

Central Florida Business



Real Estate

Former Blockbuster stores become pawn shops

By **Mary Shanklin** | ORLANDO SENTINEL

Shopping center landlords may have found a new use for darkened **Blockbuster** video stores.

La Familia Pawn and Jewelry recently opened its first Orlando store in a former Blockbuster store at 4205 Curry Ford Road, near Conway Road.

The chain, launched in Puerto Rico last year by former **Value Pawn and Jewelry** chief executive officer John Thedford, has two other locations in former Blockbusters in Puerto Rico. The company is looking in Orlando at two other former Blockbusters, a spokesperson said.

"Our stores already established in South Florida and San Juan, Puerto Rico, have experienced significant growth, and we are on track to open a total of 20 locations in Florida and Puerto Rico by the end of 2010," Thedford said.

Blockbuster stores, once a popular outlet for DVD rentals, have struggled with their retail presence as consumers have turned to mail and the Internet for DVD movies and games.