



Graham MacKenzie Ph. C.,
owner and pharmacist,
Stone's Pharmasave,
Baddeck, Nova Scotia

BIG NEWS IN BADDECK

Pharmacy reno adds frontshop categories
and consultation space



RENO

**Sometimes changes in life are voluntary;
other times they are thrust upon us by
external circumstances.**

That's the situation Graham MacKenzie found himself in recently. The old dispensary and compounding area in his Stone's Pharmasave in Baddeck, Nova Scotia, was outdated and too small for the volume of business from customers and a local nursing home he was servicing. The store was, by his own admission, "looking tired," and new legislation giving pharmacists in the province the ability to prescribe and administer injections meant he needed to have a private consultation room. About eight years ago, MacKenzie had renovated the outside of his store with a new awning, signage, siding and windows, but now circumstances were telling him it was time to refurbish the inside as well.

BY TALBOT BOGGS

PHOTOS BY JOHN RATCHFORD



“We’re the only pharmacy on Cape Breton Island with a compounding facility,,

Over five months beginning in November last year, MacKenzie Ph. C. completely rebuilt and reorganized his store, which has been in its current location on Baddeck’s main street since 1960, and which he purchased in 2001. MacKenzie began by renovating the 800 sq. ft. pharmacy in November and December. The dispensary was relocated to the other side of the store and built on a slightly raised floor. MacKenzie gutted two old storage rooms and added them to the dispensary for preparing and packaging medications for the 80-bed Alderwood nursing home in Baddeck. A private consultation room was built, and the old compounding area was repositioned and rebuilt with a particle containment hood and windows so customers can look inside and watch as staff prepare veterinary, hormone replacement therapy, pain management and other compounds.

“We’re the only pharmacy on Cape Breton Island with a compounding facility,” MacKenzie notes proudly. “If we didn’t have it, people would have to drive about five hours into the mainland. I just felt there was going to be a need for it. At first I was thinking the biggest demand would be for veterinary compounds, but we started to get more and more requests for hormone replacement therapy and pain management. It’s been a great convenience and service to people on the Island and a great addition to our business.”

New legislation in Nova Scotia allowing pharmacists to prescribe as well as administer injections will require pharmacies to have a private consultation room. “It certainly is not being used all the time now, but if someone wants to come in and sit down and discuss their medications or something of a private nature, we can do it,” MacKenzie says. “We will certainly need the consultation room more when we get prescribing and injections. If we hadn’t included it when we did the renovations, we certainly couldn’t have done it now.”

Frontshop moves

MacKenzie also completely renovated the 3,400 sq. ft. frontshop. He moved the main cash counter to the other side of the store right next to the cosmetics section, a big-selling category but also one with the highest incidence of theft, along with razor blades and batteries. “These categories always had the highest rate of theft in the old store, so we decided to put them together to keep an eye on them,” says frontshop manager Leigh Anne Buchanan. “Wider aisles have made these categories a lot more visible, and an updated security camera system hopefully will help monitor them more closely and reduce the losses.”

MacKenzie increased the size and visibility of the store’s home health section to meet the needs of an aging demographic. More spacious aisles now can accommodate wheel chairs, and the home health section has a raised display area where it can profile walkers, wheel chairs and mobility chairs for purchase or rental, along with a large assortment of other products such as pressure stockings, joint supports, bath accessories and pillows. “The whole section is a lot more accessible, has a better layout and flow that makes it a lot easier for people to find what they need and help themselves,” Buchanan says.

Stone’s boasts a vibrant tourist trade during the summer months in particular, so MacKenzie updated and modernized the giftware, seasonal and vitamin sections. Giftware, featuring Canadian and Cape Breton themes, is now repositioned in one corner of the store and is displayed in an eye-catching Plexiglas display case visible from



Frontshop manager **Leigh Anne Buchanan** says Stone’s Pharmasave completely rethought the frontshop section to make it more visible and also increased the size of the growing home healthcare section.

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the main entrance. Other popular seasonal items like bug spray, towels, beach toys and fireworks, popular with the thousands of tourists who visit the area each year, are highlighted on Plexiglas shelves. Other areas now feature Pharmasave's private label brands, a Kodak photo kiosk, fresh flower cooler, confectionery, milk, small assortment of groceries, flat screen television running product features and promotions, helium for balloons, and a host of other pharmacy services such as blood pressure monitors, and cholesterol, glucose, diabetes and saliva testing.

The new store also features end-aisle displays and special two-foot by four-foot copper-like roof tiling. "The ceiling has brightened up the store amazingly," MacKenzie says. "People are really shocked when they come in for the first time. They just can't believe the difference."



A new flat screen TV runs product features and promotions.

The second floor of the building is occupied by Home Hardware. For years the pharmacy had used the 1,800 sq. ft. third floor for storage, but MacKenzie decided to renovate it as well and turned it into Stone's Clothing, offering casual clothing and footwear from infants to adults. "There are no casual clothing stores in Baddeck, only specialty stores," says MacKenzie. "We felt the time was right to convert the third floor to clothing. My wife Beverly helps to do the buying. It's part of the drugstore business and makes a financial contribution to it."

The \$200,000 renovations are only a few months old and MacKenzie can't yet say how much impact they've had on business and his bottom line, but customers and staff are very happy with the new store and the changes, which also included a new staff room with space for 12 people. MacKenzie held a grand reopening in the spring with in-store specials and hourly prizes that included Pharmasave gift cards, golf shirts, barbecue sets and a 50-inch flat screen TV. "The changes have been great for everyone," MacKenzie says. "In this business you have to keep up or you'll be left behind." **PB**