

Hardwick & Sons hardware store to move from Seattle to Post Falls

Hardwick's owner says rising taxes factored into decision to relocate here

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Hardwick & Sons Inc. hardware store, a fixture of Seattle's University District for nearly nine decades, is looking at moving to

Post Falls, says CEO and third-generation owner Dean Hardwick, who cites rising taxes in Washington state as a driving force behind the move to North Idaho.

“For various reasons — there are about half a dozen reasons — it’s no longer viable, after 87 years, to be in Seattle,” Hardwick says.

Hardwick’s in-laws live near Spokane Valley’s Dishman neighborhood, less than 15 miles west of Post Falls, so he’s familiar with the area, he says. He’s found a few potential spaces for Hardwicks’ new Post Falls home but hasn’t decided upon one yet.

“We have a crew of about four people over there doing different things for us,” Hardwick says. “They’re helping us along, since this is the first time I’ve bought any property since I bought my house in 1982.”

Hardwick & Sons, often called Hardwick’s Hardware by Seattle locals, was established in 1932 by Dean Hardwick’s grandfather.

The business was handed down to Dean Hardwick’s father, who later bequeathed it to brothers Bill and Dean Hardwick. Dean took over as sole owner after Bill passed away two years ago. He says he intends to pass Hardwick & Sons down to his only son, Paul.

“All the Hardwicks have worked here at one point or another,” Hardwick says. Hardwick says he, his wife, son Paul, and youngest daughter Erin will move to the Post Falls area, though they haven’t yet found a home.

Hardwick’s has been well-known for the array and volume of products it offers.

“I did a local ad once where I said that Hardwick’s has a PHD: Piled High and Deep,” Hardwick says.

“Unfortunately, we won’t be able to create exactly that in Post Falls, because that took about 25 or 30 years of my life to expand it that much.”

Hardwick says the store currently employs nine people, but he’s not certain how many employees Hardwick & Sons will have in Post Falls.

“We want to be low-key,” he says.

“We don’t plan on making a big splash. We just want to earn a living.”

Hardwick says the move to Post Falls will mean consolidating inventory, so Hardwick & Sons will offer standard tools and some specialty tools. He says other hardware stores in the area, like Rathdrum Trading Post Hardware, already have a client base that's interested in more specialty categories, such as plumbing and electrical supplies.

Hardwick says that he's trying to purchase property through a 1031 exchange, though he says it's not critical to the planned move.

A 1031 exchange is a tax-deferment strategy in which an investor defers paying capital gains taxes on an investment property when it's sold, as long as another "like-kind property" is purchased with the profits from the sale of the first property.

Hardwick has agreed to sell the company's commercial property, at 4214 Roosevelt Way NE, west of the University of Washington, but it hasn't completed that transaction.