



Houston Jewelry & Distributing Co. employees, from left to right, Herschel Rich, Barbara Traylor, Donna Lindig, Paul Seabolt and Judi Vroulls, prepare Tues-

day for the liquidation sale beginning today of all merchandise at the company's downtown store, 1301 Fannin.

King Chou Wong/The Houston Post

Houston Jewelry selling out downtown

BY MICHAEL DAVIS
OF THE HOUSTON POST STAFF

When Abe "Honey" Donsky opened his first Houston Wholesale Jewelry store on Main Street in 1953, he put 20 silver dollars for good luck in the cash drawer where they have stayed for 38 years.

Whether the coins are still providing any luck is questionable, but soon they will move out to the company's store at Westheimer and Gessner — now known as Houston Jewelry & Distributing Co. — following the liquidation of the downtown store which begins today.

The family-owned business's downtown store has been at 1301 Fannin in the First City Financial Center since 1984. Previous locations of the company's downtown stores have been in the Houston Club Building and near the intersection of Milam and Rusk streets.

Owner Andrew L. Solomon said Tuesday the downtown store is closing because of a lack of pedestrian traffic and because the store has no access to the tunnel system.

"Many of the buildings that were anticipated to be built in our immediate area never did come into reality and as a con-

sequence we lacked the traffic that a retailing establishment needs," said Solomon.

David Pena, whose Houston-based company Rogers, Pena & Associates is handling the liquidation, estimated there is about \$2 million in merchandise at the store that will be sold, along with virtually everything else in the store, which occupies about 10,000 square feet of leased space.

"Everything will go, all of the merchandise, the furniture, the rugs,

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everything," said Pena.

Andy Solomon's son, Rex, said in the past few months sales have dropped significantly at the downtown store.

"It may have something to do with the rising crime rate where people just aren't willing to walk around downtown," he said.

Solomon said Pena's estimate of

\$2 million in merchandise is probably on the low end because items are also being brought in from the Westheimer location and from Dallas, where the company owns the chain of Sterling Jewelry stores.

For purposes of the sale, which will feature initial markdowns of 20 percent on all merchandise except cameras and electronic equipment, only Houston Jewelry cardmembers will be allowed to shop

the store today and Thursday.

From then on, the sale will be open to the general public until everything is gone.

The company employs about 16 people at the downtown store, and Rex said every effort is being made to find jobs for them at the Westheimer store.

"Our Christmas hiring is going to start with that pool of people," he said.