

GarageTown USA makes space for more than just cars and RVs

By Karisa Saywers
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Why rent when one can own? That is the question Garage Town USA employees are likely to ask Tri-Citians who cannot decide between purchasing temporary or permanent storage space for their treasured possessions.

GarageTown USA is Kennewick's newest storage facility, located at 725 N. Edison St., across the street from Kamiakin High School.

The \$1.5-million project currently offers 37 storage units for sale, not for rent. Thirty-three more units will be completed in early 2007 but are already available for purchase.

Carrie Berglund, director of sales and marketing for GarageTown USA, said customers are making an investment when they buy permanent space for stowed away items, rather than "throwing their money away on rent" for leased storage units.

"You are investing in commercial property," Berglund said. "It is real estate and chances are it is going to appreciate."

The consumer can choose the size of their investment by deciding how large of unit they would like to own.

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-Carrie Berglund
Director of Sales and Marketing
Garage Town USA

The smallest space is 16 feet wide and 48 feet long and has a price tag of \$58,950. The largest unit, which sells for \$116,950, is 32 feet wide and 48 feet long. There are three other spaces of varying sizes and prices that fall in between.

All units have electric overhead doors that are 14 feet tall. The height of the ceilings varies anywhere from 16 feet to 20 feet depending upon the space.

Berglund said the units are unique in that they are designed to store and protect everything from a recreational vehicle



JoAnn Grinde, realtor for Century 21, and Carrie Berglund, director of sales and marketing for GarageTown USA, stand in one the open unit at 725 N. Edison St. in Kennewick.

(RV) to business records and files to a family's priceless heirlooms.

"We just want to get away from people thinking it is only for people that have million-dollar car collections, \$300,000 RVs and \$80,000 boats because that is not what it is about at all," she said.

Each unit is constructed with insulated commercial-grade steel allowing the owners to control the climate of their space with individual electric heaters and thermostats. The ability to regulate the temperature allows owners to protect their valued goods, Berglund said.

"When you have records and they are not climate controlled, then after awhile you have humidity in the boxes and in the paper," she said. "You can't have that with records, especially for businesses."

Other amenities of GarageTown USA units include the ability to hook up cable television and phone lines. The common area amenities include RV cleanout, maintenance equipment storage and hydrants.

Owners also have all-hours access to restroom and shower facilities as well as the 512-sq. foot clubhouse. The homey clubhouse holds comfortable furniture, a

big screen television and refrigerator that storage unit owners can use.

"Owners get the key codes so they can come in here at all hours," Berglund said. "They can have kids' birthday parties, Super Bowl parties because they are all part owners of it."

The restrooms and all of the common areas are cleaned weekly, and funded by the owner's association fees, which vary at each different location, she added.

Though there are multiple GarageTown USA sites, the organization is not franchised.

Other GarageTown USA sites can be found in found in Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Texas and Idaho, where the organization began with a 65-unit facility in Coeur d'Alene.

GarageTown USA units provide the owner with options other than the storage of collector cars, boats or antiques.

Some individuals choose to purchase space and then lease the unit to someone else. Some use it as a shop to build hobby projects or fix household items. Others choose to use the space to headquarter their own non-retail business.

Steve Horst, owner of Horst Heating &

Air Conditioning, conducts business out of his GarageTown USA units.

"I have been looking for a year for something commercial that I didn't have to pay millions of dollars for," Horst said.

Rather than purchasing commercial property and building or modifying an existing structure, Horst bought two adjacent units to suit the needs of his business. The wall between the units was removed, and an office was constructed within the space.

Buying a GarageTown USA unit is an expense businesses can write off, Berglund said.

Though owners are free to do almost anything with their space, there are rules as far as alterations to the structure. For example, title-holders cannot drill holes into the walls or plumb water into the units.

However, owners do have some creative liberties.

"You can go in there and paint the floors, paint the walls and put lofts in them," Berglund said. "The lofts can't be attached to the walls, but people just build these awesome freestanding lofts. People actually drywall them, and make these little office spaces."

As with many real estate transactions, purchasers of GarageTown USA space must go through a real estate brokerage company, such as Century 21. Realtors JoAnn Grinde, Julie Evans and Gary Kopf are handling GarageTown USA transactions for the Kennewick site.

Individuals who are interested in owning a unit have multiple avenues in which they can achieve their goal, even if the cost is a little out of their range. Certain lenders, such as F&M Bank and Washington Trust Bank, will finance the purchase of a GarageTown USA space. The process is similar to that of a home mortgage. Units can also be acquired through partnerships.

GarageTown USA
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(509) 879-9019

MOVES, From page 52

Hopper Dennis Jellison PLLC's Tri-Cities branch has moved to 6115 Burden Boulevard, Suite E in Pasco. Reach this company at (509) 547-5119.

Mid-Columbia Engineering is now located at 2155 Robertson Drive in Richland. Contact the firm at (509) 943-6706.

Allegiant Insurance is under new ownership, and is now located at 715 W. Kennewick Avenue in Kennewick. Reach the business at (509) 582-7247.

Moving? Submit your company's new address to news@tcjob.com.

NEW BUSINESS

Lucky Flowers, a floral and gift shop, is now open at 112 S. 4th Avenue, Suite 1 in Pasco. Reach this business at (509) 547-6091.

Desert Dove, a Christian bookstore, is now open at 5025 Road 68, Suite E in Pasco. Reach this company at (509) 543-6999.

Starting a new business? Know of a new company coming to town? Let us know. E-mail news@tcjob.com.

EXPANSIONS

Sahara Pizza has added a second Tri-Cities outlet inside Ranch and Home in Kennewick, located at 845 N. Columbia Center Boulevard. Reach Sahara Pizza at (509) 735-8383.

NEW OWNERS

Kaleidoscope Childcare, located at 820 N. 20th Avenue in Pasco, has been purchased by Kid's World Childcare. This is Kid's World Childcare's third Tri-Cities

location. Reach Ginger Still, the centers' manager, at (509) 545-3379 or (509) 967-9150.

Allegiant Insurance is under new ownership, and has a new location. Reach the business at (509) 582-7247.

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