

## Sheplers Sold; Other Retailers Make Changes

After weeks of speculation, an announcement was made at the end of July that Western retailer Sheplers had been purchased by Gryphon Investors of San Francisco. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Sheplers was founded in 1899 in Wichita and today operates 19 stores, in addition to a catalog and Web site. The company employs about 650 workers.

A Gryphon spokesman said no immediate changes were planned; however, long-time Sheplers CEO Mike Anop will retire. He will be replaced by Mark Syrstad, formerly president and CEO of Crafts Retail Holdings Corp.

Syrstad has spent nine years in Western retailing and worked with Gingiss Formal Wear, another Gryphon company. The group also owns G.I. Joe's Inc., a full-line sporting goods retailer in the Pacific Northwest.

The trend toward consolidation in the retail sector of the equine trade industry continues. In August, owners of F.M. Brown & Sons Tack Shop in Sinking Spring, Pa., announced that the store would be closing.

The company will join the Horseloverz.com family and its premium outlet store, located in Hazleton, Pa. That facility is expected to open in September. A liquidation sale at the Sinking Spring location was conducted through the end of August.

Meanwhile, Dover Saddlery announced the opening of its ninth retail store in Dallas. A grand opening is planned Sept. 14 at the store at 7529 Campbell Road in North Dallas. Dover announced that it intends to open 50 retail stores across the United States over the coming years when it went public two years ago.

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▼ Source: Surveys conducted in the Fall of 2002 and March 2004 of equine veterinarians who recommended oral joint health supplements.