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Capital Buzz: Booz Allen Hamilton considering going public, sources say

By Thomas Heath

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The Buzz hears that Carlyle Group-owned [Booz Allen Hamilton](#), the McLean-based government consulting firm, is considering going public.

Two sources said an initial public offering is imminent, and could happen as early as this week. (They spoke on the condition of anonymity because the details are not yet public.)

Booz Allen provides consulting services in strategy, operations, organization and change, and information technology to major corporations, government agencies and institutions, according to Carlyle's Web site.

Booz Allen Hamilton in 2008 split its government and commercial businesses, selling a majority stake in the government unit to Carlyle for \$2.54 billion.

The consulting firm, founded by Edwin G. Booz in 1914, went public in 1970 and then was taken private six years later. It had been owned by 300 top executives and had about \$4 billion in revenue prior to the Carlyle purchase.

A Carlyle spokeswoman declined to comment.

"It's not something we can speculate on," said Marie Lerch, a spokesman for Booz Allen Hamilton.

FITZGERALD DEALERSHIP REINSTATED

Chalk one up for Jack Fitzgerald, the longtime Washington area automobile dealer who is fighting to keep open five Chrysler dealerships -- three in Montgomery County, one in Frederick and one in Florida -- after the auto company terminated them as part of its reorganization plan following last year's bankruptcy.

An arbitrator ruled earlier this month that the Florida Chrysler dealership at the Fitzgerald Auto Mall in Clearwater should be reinstated.

The hearing, administrated by the American Arbitration Association, lasted four days and included around 15 witnesses. The judge considered three factors, including the interests of the dealer, the interests of the manufacturer and the interests of the consumer.

The judge said the dealer and manufacturer interests canceled each other out, which he termed "equipoise."

That left only the consumers, who the judge said benefited by having an additional outlet to shop for cars and get service, according to John Forehand, who handled the Florida arbitration for Fitzgerald.

Fitzgerald, known for starring in his own television commercials, was thrilled with the judge's consumer-oriented ruling.

"That's the highest compliment any business can get," he said. "Small-business people have to be consumer activists to be effective."

The four cases in Maryland have yet to be decided.

EVENING STAR BUILDING SOLD

The Evening Star building, a 112-year-old property on Pennsylvania Avenue NW, is being purchased by TIAA-CREF, the New York-based financial services firm, for \$180 million, according to the seller's agent, [Jones Lang LaSalle](#).

The 13-story building was built to house the former Evening Star newspaper and is the oldest building on Pennsylvania Avenue after the White House. It is 88 percent leased.

The sale serves as another benchmark in office sales after a frozen 2009. Last September, Vornado/Charles E. Smith sold 1999 K St. NW, a 250,000-square-foot office building, to a German investment fund for \$207.8 million. Last month, MRP Realty reportedly signed a contract to buy Washington Harbour, the 526,000-square-foot Georgetown office and retail complex, for \$240 million.

IF YOU SEE A GUY CARRYING A TV ...

Zappos.com chief executive Tony Hsieh, in town for Digital Capital Week, sat for an interview for an online video at The Washington Post with The Buzz.

Hsieh, 35, had a lot to share. He sold his first company, Linkexchange, to [Microsoft](#) for \$225 million. Then last year, he sold Zappos.com to [Amazon.com](#) for \$1.2 billion. Hsieh exchanged his 30 percent ownership in Zappos.com for Amazon stock.

Asked later how he spent the week, the author of the book "Delivering Happiness" said by e-mail that he stopped by Marvin, a hot 14th Street bar, and had dinner at the Bombay Club with DCWeek organizers.

"Food was really good," he said.

He added, "went to Washington Post, did an interview with some guy

named Tom Heath [aka The Buzz], gave him a signed copy of my new book. I also managed to steal a giant plasma TV from The Washington Post offices when nobody was looking. I later sold it on eBay and pocketed a tidy \$700, which more than paid for my train ticket back to New York."

The Buzz is pretty sure he was kidding about the last part, seeing as how he walked Hsieh out and he had no flat screen under his arm.

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