Setbacks lead to business closure

Kornmeyer's in BR since 1859

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Kornmeyer's Furniture Co., which relaunched itself two years ago as Kornmeyer's HomeSmart, abruptly announced Tuesday that the company will close by the end of the year, ending an institution among local businesses that stretched back to the mid-1800s.

Kornmeyer’s President Jacques Pourciau blamed the decision on a failed software conversion, saying the resulting financial setbacks were too great to overcome.

"We're heartbroken. We're just heartbroken," he said Tuesday.

Pourciau would not offer details, but left open the possibility that the company might return.

For now, though, Kornmeyer's plans to begin a going-out-of-business sale Friday and wrap up by mid-December.

Pourciau said employees were told of the decision Saturday.

"It's just something that's heartbreaking to the family," said Harold Bahlinger Sr., a direct descendant of the company founder. Bahlinger retired last year as president.

Reached at home late Tuesday, Bahlinger, Pourciau's father-in-law, declined further comment.

Without disclosing the name of the manufacturer, Pourciau said the computer software system created problems with inventory tracking and accounting.

"We had things being duplicated, things not showing up at all," he said. "Finally, we decided to switch to a third computer system. At that point, we were unable to recover from the damage (the original software) had done."

The company's closing would mark the end of a business legacy that began in 1859, when German immigrant Jacob Kornmeyer opened a general store.

In 1980, Kornmeyer moved a few blocks to 16th Street and opened a second store.

Pourciau added, "We've been in the building for 28 years."

The company's closing was announced last week in a meeting with creditors, customers and employees.

Pourciau said the business, which now sells furniture and home accessories, will continue to operate until the store is closed.

"We're going to try to keep the business running as long as possible," he said.