

Factory Stores at the Y going under



This South Lake Tahoe center used to be bustling.

By Kathryn Reed

One by one businesses at the Factory Stores at the Y have been closing. Now the whole center is on the auction block.

While the notice of default was filed in June 2012, the trustee sale is scheduled for Feb. 27 in Placerville.

Sisters Shannon Casteel and Nancy Irmer, who own the center at the corner of highways 89 and 50 in South Lake Tahoe, use the business name Two Sisters LP. They are based in Genoa. Neither could be reached for comment. Their property manager, Chad Coons, did not return a call.

The sisters bought the center from their brother Gary Casteel in 2004. He still operates the Heavenly Village.

The sisters owe more than \$8 million, according to documents.

At one time Casteel also operated Blue Willow Lingerie in the center with her daughter-in-law Lori McKinney.

The last anchor tenant, Adidas, left in December 2011.

Much of the 51,811-square-feet of leasable space has sat empty for years.

Another business is leaving – Fragrance Outlet. Doors will probably be locked for good in April.

Gary Campbell who has operated the store for the last 18 years told *Lake Tahoe News* he just couldn't make it anymore. He has significantly slashed prices to get rid of the inventory before he closes shop and moves out of South Lake Tahoe.

"It was pretty obvious when the mall was emptying out that they were in trouble. But they never told us they were in trouble. But when 70 percent of the stores are vacant, they had to be," Campbell said.

There was a time when it was difficult to find a parking spot at the outlet stores. Locals and tourists would shop there. After the Outdoorsman closed, the factory stores offered one of the few places in town to be able to buy reasonably priced clothes, gifts and other goods.

Campbell said the decline at the factory stores has been combination of things – "Indian casinos, poor economy and poor management for the mall."

He added, "I just think the whole town is struggling."