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Brown's marina sold

ginger@laconiadailysun.com

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By THOMAS P. CALDWELL, LACONIA DAILY SUN

MEREDITH — A local marina that has been in operation for 98 years will soon have new ownership. Shep Brown's Boat Basin is being acquired by Goodhue & Hawkins Navy Yard of Wolfeboro.

Shep Brown opened the marina, situated at Lovejoy Sands Road on Meredith Neck, in 1919, and operated it until 2002 when Bill Littlefield Jr. purchased the business. Littlefield's parents had been involved in the building of the Gilford Marina, which today is Mountain View Yacht Club, and they owned and operated Channel Marine at Weirs Beach until retiring in 2000.

Nathaniel Goodhue and Chester Hawkins established their marina in 1903, which makes it the oldest marina on Lake Winnepesaukee. The Pratt family acquired the marina in 2004.

Vice President of Operations Cote Gray said Goodhue & Hawkins expects to close on the purchase of Shep Brown's by early next week.

"It's a little difficult to comment on the details before the closing," he said, "but certainly our number one priority is to get to know the members of the local community, particularly those with abutting properties, as well as island residents and other folks we'll be working closely with in the future. Our priority is to be great neighbors and facilitate some awesome experiences on the lakes."

Littlefield and his wife, Charity, who manages the business operations at Shep Brown's, were out of the office and did not make themselves available for comment on the pending sale.

Gray said Goodhue & Hawkins had been looking to expand its operations. "The word was out that we were looking for other marine opportunities, so there was a mutual awareness of the opportunity," he said.

Shep Brown's was an attractive choice, offering boat storage and valet services, slip rentals, and a brand-new, well-equipped shop facility that does repairs of all kinds, from engines and drives to fiberglass and paint. The marina sells about 100 boats a year, Gray said.

He said they are interested in beautifying the property and are willing to invest in improvements the community would like to see.

"We're mindful of the impact of some of the buildings, and want to learn what the community is interested in changing," he said. "What are they looking for from their local marina?"

The ultimate goal?

“We’re going to make it great,” Gray said, adding, “We will probably look for other expansion opportunities in the future.”