

Ethan Allen to open

Sharon Dunn, sdunn@greeleytrib.com

January 12, 2006

The competition in the furniture industry just got a bit hotter in northern Colorado.

Ethan Allen Retail Inc., a furniture manufacturer and retailer with stores throughout the world, recently bought 1.84 acres of land for \$1.17 million to build a 20,000 square-foot store in the 2534 project in Johnstown, just south of the Shops at Centerra.

"My understanding is that it will be the sole Ethan Allen for northern Colorado," said Nick Christensen, principal of Chrisland Inc., which is developing the project at Interstate 25 and U.S. 34.

Christensen said Ethan Allen officials, based in Connecticut, had been looking for a new northern Colorado site in the last year. The addition, he said, will help 2534 emerge as "regional power center" that complements the shops across the highway at Centerra.

The new store will be twice the size of the store at 4636 S. Mason St. in Fort Collins, said Peg Lupton, Ethan Allen spokeswoman. The store should open by fall, she said.

Lupton said the move is part of the company's overall strategy to relocate stores where people are shopping and where there is more visibility. In the past seven years, the company has relocated more than 100 stores, part of its focus on continual improvement.

"Ethan Allen finds that when we can be in a high-traffic area where people are shopping, with our business model and service model, the better the stores perform", Lupton said, addressing possible competition from American Furniture Warehouse, which will open its mega-store in Firestone in the next year.

With three other Colorado stores in Westminster, Centennial and Colorado Springs, the company will soon open another store in Aurora, Lupton said. Known for years for its construction of early American furniture, the company in the early '90s added a casual collection to attract younger shoppers. It also offers customers complementary design services, including house calls. Most of its products have been introduced in the last three years.

Ethan Allen will join two banks, an insurance agency and marketing agency relocating from Loveland, Fort Collins and Greeley at the 2534 development.

Plans also continue for the health-care based, four-story building on 12.5 acres, Christensen said.

Ethan Allen started as a housewares distributor in 1932 in New York and has grown into a global company with three saw mills, 11 manufacturing facilities in the United States and 310 retail operations between North and South America, the Middle East and Asia.