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Used, rental furniture ideal for students 'on a shoestring'

By Diana Johnson Staff Reporter

"Living on a shoestring" is a phrase most college students relate to easily. It's not easy to pay tuition and rent and still furnish an apartment.

The answer to furniture problems may be just down the street at the local rental center, thrift shop or used furniture store.

Mer-Hart Furniture Mart, 5701 Russell Dr., gets a lot of business from college students, said Jan Merritt, store co-owner.

Mer-Hart sells only used furniture often buying complete households of at college time, she said. Sofas, lovefurniture, she said. The store also seats, beds and mattresses also are stocks a warehouse which is open for popular items.

the year to "get ready for August," Mer-ritt said. Many students buy furniture here," Merritt said. in the summer and leave it at the store.

"It's easier to leave it here and then pick it up later," she said. "We have the room."

Merritt said some customers come to the store year after year. Mer-Hart Merritt said.

has been in business for 15 years and students always have been good customers, she said.

Students sometimes look for furniture they can refinish, since the store does nothing to the furniture except

Used furniture is sold as is. No repairs are made. Prices vary from store to store, but they depend on the furniture's style, condition and age, Merritt

Desks sell for as little as \$13.50. Chests are about \$20 to \$25. Sofas start at \$25, Merritt said.

Desks and chests are the top-sellers

"Students don't have the time to go The store buys furniture throughout to garage sales to look for things like

> Apartment-dwellers aren't the only shoppers at used furniture stores.

> Students living in residence halls and Greek houses often are interested in loveseats and chairs for their rooms,



Mark Davis/Dally Nebraskan

Used furniture can add style to a room for a low cost.

"They're usually not too picky about what they get," she said. "They just want something that will get them through the next nine months."

Merritt said many students recommend the store to their friends. Word of mouth is the store's best advertisement, she said.

Renting furniture and appliances also is an answer for apartment dwellers. August and January are the busiest months at Ace Rent-to-Own, said store manager Brett Schroeder.

"Students may rent entire sets of furniture from here. They may also come back later in the year and trade in furniture if they want to change style," Schroeder said.

He said small two-cubic-foot refrigerators are the store's most popular item. Students started renting early in August and Schroeder said he expects it to continue through September.

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