

Business

Thursday, October 1, 2015

Somero Enterprises Inc. Company building new global headquarters in Lee County

By Laura Layden
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Hertz won't be the only company in town with a new global headquarters.

While the rental car giant will soon move into its new world headquarters in Estero, Somero Enterprises Inc. will soon build its own in Fort Myers.

Somero, a machine manufacturer, has scheduled a ground-breaking ceremony for Thursday for a 14,000 square foot building that will serve as its global offices and training center on more than three acres. The expansion project is a \$5 million investment for the company, which makes laser-guided and technologically innovative machinery used for concrete placement in commercial buildings.

Somero has been renting a building off Link Court for its headquarters. The company relocated to Fort Myers from New Hampshire in late 2007.

"We sell equipment in 93 countries so we have a lot of customers coming for in-house training on some of our equipment and to be able to do that year-round works better in Florida," said Howard Hohmann, an executive vice president for the company.

The project, which will be built by Fort Myers-based Chris-Tel Construction, is expected to be completed by April.

"It will create some new jobs at the subcontractor level. Management staff is currently employed by us. This is a substantial project for sure," said Howard Wheeler, Chris-Tel's president.

Somero's equipment ranges in price from \$400,000 to \$3.5 million, based on the size of the machines, which use laser technology to place concrete floors evenly.

"We introduced the machine in 1986," Hohmann said. "We are patent protected. We currently hold 55 patents to date. We are a leader and an inventor in the industry. We basically revolutionized the way to place concrete. We are known around the world," Hohmann said.

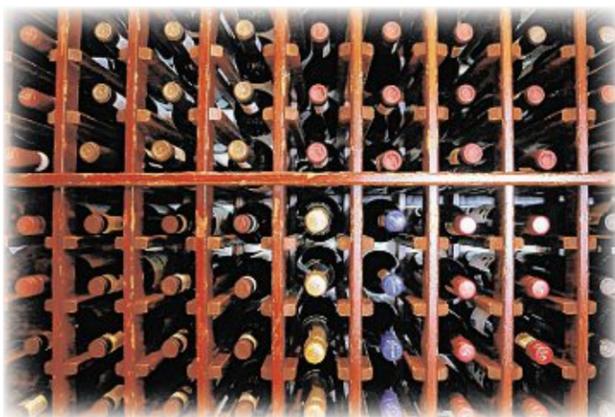
The larger headquarters will be built at 14530 Global Parkway, off Treeline Avenue, near Southwest Florida International Airport. It's needed mostly to support training on the company's machines, Hohmann said.

"Our tag line is we are passionate about your success. That goes more to not just equipment, but helping customers do a better job," she said.

Companywide, Somero has 176 employees.

The headquarters office now has 12 employees, but it could have up to 20 eventually, Hohmann said.

The company also has an assembly plant and administrative offices in Houghton, Michigan, and support offices in Chesterfield, England, Shanghai, China and New Delhi, India.



Grape expectations

Marco restaurant racks up another award from wine magazine



ABOVE: Enzo Fargione, food and beverage manager, clockwise from left, Ivo Nadelchev, food and beverage director, and Vessy Tyler, restaurant manager, at Sale e Pepe on Marco Island on Wednesday. For the 10th straight year, the fine Italian restaurant, at the Marco Beach Ocean Resort, received a Best of Award of Excellence from Wine Spectator magazine. **TOP:** Wine at Sale e Pepe on Marco Island.

By John Osborne
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A gourmet Italian restaurant at the Marco Beach Ocean Resort continues to show it has legs when it comes to winning prestigious awards.

For the 10th straight year, Sale e Pepe, which features a world-class wine list to complement authentic Italian fare served up by an executive chef born and raised in Naples, Italy, has received a Best of Award of Excellence from Wine Spectator magazine.

Sale e Pepe was the only restaurant on Marco Island to earn the coveted honor this year.

