

Downtown Port to get two new stores

Written by KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM
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Businesses filling vacant spaces will specialize in clothing, dog grooming

Two new businesses are slated to open in downtown Port Washington in the coming weeks — a positive development just in time for holiday shopping.

Mobocracy, a shop that will primarily specializing in vintage clothing and accessories, is opening in the former Zing storefront at 307 N. Franklin St.

Next door, in the former Stadler law building at 309 N. Franklin St., Pretty Paws Port will be opening Dec. 1.

“This is pretty exciting,” said Sara Grover, executive director of Port Washington Main Street. “That whole block is now full.

“There is a lot of interest in Port Washington right now. Things are finally moving.

“For years people have said Port’s a beautiful gem. For years, people have talked about Port. Now, people are starting to make things happen. I think 2012 is going to be a very good year for Port Washington.”

Interest continues to be high in downtown buildings, even the larger spaces that are often more difficult to fill, Grover said.

For example, she said, the FDIC has accepted a bid for the former Wind Rose property.

Mobocracy owner Craig Kasten said he had hoped to open on Black Friday, Nov. 25, but that may be delayed slightly.

“We’re still shopping for Friday, but I’m not sure that’s going to happen,” he said. “You only have one chance at a first impression, so we want to wait until everything’s set.”

Kasten, who lives in West Bend, said his wife Ashly came up with the concept for the store, which is targeting shoppers from their teens to their mid-30s.

“There is definitely a market for it, an untapped one,” he said. “I’m sure we’ll attract an older group as well.”

People walking by have already stopped and looked in to check out the store, which will also carry organic items such as T-shirts, lotions and soaps, said Kasten, who also operates an Internet auto-parts business.

“I think it’ll fit in well,” Kasten said. “I think it will complement rather than compete with the existing downtown businesses, and hopefully it’ll stand out.”

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Even before he looked for a location for his new shop, he was familiar with Port Washington, Kasten said. His father had a boat in the marina for more than a decade, so he spent quite a bit of time in the city.

Pretty Paws Port will be the second location for Amanda Wampner's dog grooming business, which has been operating in Saukville for the past eight years.

In addition to grooming, the Port outlet will also feature a retail outlet, said Wampner's mother Sue Richison, who owns Dawgs in Motion in Saukville, where the Pretty Paws is located.

The decision to open a Port Washington location came after Vicki Milsap decided to retire and close Vicki's Pet Parlor on Webster Street, Richison said.

The new location will initially be open for grooming Tuesdays through Saturdays, she said, while the retail shop will be open Mondays through Saturdays.

The retail operation will offer a variety of unique dog and pet items, including clothing, leashes, collars and decorative things, as well as "natural products for both humans and animals," such as lotions and soaps, Richison said. A line of natural dog foods may also be offered.

The women looked at a few other locations for the operation before settling on the Franklin Street spot, Richison said.

"This seemed to be the best fit," she said, noting there is plenty of parking as well as a green space next to the Pretty Paws Port building.

"And we've been amazed at how many people walk downtown with their dogs."