

COLUMBUS, OHIO, USA | AUGUST 18, 2006



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Top dog in pet-waste removal gets bigger

Pet Butler of Columbus merges with larger firm

Tuesday, March 14, 2006

Jeffrey Sheban
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Talk about your business news.

Pet Butler of central Ohio, a pioneer in pet-waste cleanup services, has merged with a Texas company using the same name.

The combination creates the nation's largest business devoted to ridding yards and homes of dog and cat feces. The business has projected sales of \$2.5 million this year, said Matt Boswell, founder of the Texas business.

It also ends some confusion for online customers: PetButler-.com belonged to Pet Butler of Texas while PetButler.net was the Ohio company. After the merger this month, both addresses link to the same Web site, PetButler.com.

Boswell, 35, started his Pet Butler in 1998 in a Dallas suburb, and recently started franchising in other states. The franchise fee is \$24,900 with continuing royalty payments of 7 percent of gross sales.

But Ohio was off limits because the other Pet Butler was founded in Columbus in 1988 by Matthew Osborn, who sold the business 10 years later to Pete Hulse for \$225,000.

"I didn't protect the name nationwide and opened the door" to competition, said Hulse, who lives on the East Side.

With the merger, Hulse will continue to own the local business and becomes the first Ohio franchise for Pet Butler of Texas.

"He is the godfather of the pooper-scooper industry. We all call him Gramps," Boswell said of Hulse, who is 51. "If there was anyone in the world

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I wanted to be in business with, it was Pete Hulse."

Pet Butler of central Ohio has between 800 and 900 customers, mostly in Franklin County, paying \$9 a week to have dog waste removed from yards. Each additional dog costs \$3.50 a week more.

Competitors in town include Happy Lawn, Dog Duty, Pooper Troopers and Scoopers.

Boswell thinks there's plenty of doggie business to go around.

"Forty percent of Americans have a dog, and every one of those dogs is going one, two, three maybe four times a day," he said.

"It's almost a no-brainer."

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