

Franchise ownership attractive for some in business world

Local spent 30 years in health insurance before opening his own cleaning service

by Nicholas Backus
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SHOREVIEW — The U.S. Department of Commerce reports that 50 percent of all retail sales in the U.S. are now made at franchises. In fact, it says, one out of 12 U.S. businesses is now a franchise.

Among those making a career move to franchise ownership is Shoreview resident Patrick Sager, 56, who bought a Molly Maid Cleaning Service franchise earlier this year to get out of the turmoil in the health care insurance industry. Sager, who spent 30 years in the business world, said he lost interest in his informational technology position, and being his own boss was a move he wanted to make.

"It's really a lifestyle change for me," Sager said. "I'm starting from scratch."

It's a move that doesn't guarantee financial stability, said Mitch Rehbine, Quad Community Chamber of Commerce

chairman. But he said buying a franchise could provide aspiring business owners with more security than say, launching a start-up business.

"With a franchise there is already a model created for how you should be doing business and marketing," Rehbine said. "A franchise can be seen as a more conservative approach (to owning a business)."

Rehbine is a partner at Five Star Financial in Forest Lake, and said he also has looked into buying a franchise as a second-



Sager

ary or tertiary business venture. He cited Subway restaurants as following a particularly solid business model. But franchises still have a level of risk, he warned. The initial investment in starting a franchise can represent a serious blow to the bank account.

Rehbine has seen others go into franchise ownership after working in the corporate world, including

a friend who also started a cleaning service.

Sager said the move to franchise owner after 30 years in business will be a financial challenge. His wife Barbara works part-time with Molly Maid in addition to her other job in the nursing assistance program at Century College.

But he said he is already optimistic about his service. He said he wants to help people, something he didn't do in his last job.

"You would think that (the health insurance industry) is geared toward helping people but many people would agree that it's not," Sager said.

Aspects of owning his new franchise that Sager likes include Molly Maid's use of "green" products to clean homes, its sister non-profit the Ms. Molly Foundation (which promotes domestic violence awareness) and the fact that Sager now feels he is "giving the gift of time."

"I wanted to make a statement with the business that I purchased and operate," he said.

Currently, Sager's Molly Maid covers Shoreview, Lino Lakes, Circle Pines and Roseville among other nearby suburbs.