

# Monument may get youth hockey rink

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*Chapel Hills Mall reportedly will close its rink by March*

*By JIM BAINBRIDGE THE GAZETTE*

Springs developer and former junior hockey goalie Ray Marshall is heading a group that intends to buy the Soc n' Roll Indoor Sports Center in Monument and convert it into one of the state's premier youth hockey complexes.

The deal has not closed, and sources were tight-lipped about details.

Marshall's LandCo Properties has been in negotiations with Soc n' Roll owner Steven Yates for three months and is simultaneously working with Chapel Hills Mall officials for the purchase of the Zamboni, glass and refrigeration system used at the mall's rink.

Although Chapel Hills general manager Janet Henderson and officials from parent company General Growth Properties declined to comment, several sources in the hockey community said they had been told the rink will be closed by March and turned into retail space.

Plans call for a temporary sheet of ice at Soc n' Roll in January and the transition of ice time from Chapel Hills in March. The Rampage youth hockey club, with 300 players in the Pikes Peak area, plans to make the five-year-old Monument facility its headquarters.

Marshall eventually wants to have two National Hockey League-sized sheets of ice — 85 feet by 200 feet — at Soc n' Roll while continuing the facility's in-line hockey programs and adding an 8,000-squarefoot workout room. Also available at the site are a rock-climbing wall, volleyball, lacrosse and other recreational programs.

"All I can say right now is that this is a very big development for El Paso County, and all of it is being done with private funding," Marshall said.

Yates is similarly cautious. "A million things can happen in a real-estate deal, even when you have a motivated buyer and seller like we do here," he said.

The proposed facility would be a sharp upgrade to the Chapel Hills rink, which is 15 feet shorter than NHL regulation and narrower, making it a problem for hockey competition for all but the youngest of the agegroup leagues.

In addition, the large, southfacing windows at Chapel Hills, although scenic, make ice quality a constant challenge.

The fast-growing Colorado Hockey Club, which operates the Rampage, has been using the area's public rinks — Sertich Ice Center, World Arena Ice Hall and Chapel Hills — to get enough ice time. Rampage general manager Mike Parrish sees this move as a great opportunity.

"With two rinks, the new facility could accommodate 500-600 players," Parrish said, "and the Rampage can take a (good) run at the Colorado Springs Amateur Hockey Association (for the dominant position in local youth hockey).

"The facility should attract kids from Parker, Highlands Ranch and Castle Rock. It's probably an easier commute for those kids than going into Denver. Plus, there's been so much growth in the north end (of the Springs), and we should get a lot of kids from there."

The CSAHA, which oversees operation of the Pikes Peak Miners and Colorado Thunderbirds youth programs, would feel an immediate impact from closure of the Chapel Hills' rink because it buys 20 percent of its ice time there.

The organization has a membership roster of 800 families, larger than last year, and plans on continued growth.

"We will have to seek other alternatives for ice time," said CSAHA president Kevin Keenan.



**THE GAZETTE FILE** - The proposed rink would be a step up from the ice arena at Chapel Hills Mall, above, which is shorter and narrower than an NHL-size rink. And the large windows at Chapel Hills make it a challenge to keep the ice in shape.



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