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Ruggles Sign relocating to Kuhlman building

By Bob Vlach
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The co-owner of Ruggles Sign Company said his business will relocate to the former Kuhlman Electronic building after purchasing a 27-acre site off the U. S. 60 Bypass for \$2.775 million earlier this month.

The 253,000 square-foot building at 101 Kuhlman Drive will provide sufficient space for Ruggles Sign Company to expand its operations, while also providing about 88,000 square-feet of space for another local manufacturer to rent.

“So it’s a win-win situation,” said Ruggles co-owner Tim Cambron. “We’re able to take care of ourselves, but we’re also going to help one of the key employers in the county that needed some space.” He said the name of the Versailles manufacturer will be revealed when a rental deal is finalized.

Cambron said he and his wife, Ruggles co-owner Anna, had explored moving their family business to the Kuhlman building for more than two years. But because the building was “way too big for what we want to do,” he said a decision was made to purchase 114 acres on Big Sink Pike, with a plan to relocate their business to a 24-acre site zoned for industrial uses.

The building originally planned for the Big Sink site would have added about 40,000 square-feet of additional space, which wasn’t large enough. So another 20,000 square-feet was added, Cambron said.

Given the high cost of constructing a larger building, he said purchasing and renovating the Kuhlman building made more economic sense.

“We just feel it’s a great building. It’s a great location. It’s utilizing something that’s there rather than building from scratch,” said Cambron.

A request to rezone an additional 21.469 acres on Big Sink Pike from A-1 (agricultural) to I-1 (industrial) remains on the agenda of tonight’s Versailles-Midway-Woodford County Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, which begins at 6:30.

Cambron said the 24 acres already zoned I-1 and the additional 21 acres being rezoned to I-1 will provide much-needed land for businesses to expand or move their operations here in the future.

“It’ll be sitting there when the time comes (for more industrial development),” said Cambron. “But we just felt right now going out to Kuhlman is the right thing to do.” He said WinStar Farm currently leases the undeveloped 114 acres on Big Sink Pike.

It will take about eight or nine months before Ruggles Sign Company makes the move from its current location at 308 Crossfield Drive to the Kuhlman building, according to Cambron.

“You won’t even recognize the front of that building,” he said. “It’s going to be a nice addition to Versailles.”

Besides completing redoing the building's façade, Cambron said "We're going to dress the whole building up."

He said the renovated Kuhlman building will provide much-needed storage space to allow Ruggles Sign Company to become more efficient in its operations. Over time, he said the business may add 10 to 20 jobs.

"Our business," said Cambron, "we're kind of back to where we were pre-recession ... Our client-base, they don't have to build brand new stores ... Remodels and refreshes are huge for us." He said the first step in a sprucing-up a business's image typically involves replacing storefront signs and changing a building's façade.

"Some of your best business is your existing business," said Cambron. "And future business is more business with your existing customers."

Founded in 1946, Ruggles Sign Company relocated to Versailles 19 years ago and employs about 70 people.

The company's signs are shipped to businesses across the United States, Canada and worldwide. About 10 percent of its signs stay in Kentucky, with perhaps 10 or 15 percent being international business.