The restaurant's latest distinction is list-

ed in the magazine's 2015 Wine Spectator Dining Guide, which includes a complete rundown of the 973 recipients worldwide and recognizes winners from around the globe as top destinations for wine lovers.

Wine Spectator has honored the world's best wine lists since 1981.

To qualify for the award, honorees must offer a wine list of 350 or more selections, consistently provide a superior presentation and display either vintage depth — with several vertical offerings of top wines — or excellent breadth across several wine regions.

Enzo Fargione, food and beverage manager for Marco Beach Ocean Resort, said

See SALE E PEPE, 2B

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Chevrolet dealership

From Bob Taylor to Rick Hendrick

Business changing hands on Thursday

By Ryan Mills
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After more than 45 years in business, one of Collier County's top car dealerships is changing hands Thursday when Bob Taylor Chevrolet becomes Rick Hendrick Chevrolet Naples.

Bob Taylor Chevrolet, 5665 N. Airport-Pulling Road — across the street from Barron Collier High School — first opened its doors in 1969, according to its website. On Thursday, when the sale is closed, it will become part of the North Carolina-based Hendrick Automotive Group, the nation's largest privately held automotive dealership group.

The Naples dealership will be Hendrick Automotive's 98th location nationally and eighth dealership in Florida.

"We're so excited," said Michael Curtis, the dealership's new general manager who relocated to Southwest Florida from San Diego in late August. "There are so many great people in this organization."

Much of the transition was underway on Wednesday, including conducting an inventory of cars and installing new computer systems, Curtis said. A receptionist answered the phone Rick Hendrick Chevrolet. Signage changes are expected to occur after the sale is closed Thursday.

Bob Taylor employees were given an option to stay with the company under

See DEALERSHIP, 5B

IT'S YOUR BUSINESS

DAILY NEWS STAFF

Appointments

■ **Douglas Rucker** has been appointed general manager of the **Naples Bay Resort & Marina**.

■ **Laird A. Lile**, a wills, trusts and estates attorney in Naples, has selected **Caitlin Powell** as the fourth resident at law at his Naples law firm, Laird A. Lile, P.A. Information: 239-649-7778; www.LairdALile.com.

Events

■ **Tech4Good SWFL** will hold its monthly meeting from 6 to 8 p.m. on Oct. 6 at Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church, 1225 Piper Blvd., Naples, for staff and volunteers at nonprofit organizations. Information and reservations: organizers@tech4goodswfl.org; tech4goodswfl.org

■ **The Pro Bono Committee of the Lee County Bar Association** invites veterans, active military personnel, police officers and firefighters to receive free legal advice at a Veterans and First Responders Legal Clinic, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Oct. 3 at the Southwest Florida Military Museum and Library, 4820 Leonard St., Cape Coral. Information: www.leebar.org; 239-334-0047

Good deeds

A total of 175 students received a backpack filled with school supplies from employees from **Hertz's** Bonita Springs and Naples offices, who spent two weeks collecting the backpacks and filling them with binders, pencils, glue, composition books and more to benefit children from **The Immokalee Foundation** in Immokalee and **The Heights Foundation/The Heights Center**, in Fort Myers.

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Merchants chip away at obstacles to new credit cards

By Laura Layden

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It won't happen overnight.

A switch to chip-enabled credit cards will take more time than that. Not only have retailers, hotels and restaurants been slow to make the changes needed to accept them, but banks have been slow in getting the cards into their customers' hands.

Despite the Oct. 1 deadline announced almost two years ago, many businesses locally and around the country aren't ready to accept the cards. Some businesses have yet to purchase terminals with chip card readers in them, while others have the terminals — but they're not yet programmed to accept the new cards.

It's not unusual to hear the technology is "coming soon" or "coming any day now" at the checkout line in Southwest Florida, and to get a shrug of shoulders from a cashier about why it's taking so long.

Some big retailers, such as Walmart, adopted the chip-

reading technology early. Ahead of the Thursday deadline, experts estimated, however, that only half of the nation's 12 million payment terminals would be ready for the change by the deadline.

