

JAX expansion gives shoppers elbow room

Store adds buildings, products, archery range

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On Friday morning, below a pale, cold sky, JAX sporting good store owner Jim Quinlan walked through his recently built breezeway part of the newly expanded store.

A clearly confused customer in search of the firearms section stuck his head out of a door. Quinlan paused to direct the man into the new armory building, home to the store's hunting and archery equipment. A few of JAX regular customers may have to search a bit next time they shop based on the fact that nearly the entire store has been rearranged.

JAX sporting goods added 12,000 square-feet, two new buildings, an outdoor pond, a new parking lot and two new product lines, including a new archery company it bought, at its 1200 N. College Ave. store.

The \$1.2 million expansion, a good three years in the making, positions the JAX as the largest of its five stores with more room to display goods along with a new athletic line and archery products that includes an indoor archery range.

With the expansion, Quinlan has added 15 new employees, bringing the store's total to more than 100, and company-wide to about 380.

Jax received about \$170,000 in Urban Renewal Authority funds from the city for development fees and road improvements on the project. Quinlan said the money offset the parking lot cost on the east side of the building, as well as road improvements to a road connecting to the parking lot that will eventually go through to Old Town. Quinlan said he paid the upfront cost and the city paid them back with the URA money.

On Friday morning, Quinlan showed off the recent additions and said the improvements will pave the way for another 50 years of business, as well as more business and a better experience for shoppers.

"It was definitely getting to the point where you couldn't walk through footwear," said Quinlan, who bought JAX in 1988. "It makes it much more shoppable."

The expansion project, which was open during construction, started last spring and continued through October. Now, the new shop is set up and JAX will host an open house Nov. 20 to showcase the additions. The 12,000 square-foot addition brings the total store to about 57,000 square feet. Of the store's 12 departments, all but kitchenware has been moved.

The store now offers athletic gear ranging from hockey, baseball, softball and soccer to volleyball and lacrosse. Quinlan also bought Arrow Dynamics, a local archery store, for an undisclosed price. Arrow Dynamics was formerly owned by Jim Widmier, who now manages the shop for JAX.

Widmier said he decided to sell the company because he is ready for a slower pace and less responsibility. The archery, formerly at 2536 Midpoint Drive, is housed in a new building dubbed the armory at the JAX location.

With the new location, Widmier said the store gets a lot more foot traffic than before. And with the new indoor range, he plans to start some archery leagues soon.

The expansion also includes a new parking lot to the east of the building with a new entrance, and a pond where customers can demo canoes, kayaks and fly rods once it is completed next spring. The store's manager Bill Greenlee said since the expansion customer reaction has been, for the most part, positive. He said it takes some getting used to for the regular customers.

One of those regular customers is Fort Collins resident Tim Vanhorn, who has been shopping at JAX since the 1970s before Quinlan bought it. Friday, Vanhorn perused the new hunting section and said he would have preferred to see an indoor shooting range as opposed to an archery range and a bit wider space. Aside from that, he said it was a definite improvement.