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This story first appeared in:

Farmington Observer

Thursday, February 17, 2005

Main News

What's the buzz about Cowley's?

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By Sue Buck

Staff Writer

Greg Cowley answered rumors Tuesday about the future of his downtown Farmington business, John Cowley & Sons.

First, he is neither selling his business nor going out of business.

Second, Cowley is considering moving his business elsewhere in downtown Farmington.

"Parking is a problem," said Cowley, of his current location on Grand River, just east of Farmington Road. The family-owned Irish pub has been located there since 1972.

More than two years ago, Cowley's family completely

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razed their old-fashioned bar. A new two-story building, designed like pubs in Ireland, was built to replace the old structure.

Cowley imported materials from Ireland to make the new pub authentic.

With the Downtown Farmington Center project slated to begin this year at Grand River and Farmington, Cowley believes there might be a chance to purchase some space in that area.

"I'm considering all opportunities," Cowley said this week.

Cowley, like others, predicts the changes downtown will cause a boom. It's important to get in on the ground floor, he said.

The city plans to construct a privately-funded community pavilion and a new park. It will turn two drive lanes into new streets in the Downtown Farmington Center.

The streets will run in front of Starbuck's to Quiznos and in front of Fitness 19 east to Great Harvest Bread Co.

Cowley may lease the currentpub, which he thinks would make an attractive, upscale location for offices. He is presently entertaining some offers.

He laughed when responding to the rumors.

He said a Realtor called him two weeks ago and asked if he would be willing to sell.

"For the right amount," Cowley said. He described his remark as "off-the-cuff."

Word spread.

One of his suppliers also heard that he was going out of business. That's also inaccurate, Cowley said.

Farmington is a viable market and he's not leaving, he added.

As for the tight parking situation, Cowley believes the area greatly needs a parking deck. He said the discussion needs to begin now about who will pay for it and where it will be built.

The need for parking will become apparent to everyone as soon as one or two new restaurants move into the downtown area, Cowley said.

There's a couple good locations for a parking deck, he said. One is the Farmington Training Center on Thomas, which is owned by the Farmington Public School District. Another possible location is the parking lot south of the T.J. Maxx building on Grove, Cowley added.

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