Meanwhile, six in 10 credit card holders still don't have the more secure chip-enabled cards, or EMV cards, according to a new report by CreditCards.com.

"This is the biggest change in decades in how cards are used in America, so we shouldn't be surprised that things are moving slowly," said Matt Schulz, a senior industry analyst with CreditCards.com. "One thing that won't change, however, is consumer liability. If you report bogus charges promptly, you likely won't be out any money."

Here's how the new technology works: Instead of quickly swiping a card's magnetic stripe through a payment terminal, consumers will dip their chip card into it and leave it there, usually for three or four seconds. The wait gives the machine time to read the chip and produce a unique validation code before it asks a consumer for a sig-

nature or PIN.

The cards are designed to prevent copying.

There are several reasons for the slow adoption of the chip-reading technology, including the cost of the conversion. One new terminal can cost more than \$500.

"Our biggest concern is the mom-and-pop shops and the small businesses," said James Miller, a spokesman for the Florida Retail Federation. "The big box retailers will be fine. They have the resources, both manpower and finances to handle this kind of change. But a small retailer, where the profits are obviously very thin, may not have the financial resources to do something like this."

That's why the federation is offering the new terminals for \$99, as a way to encourage more of its members to make the switch.

"We've definitely had members take advantage of it," Miller said. "Unfortunately, it is not as many as we thought, or had hoped."

One of the problems, he said, is a lack of awareness about the change, affecting Florida's

270,000 retailers and their millions of point of sale terminals.

There's good reason to make the switch sooner rather than later. After Oct. 1, credit card issuers can shift the liability for counterfeit fraud to merchants that aren't accepting the more secure chip cards.

"The EMV card has been used in Europe for over a decade now and they've seen fraud drop 76 percent, just within the first couple of years using it," Miller said. "That again is why we are encouraging our members to use it."

By making this change, businesses could potentially save tens of thousands of dollars in fraudulent charges, while boosting security for their company and their customers.

Lisa Kelly Boët, owner of Chez Boët, said her French restaurant has been accepting chip cards for some time and that she was aware of the technology's benefits from her travels to Europe.

"For security reasons, we are already updating our software," she said. "It's one of those routine maintenance things. That's how

we're looking at it."

Lise Sundrla, executive director of the Fifth Avenue South Business Improvement District, said she's been trying to spread the word about the change to merchants.

"I think there are obvious concerns about costs, but also about starting something new right as we are going into season," Sundrla said.

Sheryl Sashin, owner of Arabesque, a fine stationer and gift shop on Fifth Avenue South, said she won't be making the switch right away because the software update for her point-of-sale system isn't complete and it has not been certified to accept the chip cards, which should protect her from being held liable for fraudulent charges.

She's interested in partnering with other merchants on the street to negotiate better pricing for credit card processing with a shift to the new technology.

"It's not as simple as just having the machines," she said. "There has to be a processing company behind the machines."



COREY PERRINE/STAFF

Sale e Pepe's dining area is shown Wednesday. The fine Italian restaurant, at the Marco Beach Ocean Resort, recently received a Best of Award of Excellence from Wine Spectator magazine. See more photos at naplesnews.com.

SALE E PEPE from 1B

Sale e Pepe's wine list checked all the above boxes — and then some.

"We carry a minimum number of selections, which varies between high season and low season, typically between 250 and 400 offerings," he said, adding that many of the Sale e Pepe's selections are hand-picked by the restaurant's two on-site sommeliers.

Fargione said Sale e Pepe's

wine offerings include industry superstars such as 1997 vintages and 2010 Bordeaux.

"The quality of vintages in 1997 made them collection pieces, so we try to locate those hard-to-find vintages and offer them to our guests to provide an element of surprise," he said. "And when it comes to 2010 Bordeaux, every now and then an incredible vintage sneaks around the corner and surprises everyone. So we try to get our hands on those fast because we know they will

all be gone soon."

