

## Cd'A firm primed to take over cycle dealership

- **April 14th, 2010**
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By Elaine Williams of the Tribune

### Owner of Lone Wolf Harley-Davidson says he's eager to try reopening Lewiston store

A potential buyer hopes to reinvigorate the financially challenged Shumate Harley-Davidson dealerships in Lewiston and Spokane.

Seven Oaks Motor Sports, which operates Lone Wolf Harley-Davidson in Coeur d'Alene, has signed an agreement to purchase the assets of the businesses for \$3.17 million, not counting about \$2 million in debt it will also assume, said Greg Ernst, an owner of Lone Wolf Harley-Davidson.

The deal would include merchandise, clothing, parts, accessories and furniture at the stores, but not the buildings since they are owned by parties other than Shumate, Ernst said.

Shumate Spokane has experienced financial challenges that resulted in it seeking reorganization under Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Ernst's offer covers only the Lewiston and Spokane locations and not a Tri-Cities dealership that has the same owner, John (Michial) Shumate.

The Harley-Davidson stores in Lewiston and Spokane have been open at times in recent months, but the stores were not able to sell merchandise, Ernst said. "Here in Spokane they've done some service work."

Ernst wants both stores operating at full capacity as soon as possible, but he's not sure when that will be because of the bankruptcy proceedings.

A request was made in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court of eastern Washington to have an auction on April 30, but Ernst hadn't heard as of Tuesday if the court had made a decision.

If a higher bidder doesn't emerge in any auction the court allows, Ernst said he is ready to take on the businesses. He and his wife opened the Coeur d'Alene dealership in 2008, and previously operated a family-owned floor covering business with nine locations in the St. Louis area. That business was purchased by Carpet One, and eventually the Ernsts decided to go into business for themselves again, choosing Harley-Davidson because he is an avid rider and they like the community of Harley owner groups, Ernst said.

The Coeur d'Alene dealership made money last year in spite of the bad economy and was named the best Harley-Davidson dealership for overall customer satisfaction in 2009, Ernst said.

Expanding appeals to him for a variety of reasons. The Lewiston store has one of the strongest Harley owner groups in the country, he said. "They are extremely involved in the sport of riding. They've got tremendous amounts of enthusiasm. Wherever they are, they're telling about the fun and personal fulfillment of riding. That really helps the business."

Plus, he's always loved to build things. "I've always seen it as a challenge and I love working with people."

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