



Nora Ordoñez brought over another outfit for Crystal Hernandez to try on as Hernandez checked out the one she had on in the mirror. Daniel Ordoñez showed a cowboy hat to a couple of customers. Photos by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Star-News

New location for business offers more space

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Star-News

People told them it would never succeed, but Daniel and Nora Ordoñez didn't listen.

They wanted to open a store in Goodland, so they did.

Four years later, they wanted to move the store downtown.

"Downtown's dying," they were told.

They didn't listen.

And they're glad they didn't.

The couple moved their store, El Dorado, into the old Schneider's building at 11th and Main, next to the former Aten Department Store and across the street from the old Knott Just Books.

El Dorado, which opened in the

fall of 2001 next to Subway on K-27, had outgrown its space.

Its move downtown July 1 provided more room, the Ordoñezes said, and gained the store new customers.

Since moving to downtown, Nora said, the old customers have stayed with the store, and it has gained new ones.

People are rediscovering El Dorado, Daniel said; at the old location, only about 10 percent of business was from local customers.

"It was easy to forget we were here," he said.

The store is also fighting misconceptions.

"People thought we were only western wear," Daniel said, "and

some thought it was a store for Hispanics."

The store sells items targeted to Hispanics, such as compact discs of Spanish music and items needed for a quinceñera celebration.

But, Daniel said, it is a store for all people.

El Dorado has bridal wear, formals, men's hats, western wear, boots and baptism clothes, such as baby tuxedos, and provides a two-day cleaning service. And the store does special orders.

Instead of going to several stores and finding a dress you will settle for, Daniel said, you can order what you really want.

The new location has provided the needed space to expand.

"It was crowded," Daniel said. "We couldn't show the merchandise and give customers the kind of service we like to."

But that has changed. A home decor section will be added downstairs, Daniel said, with blankets, curtains, satin bedspreads and other things.

The store sold those things at the K-27 location, he said, but there was no room to display them.

"People knew we had them and would come buy them," he said.

Daniel graduated from the engineering technology program at the Northwest Kansas Technical College, and Nora attended Goodland High School.

They married and moved to Den-

ver, where he worked for an engineering firm, and she did the accounting for six stores.

She missed Goodland, and they both wanted to move to a small town to raise a family.

He was offered a job teaching engineering technology at the technical college, and they moved to Goodland and opened the store, where she works during the day and he helps in the afternoons.

"I always wanted a clothing store," Nora said.

They have two children, Nora, a first grader, and Daniel, 3.

When they came there, the couple said, they said they faced a lot of negativity.

"When the business opened,"

Daniel said, "people asked what we were doing in Goodland."

But business has been good so far, he said, and it's growing.

Businesses are closing because people are retiring, he said, and Goodland needs new blood. People with businesses can only do it so long.

The town needs someone with an entrepreneurial spirit, Daniel said, someone who has that dream.

People just need to have a more positive attitude, he said.

Since El Dorado moved downtown, Daniel said, there has been a lot of traffic come through.

"I think it's gonna be excellent down here," he said.

Owner of Edson gym expects to be here Aug. 5

By Kathryn Burke

The Goodland Star-News

After spending years in the hands of the Goodland School District, the old Edson school gym has been sold and soon will have a new life.

Jeff Soper, California, bought the gym in an online auction on eBay in January. He plans to hold a flea and farmers market in the building, opening on Friday, Aug. 5.

The gym was set to change hands in June, but family problems for Soper delayed the transaction.

Superintendent Marvin Selby said now the money is in the bank and they are just awaiting Soper's arrival.

Soper gave the district a \$10,000 down payment and then when he missed the June 1 date, sent an additional \$15,000 to hold the gym. Selby said the district now has the remaining \$25,000.

He said the papers were signed by the school board president at a meeting last Friday.

"Owning the property is a big relief," Soper said.

He plans to sell items buys at auction from abandoned storage units in the market at the gym, plus things from other vendors. Anyone, he said, can rent a booth.

"This isn't just about me making

money," he said adding he want the community to benefit. "I can make money anywhere."

He said the gym will be available to rent for weddings, concerts and other special events.

So far, he said, three people have signed up to rent the gym. For \$500, he said, the gym is yours for 16 hours.

"We're just starting with the flea market," he said. "It's going to be a lot more than that."

Last month, Soper set up insurance to cover anyone selling items in the gym. While he wasn't sure how the insurance would work with the farmer's market, he said, he wants to protect his vendors.

An outdoor area will be available for weekend booth operators to camp, with full use of the gym's showers and bathrooms. Soper plans to add an outdoor concessions stand where he will sell cold drinks and maybe even barbecue.

His web site says the flea market will be open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday, Saturday and Sunday and the farmers market from 9 a.m. to noon on Wednesday.