Fargione said Sale e Pepe features wines from — among other countries — Italy, France, Chile, Argentina and Spain.

"And in the next couple weeks we'll be offering a brand-new selection of wines from South Africa," he said. "The regions there have been steadily improving for many years, and in my personal opinion South Africa will play a leading role in quality wine over the next 10 years."

Recognized as a AAA Four-

Diamond award-winning restaurant each year since 2006, Sale e Pepe offers authentic Italian cuisine overlooking the Gulf of Mexico, with al fresco dining on the terrace or elegant dining indoors, surrounded by Renaissance-inspired art and architecture.

The restaurant is open to Marco Beach Ocean Resort guests and the general public alike.

Reservations are preferred and can be made by calling 239-393-1600 or visiting www.sale-e-pepe.com.

VW, Audi give back Green Car of the Year awards

By Charles Fleming

Los Angeles Times

For the environmental black marks they've received, Volkswagen and Audi have been asked to give up the green.

The two car companies, embroiled in a widening scandal for their part in cheating on auto diesel emissions tests, have lost the prestigious Green Car of the Year Awards they won for their 2009 Jetta TDI and 2010 Audi A3 TDI.

The two "clean" diesel vehicles are included in a batch of 11 million cars worldwide that VW has admitted are fitted with a "defeat device" designed to trick emissions testing. Both vehicles are on the list of cars the Environmental Protection Agency has charged with emitting as much as 40 times the permitted levels of dangerous pollutants.

That batch of cars includes diesels fitted with 4-cylinder engines built by VW, among them 2009 to 2015 VW Jetta, Golf, Passat and Beetle cars, plus the Audi A3.

The awards were taken away by Green Car Journal, whose editor and publisher announced his decision Tuesday night.

"Rescinding the Green Car of the Year awards for the VW Jetta TDI and Audi A3 TDI is unfortunate but appropriate," said Ron Cogan.

Attempting to make a virtue of a necessity, Audi of America President Scott Keogh said in a statement, "Audi has won hundreds of races and thousands of awards throughout its history. But we only want to win fair and square. Therefore, in light of recent developments, we believe the only right thing to do is to return this important recognition of environmental stewardship."

Volkswagen of America has also agreed to return its award.

Twitter

Co-founder reportedly to be named permanent chief executive

By Andrea Chang

Los Angeles Times

Is Jack back for good?

That's the word trickling out of Twitter, with one news report saying co-founder Jack Dorsey — currently interim chief executive of the micro-blogging company — will be named permanent chief executive as early as Thursday. Dorsey was Twitter's first chief executive and stepped down in 2008.

The naming of Dorsey to permanently lead San Francisco-based Twitter would end a prolonged search for a replacement for Dick Costolo, who announced his resignation in June after several quarters of sluggish growth and disappointing stock performance.

According to Re/Code, which cited unnamed sources, Dorsey, 38, will do double duty — he has been vocal about keeping his other job, as chief executive

of mobile payments company Square.

In recent weeks, Dorsey clearly emerged as the front-runner to take the job.

"The public support from prominent shareholders of BOTH companies is clearly a boost of confidence in Mr. Dorsey for permanent CEO of Twitter," SunTrust Robinson Humphrey analyst Robert Peck wrote in a note to investors Monday.

In his three months as interim chief executive, Dorsey has been publicly critical of the company. In a July earnings call, he slammed the company's lack of focus, unintuitive service and difficulties communicating the value of using Twitter. He also said recent product initiatives had yet to produce "meaningful impact" on growth and engagement, which "is unacceptable and we're not happy about it."

A Twitter spokesman did not immediately return a request for comment.



Twitter Chairman and co-founder Jack Dorsey applauds during the ringing of the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange in November 2013. According to a report posted Wednesday by technology news site Re/Code, Twitter might be about to hire Dorsey as its permanent CEO three months after he took over the job on a temporary basis.