

# Retailers On The Grow

*Three long-time equine retailers have announced major expansion projects, suggesting continued strength in the industry.*



An artist's rendering shows how the new Schneider's Saddlery building will look when it is complete.

## Schneider Saddlery

Expansion of general offices, a fulfillment center and a warehouse at Schneider Saddlery in Bainbridge, Ohio, is under way. When the company opened in Bainbridge in 1993 on a four-plus-acre parcel, expansion and growth were anticipated.

A Schneider's spokesman said growing Internet sales and a healthy catalog business have been driving forces behind the expansion. Those facilities are fronted with a retail store, which will remain open throughout the construction phase.

When the expansion is completed, the Schneider complex will span more than 90,000 square feet, with double the office space relocated to the second floor and a new 12,000 square-foot retail store remaining on the ground floor.

The store conducted a major sale prior to the onset of construction so there would be less to move.

Schneider's was founded in 1945 by Milton Schneider and today is run by Milt's sons, Donald and Stanley, with a third generation entering the business.

## Rick's Saddle Shop

A new 27,000 square-foot facility in Cream Ridge, N.J., will replace a 5,000 square-foot store for Rick's. The new super store will focus on the English and Western equestrian enthusiast, according to owner Rick Wills.

About 2,000 square feet of the new store are dedicated to education. The Equine America-sponsored classroom will work to attract new riders to the sport, as well as to inform current riders on all aspects of horse ownership.

A grand opening was planned May 12-22 with vendors such as Purina Mills, Nutro Pet Foods, Tredstep Ireland, WeatherBeeta USA, Reinsman and others participating. The grand prize will be a new Cotner horse trailer valued at \$5,900.

## Charlotte's Saddlery

Official occupancy for a store expansion project for Charlotte's Saddlery's Katy Freeway location in Houston was granted in March. The expansion increased sales floor space by an additional 4,000 square feet.

The additional space has allowed the store to expand its current lines and add new lines and products, especially in the area of stable and stall equipment. Also included in the new area are two new offices and a state-of-the-art studio for digital photography.

"After all the delays, too numerous to mention, we are finally moving merchandise into the expansion area," said Tim Raisbeck, vice president of the company. "Our customers are absolutely thrilled when they walk in and see the new area. All they have seen for the past four to five months has been plastic draped from ceiling to floor."

Charlotte's Saddlery posted images of the ongoing remodeling project on its Web site.

## And One Says 'Good-bye'

**After 127 years in business, Cross Western Wear in Ogden, Utah, closed its doors in March. According to published reports, the business fell prey to the decline in ranching, changing tastes in clothing and the closing of a shopping mall adjacent to the store to accommodate a parking lot.**

**The business was opened by C.W. Cross in 1878 and was being operated by the fifth generation of the Cross family.**

**An auction was held March 19, featuring inventory, decorative items, store fixtures, spurs, saddles, antiques, tack and a portion of the family's personal collection of memorabilia.**

**The store was widely believed to be the oldest operating Western store in the United States. It began as a saddle-making operation. 🐾**