

Mesa Junction lands another store



CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/JOHN JAQUES

The former Bosanova/Skateland roller rink on Abriendo Avenue in Mesa Junction will become a retail site.

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THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

More private development continues to make its way to Pueblo's historic Mesa Junction business district.

Two years after the opening of the \$24 million Robert Hoag Rawlings Public Library, a developer of Family Dollar stores purchased the former Bosanova/Skateland roller rink building, near the library.

The rink closed in 2002.

Today, a little more than half of the building (10,000 square feet) will go for a new Family Dollar store set to open in late February. The remaining 8,500 square feet remains on the market.

The developer, Virgil Shouse of Denver-based Excell Fund, said Family Dollar continues to expand throughout the U.S. and the revitalized Mesa Junction area site fit the retailer's market criteria.

The Mesa Junction area shows renewed energy, Shouse said.

"I don't know if everyone's noticed it but we certainly did when we bought the property," said Shouse, who lives in Denver but is familiar with Pueblo through relatives.

The library opened in October 2003.

The following year Eckerd drug store built a new store in the area at Fourth and Abriendo - since purchased by Walgreens. Elsewhere, some of the neighborhood's existing stores are remodeling.

At the Family Dollar job site on Wednesday, electrician Ernie Fresquez said he was excited by Family Dollar's decision to move into the neighborhood.

Fresquez, of Danmarc Electric, noted the store will provide a low-cost general merchandise store for the neighborhood, including the residents of the nearby Mesa Towers senior apartments. Right now the main neighborhood options are drug stores and convenience stores.

Plus, the developers are investing in refurbishing the former roller rink building, giving the site a modern, fresh appearance, Fresquez said. The work began about two months ago, he said.

Of note to fans of the former roller rink, the developers opted to keep the wood skating rink floor. Crews are in the process of refinishing the floor that will run the length of the Family Dollar.

Shouse, whose development company primarily works for Family Dollar, said his company continues to monitor Pueblo for other possible developments.

The former Bosanova/Skateland site was closed by roller rink owner Larry Bishop in 2002, who opted to focus time and resources on the state-of-the-art Skate America rink in Belmont.

Excell Fund, through a subsidiary Excell Abriendo, purchased the former Bosanova site in the fall for \$... from Bishop, according to the Pueblo County clerk's office.

In its earlier years Bosanova was known as Skateland.