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Colo. Baggage packs up 34-store Dallas firm

By Margaret Jackson

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Colorado Baggage Co. has teamed up with Gart Capital Partners to buy Dallas-based Bag 'n Baggage out of bankruptcy for \$10.5 million.

The move gives the Denver-based chain, which has 10 stores throughout Colorado, an additional 34 stores in 12 states. The new company will be called Colorado Bag 'n Baggage.

Colorado Baggage founder Pete Paradise said he will focus on increasing sales of the popular brands his company carries, including Tumi, Hartmann, Victorinox, Eagle Creek, and Briggs and Riley.

"A lot of what they did was real ly try to be more of a fashion player in the luggage industry," Paradise said of the Bag 'n Baggage chain. "Luggage really can't be on the cutting edge of fashion. Luggage has a utilitarian life, as well as a fashion life."

Tom Gart, a partner with Gart Capital, said the investment is a good fit for the private-equity firm, which focuses on specialty retail.

"We are optimistic about the travel-and-leisure industry," Gart said. "If we can be the largest player in a niche, we feel we'll be successful."

Gart Capital invests in companies with annual revenues of \$5 million to \$200 million and earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization of \$1 million to \$15 million. It looks for management that has made a significant financial commitment to the business, and the potential for above-average industry growth.

Margaret Jackson: 303-954-1473 or mjackson@denverpost.com