

GREEN HILLS

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Flower Mart reborn

By Angela Patterson
THE TENNESSEAN

Several months after the old Flower Mart shut its doors, the space at 4002 Hillsboro Pike will be reincarnated under the same name.

The new Flower Mart will house a garden center run by Sunrise Lawn care and Landscaping.

Owner Bob Wellerding, who has owned the landscaping business for 28 years, signed the lease March 16; he and his crew gave the space an overhaul to be ready for a soft opening the weekend of Friday, March 27.

"The place was in bad shape," Wellerding said. "We came in and cleaned, painted, did some work on the roof, redid a lot of the electrical and the plumbing. We're pretty handy so we did a lot of it

ourselves. Because we do irrigation as part of our landscaping business, the plumbing wasn't all that difficult."

Within 10 days of signing the lease, Wellerding and his staff had ten shipments of inventory ready for sale. The store will offer annuals, perennials, tropical plants, landscaping materials, planters and insecticides.

"It's an excellent opportunity for us, because the Flower Mart had a good clientele," Wellerding said. "They had customers for years and years going there. People in the area were used to going there and getting materials at a good price, and that's what we're trying to offer."

Wellerding said the landscaping business had a record year in 2008, but clients are definitely cutting back in 2009. He thinks



Flower Mart, which shut its doors several months ago at 4002 Hillsboro Pike, will open in the same spot with the same name. FILE / THE TENNESSEAN

having the garden center will be a strong supplement to the services he offers as a landscaper.

"There's a give and take with

anything like this, but I think there's an opportunity here even within this market," Wellerding said. "(Surveys I've seen) show that when the economy's down, sales of lawn and garden products go up. People don't go out as much, and they spend their few extra dollars on their yard or their house. People may not come to us asking us to plant a tree for them, but they may come to the garden center, buy the tree and plant it themselves, and save on the labor.

"In the Green Hills area, there's not another garden area. There are some that are close, but they don't have the extent, quality and quantity of plants and materials that we'll have here. There's been a huge following of the Flower Mart for many years, and we hope they'll come to us too."