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Clothing store could soon have a buyer

A downtown apparel shop owned by fallen economist **Al Parish** could come under new ownership in the coming months.

At least one potential buyer has emerged for the **A.J. Davis & Co.** men's and women's clothing store at 296 King St., said **David Dantzler**, attorney for the court-appointed receiver who is tabulating Parish's assets.

It's unclear how long a sale could take or what the selling price would be, said Dantzler of **Hays Financial Consulting** in Atlanta. "It's very preliminary," he said.

Court approval may or may not be needed, depending on the terms of the sale, he added. Some of the proceeds would likely go to store creditors or Parish's investors, or possibly to both, Dantzler said.

A newer A.J. Davis store in Summerville, also owned by Parish, is holding an inventory reduction sale and is expected to close.

Parish, a former economist at **Charleston Southern University**, last month was charged by the **Securities and Exchange Commission** with five counts of civil fraud covering his collapsed investment pools. On paper, nearly 600 clients have lost more than \$523 million in the pools.

Onetime attorney **Alan Davis** founded A.J. Davis more than 20 years ago and now manages the downtown store. Parish bought the business in early 2005 and opened a Summerville branch last year.

Power play

The **Coastal Conservation League** is expected to voice its formal opposition today to a coal-burning power plant that state-owned electric utility **Santee Cooper** is proposing to build in southern Florence County.

The Charleston-based environmental group's bone of contention: the amount of greenhouse gases, specifically carbon dioxide, that the generator will emit.

The league is seeking support for an independent energy study for the state before Santee Cooper or any other utility commits more resources to building coal-fired plants. The board of Moncks Corner-based Santee Cooper approved the plans for the \$984 million generator in April 2006. It hopes to start construction this fall and open the plant in 2014.

Santee Cooper has said the 600-megawatt plant near the Great Pee Dee River will help it provide power to the rapidly growing Grand Strand region. The utility has owned the property near Kingsburg since the early 1980s. The 2,700-acre site is large enough for a second power plant.

Journey to Oz

State officials are looking for local companies to visit "The Land Down Under."

Department of Commerce officials are inviting South Carolina business leaders to apply for an October trade mission to Australia. The trip will give them a chance to meet other executives in Sydney and Brisbane who are looking to boost their U.S. dealings.

The trip is being organized by the **South Carolina Export Consortium** and the state and federal versions of the **Department of Commerce**. Organizers say they aren't looking for businesses in any specific industry but rather for a range of sectors. "We're looking for companies that have a unique product, something that sets them apart," said international trade specialist **Phil Minard**.

Past groups have visited South America, Canada and Africa, and almost all of the trips led to partnerships between participating companies, he added.

Participation costs \$1,500 per company and does not cover transportation and accommodations.

For more information, visit www.sccommerce.com/internationalevents.html.

Trade Winds

This could be good news for the **Port of Charleston**: Traffic at the nation's major retail container ports should hit a record high in July, then immediately break that record in August, according to the monthly Port Tracker report released Friday by the **National Retail Federation** and economic forecaster **Global Insight**.

The report predicts the nation's ports will break records twice this summer -; and all this before traffic reaches fall's peak season as retailers gear up for the holiday shopping rush.

July is expected to be the busiest month since October in terms of container traffic passing through U.S. ports, with August set to be better still, according to **Paul Bingham**, a Global Insight economist.

U.S. ports collectively are expected to handle the equivalent of 1.54 million 20-foot-long containers in July, breaking last October's 1.51 million, while August is forecast to see 1.57 million.

To give those numbers some context, the Port of Charleston handled about 1.98 million containers during its entire fiscal year last year.

The year ends June 30.