

# Retail Spotlight

## Baby Boomers Open Up Shop

BY RAY KEENER

A new shop called Uphill Grind is opening in Effingham, Illinois, a town of 12,000 people east of St. Louis. The owners are two Baby Boomer couples who are transitioning from their corporate jobs.

“We don’t want to retire to a rocking chair or a cruise ship,” said Deb Reimers. “We’re all cyclists and runners, so we’re looking at a multi-sport focus.”

Deb, an attorney with an MBA, is working the finances while her husband Dick, 57, is planning day-to-day operations.

“Retail is a new thing for us,” Dick said. “We went to an outdoor apparel show, and we didn’t know what key-stone meant. You mean the beer?”

Despite their lack of experience, their grasp of the market is spot-on. “We want to grow the market for bike, outdoor and adventure sports by focusing

on events,” Deb said. “We’re emphasizing new people, not the veterans who have it all figured out.”



A coffee and juice bar and rides to the store from surrounding towns are also in the plan. Their storefront is in a shopping center next to a fitness gym and a martial arts studio. The parking lot

is filled with parents dropping off their kids and gym fanatics, which Uphill Grind hopes to attract.

Another smart move was hiring a 25-year-old mechanic and offering him part of the business to make sure he’s invested. “We know what we don’t know,” Deb said.

With a Trek dealer in town, the Uphill Grind folks are looking at Cannondale, Raleigh, Specialized and Felt. “We’re going to focus on the lower end price-wise, and as our customers get more experienced, we’ll be there to sell them a high-end bike as well,” Dick said.