So far, Soper said, he has filled up part of the gym, six booths for himself and six for vendors. He said the vendors include a health food

booth, one for bird houses, a crafts booth and more.

Soper said he could fill the gym with just his stuff, but he wants to bring it out here in waves. He has 22 storage lockers in Los Angeles that cost him \$600 per month. That merchandise, he said, will be on the first shipment to the gym.

"I can't get it all in one trip, that's for sure," he said.

The items in the locker, he said, have been stored there since 1994. He will bring antique curio cabinets, a oak dining table with six leaves and eight chairs, a 1950s Whurlitzer juke box and a German grandfather clock made in 1870.

"That gym is not going to empty, I guarantee," he said. "I will have that gymnasium full of stuff."

corrections

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Soper said he wants the right mixture of items to sell.

"I'll bring some really nice stuff out," he said.

He will bring art including a sunflowers painting.

Soper plans to open the boxes when he gets here and let customers dig through them.

"The way I sell is different than most people," he said. "If you like it, make an offer."

Soper plans to load up a 26-foot truck and drive it out here himself.

"I could fill up that 26-foot trailer four times," he said.

His trip will start on Monday, Aug. 1, as he loads up some items at his home near San Francisco. He will then head south to Los Angeles.

After picking up the merchandise from his storage lockers there, he said, he will turn west. The 24-hour drive will take him through Las Ve-

gas, where he plans to pick up a friend.

Soper said the trip will be earlier than he would like to come out, but he wants everyone to know he plans to open the business.

"I don't want to be like the boy who cried wolf," he said, adding he might not be as organized on the first weekend, but he will be here.

The gym purchase is his first real business, Soper said. While he has been self employed for years, running the gym is a new venture for him.

Soper said he looks forward to moving here and meeting people in town. He said he grew up in Fargo, N.D., so he says he understands the Midwest.

"I'm looking forward to getting out there," he said.

He said he is ready to relax in a rural area after spending years in California. Soper is already looking

at real estate and thinking of moving into town. He said if he likes it here, he might sell everything in California and make this his main address.

There are 8 million people living near his home and so he will welcome the decreased traffic and congestion.

For now, Soper plans to move into the home economics room at the gym and turn it into a small apartment.

"I'm just looking forward to the lifestyle," he said, "getting out, meeting new people."

Anyone interested in renting a booth, talking to Soper or just finding out more about the gym can see his web site at www.edsongym.com.

**Classifieds work!
899-2338**

Sherman County Household Hazardous Waste Collection

Saturday, July 16, 2005

7 a.m. to 11 a.m. Mountain time

HHW Facility

1820 Cherry Street

Goodland, Kansas

For more information please contact Kenny Griffith at 821-1024.

No early drop off or no drop offs without personnel present.

There will be no **Used Oil** collected at this time.

For Sherman County Residents Only!

Restaurant Equipment Sale

Saturday, July 23, 2005

Time: 10:00 a.m. CT (doors open at 8 a.m. day of sale)

Auction Location: T-N-T & Jones Auction Facility • 200 N Franklin • Colby, KS

Preview sale items between 5 - 7 pm CT Friday, July 22, 2005

Schaefer top entry ice cream case, metal shelving, Turbofan #31 oven made by Moffat - 110 volts, Star Food warmer, 4 office chairs, Silver King Ski Imperial stainless steel milk dispenser - refrigerated, "Frozen Food" freezer - glass front - lighted - 27"x76", True double glass refrigerator - 47" x 76", 80 restaurant chairs, 2 - stainless steel refrigerators [1 is double glass door - 29" x 51", 1 is solid door - 29" x 51"], Blodgett dual flow stainless steel oven, Wolf 6 burner stove with stainless steel oven, Vulcan grill 5' x 2', Hobart dishwasher with sanitizing Model AM-14 with stainless steel rack, salad bar with sneeze guard - 80" x 61", bun warmer and plate holder stainless steel cabinet 92" x 30", 2 stainless steel shelf with drain for pop dispenser 24" x 48", restaurant plates / cups / pots and pans,

TNT AUCTION

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stainless steel trays, waitress stations, neon salad bar light, Dean double fryer, Pitco Frigilator double fryer, stainless steel steam table - 3 pan, 2 hold stainless steel sink, butcher block preparation counter 3' x 8', steam table with stainless steel refrigerator underneath, stainless steel double milk dispenser, Bunn coffee maker, stainless steel double door freezer, 2 older Hobart mixers, several small round tables, wooden chairs - 50 plus, Vulcan Double oven with 6 burners, beer lights, wooden display case, 2 basket fryer, Hobart meat slicer, wet bar with 3 hole sink - ice tank, steam table, pool cue holder, bar pictures (dogs), large bar mirror, 2 domestic refrigerators, 5' hot food warmer with sneeze guard, drug store stools

Tom Harrison, Auctioneer

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