnson via e-mail.

Prenger talked of his own furniture retail experience. “I actually grew up in the furniture and flooring business — my father and aunt opened Prenger Furniture and Carpet in 1958 and I started full-time in 1978,” he said. “We partnered with Slumberland in 1998 converting our Carroll, Iowa, store. Since then, I have been involved in opening Slumberland stores in Sioux City, Iowa City, Davenport and soon in Clinton. With Slumberland’s buying power, we shop the world for the best values to deliver to our customers. Slumberland is a family-owned business, and as a result, a wonderful company to do business with.”

In 1967, the first Slumberland store opened in Minnesota. Unlike most furniture stores, Slumberland started as a mattress and La-Z-Boy specialty shop. Over time, the Little Canada, Minn.-based franchise has expanded its merchandise categories as well as its store count. Today the corporation has 113 stores in 10 states, selling furniture for every room of the house. Slumberland is now one of America’s top sellers of La-Z-Boy upholstery, as well as the Midwest’s largest retailer of Natuzzi leather and both Sealy and Simmons mattresses.