

Advance Auto coming to F-M

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Advance Auto Parts Inc. is bringing two stores to the Fargo-Moorhead market.

The nation's second-largest auto parts store chain — behind only AutoZone — will place one store at the old Hardee's site at the corner of 25th Street and 13th Avenue South in Fargo and the other in front of Menard's 1300 13th Ave. E. in West Fargo.

"We're excited about opening stores in the Fargo market," company spokeswoman Shiela Stuewe said Wednesday.

Crews from Olaf Anderson & Son of Fargo Wednesday began demolition of the Hardee's building in Fargo and began digging a foundation for the West Fargo store.

The 7,000-square-foot stores are being built for Advance Auto Stores by Trails End Holdings-Fargo, a Detroitbased development company.

Paul Bahra, managing member of Trails End Holdings, said the two 13th Avenue locations are perfect for the chain's stores — particularly the Hardee's site, which sits on an out lot in front of a Sunmart grocery store.

"We thought that was a terrific location," Bahra said.

He said his company has about \$1 million invested in each site, including land and construction. Advance Auto Parts will lease the sites from his company.

Advance Auto Parts is a publicly traded company (traded under the ticker symbol AAP on the New York Stock Exchange) with more than 2,400 stores in 37 states. With the opening of the two stores here, Advance Auto Parts will be in its 38th state, Stuewe said.

AutoZone, by comparison, has more than 3,000 stores in 40 states.

Advance Auto Parts was founded in 1932 by Arthur Taubman, who purchased small stores in Roanoke and Lynchburg, Va.

As a family-held company, Advance Auto Parts expanded rapidly in the 1980s, catering to the do-it-yourself mechanic market. It developed and patented the Parts Delivered Quickly (PDQ) system that guarantees delivery within 24 hours of more than 115,000 auto parts.

The company in 1998 acquired Western Auto, a subsidiary of Sears, Roebuck and Co. In 2001, the same year the company went public, it acquired regional chains Carport Auto Parts and Discount Auto Parts. Last year, it acquired Trak Auto Parts and its stores.

Advance Auto Parts today, with headquarters in Roanoke, serves both do-it-yourself and professional mechanic markets. According to Stuewe, 85 percent of the company's business is generated by do-it-yourself, or backyard mechanics, while 15 percent comes from professional mechanics.

All Advance Auto Parts stores are company owned, though the company still serves some franchisee-owned Western Auto Parts stores, Stuewe said.

Advance Auto Parts last year reported sales of \$3.3 billion, an increase of 30 percent over 2001. The company has more than 30,000 employees. Advance Auto Parts is also a partner with online parts distributor PartsAmerica.com.

According to a project manager with Olaf Anderson & Son, the stores should be ready by late fall.

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