



February 17, 2010 Ali Helgoth, Staff Writer, *Elko Daily Free Press*

## **Elko Junction Revitalization**

### **New owners to upgrade cinema, bring in businesses**

ELKO — A development company is pushing its own economic recovery at the Elko Junction shopping center.

Meridian Pacific purchased the shopping center located north of Interstate 80 about three weeks ago and already has new tenants for the property and ideas for expansion.

“What we like to do is find the best piece of real estate in a smaller town that hasn’t been managed correctly (and turn it around),” said Gary Pinkston, president of Meridian Pacific.

Elko Junction includes Coffee Mug, Cinemas 4 theater, Raley’s, Red Stone Supply and the former Blockbuster store, but Arby’s and Big 5 Sporting Goods are not part of the property.

The purchase was finalized last month, but Pinkston’s been working much longer to entice new tenants. He believes it’s not just the new businesses that will attract customers, though.

Westates Theatres signed a 20-year lease for its location, and Pinkston said Meridian Pacific will add two screens with digital projectors capable of showing movies in 3D and stadium seating to the building.

“We felt that this theater would really give us a jump start and show people we’re serious,” Pinkston said.

He expects the addition to add 420 seats, and the parking lot will be expanded to accommodate additional customers.

Plans for the new building are under review by the city, but Pinkston said he hopes the theater will be open for the July 4 holiday.

The theater will remain open during construction, he said.

When it comes to attracting new businesses, some of it’s been pretty easy, he said.

Pinkston said he was having lunch and noticed a driver trying to back a semi up to the Sears building. He dialed directory assistance and asked the store’s owner if he would like to relocate to the former Blockbuster video store. It worked. Sears could open in the new location in April.

Other new tenants include Kabuki Sushi, a sushi restaurant that could open in March or April; and Elko Coffee and Tea Co., a coffee shop that will offer drive through service and on-site roasting,



which could open in May or June.

One retail space in the complex remains open.

Other additions under consideration include adding fuel bays near Raley's and bringing in fast food chain Jack in the Box. There are several areas on the site that could accommodate new buildings, he said.

As property owners, Pinkston said Meridian Pacific is a hands-on, family business.

The company sponsored the theater's toy and food drive before purchasing the property, and Pinkston plans to continue to do similar things in the future.

"We just like to be as much a part of the community as we can," he said.

Pinkston said he or another person from the company would be in Elko at least one month a week to oversee the property.