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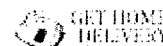
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New homes foreseen at Cook site on Grove

By Nathaniel Zimmer
staff writer

ELGIN — After more than a century, Cook Communications Ministries is planning to abandon its distribution center at the northernmost tip of Grove Avenue near the Fox River, paving the way for what several people said would be the residential development of the 10-acre parcel.

The nonprofit group, which publishes Sunday school materials and Christian books, has signed a deal to turn over the property to developer Ryan Companies US Inc., according to Mike Hastings, senior director of logistics at Cook. As part of the agreement, Cook would relocate to an as-yet unbuilt, 100,000-square-foot building in Ryan's business park near Randall Road and Interstate 90 in Elgin, he said.

Hastings declined to provide a sale price and characterized the arrangement as "more of a trade," but he said all 45 Cook employees would be transferred to the new facility.

Several calls to Ryan were not returned. City officials said they have received no formal proposals from the company and do not know what it might be planning, although they said they expect a residential project. Cook's building is surrounded on three sides by single-family homes. Directly to its west stands a patch of woods bisected by a bike trail and then the river.

Last year, Ryan won the bidding to build on the city-owned site of the old library downtown with its plans for 142 condominiums and three freestanding riverside restaurants.

Mayor Ed Schock said that while it's too early to discuss potential proposals, any plan should be "something that complements the neighborhood."

"It's probably safe to say we're not looking at a 15-story tower there," he said.

Cook — formerly known as the David C. Cook Publishing Co. — moved its headquarters to Colorado Springs in 1995 and stopped printing from its sprawling, 240,000-square-foot building on Grove a few years ago. The decision to move to a new facility was made because the existing building is old, expensive to run and, with its multiple floors and low ceilings, far from ideal for a distribution center, according to Hastings.

"We've added on as much as we can," he said. "We're actually landlocked."

Cook recently has begun to focus more on beefing up its book publishing division and reaching a broader audience, Hastings said.

Under its Victor Books imprint, the organization published *Cracking Da Vinci's Code* in response to Dan Brown's mega-bestseller *The Da Vinci Code*. Cook's book, which has sold 500,000 copies, aims to "help Christians understand how *The Da Vinci Code* works to undermine the Christian faith," according to information on Cook's Web site.

More recently, Cook published Leslie Montgomery's *Engaging the Enemy: The Christian Woman's Guide to Spiritual Warfare*.

"In order for women to become assertive, enthusiastic soldiers in the war against Satan, they must understand the warrior princess role that God intends for them," a press release about the book states.

"These are exciting times for Cook," Hastings said, adding that the organization has been "truly blessed."

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