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The Laconia Daily Sun

Irwin Auto Group acquires Belmont Hyundai dealership

By Adam Drapcho
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BELMONT — The Irwin Automotive Group of Laconia announced yesterday the acquisition of the Belknap Hyundai dealership of Belmont. The purchase, which was announced through an e-mail to customers, was effective on Monday.

Chris Irwin, vice-president of the family-owned dealership, said that the Hyundai store would remain at its present location for about the next eight months, after which point the dealership would be relocated to a site yet to be disclosed. The new site will be "within three or four miles" of the company's main store on Bisson Ave.

Irwin Motors was founded in 1951 as a Lincoln-Mercury dealership. Ford was added four years later. Toyota was brought on in the late 1970s and Scion came in 2002.

Irwin said that Hyundai is "one of the fastest growing, if not the fastest, brands in the United States." That growth, in his view, is due to recent changes in Hyundai vehicles' aesthetics and build quality. "They have improved so dramatically," he said. "They're as good as anything else in the industry."

South Korea-based Hyundai Motor Company was the world's fifth largest automobile manufacturer as of 2009 sales.

Although Hyundai's products often directly compete with offerings from Ford, Irwin said acquiring the brand will "bring more automotive traffic to this area – which I certainly view as a benefit."

Another benefit he saw was, "The Hyundai brand allows us to serve more customers, for sales as well as service." By purchasing the dealership, Irwin will also be acquiring the opportunity to earn the service business from current Hyundai owners. He hopes that these new service relationships will mature into future sales. "That's what we're trying to attract, ultimately, back to our stores."

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