

THE POST

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Family-owned pharmacies flourish



A Walgreen's pharmacy is being built on Route 415 in Dallas. When completed, the pharmacy will be the eighth in a 3.7-mile stretch of highway in the Back Mountain.

By DAVE KONOPKI
Post Editor

They've been a fixture in the Back Mountain for more than 100 combined years. During those years, they quietly watched – and persevered – as larger, big chain drug stores opened their doors in the area.

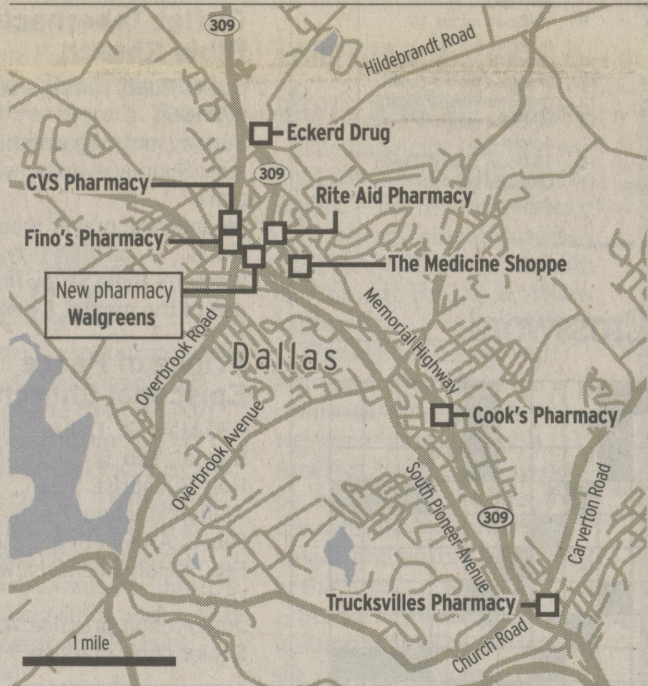
So now that construction has begun for another big chain pharmacy in Dallas, don't expect the owners and employees of Cook's Pharmacy, Fino's Pharmacy and the Trucksville Pharmacy to panic and implement wholesale changes.

Instead, the independently owned pharmacies will continue to do things the way they've been done for 10 decades.

Construction has begun to build a 24-hour Walgreen's on Route 415. The store – which will be an exact duplicate of the 14,234-square-foot Walgreen's on Wyoming Avenue in Kingston – will be built on land near the former Pizza Hut. Walgreen's recently received conditional approval from the county planning commission to begin the excavation and construction is expected to be completed in approximately nine months.

Back Mountain pharmacies

When the new Walgreen's Pharmacy is completed in 2006, the Back Mountain will be home to eight pharmacies located in less than a 4-mile stretch of highway. Three of the pharmacies – Trucksville Pharmacy, Cook's Pharmacy and Fino's Pharmacy – are independent. The others are part of drug store chains.



TIMES LEADER GRAPHIC/PAUL BOWERS

"It certainly makes you think," said Frank Lombardo, owner of Cook's Pharmacy in Shavertown. "But I don't think we're going to change a lot. We'll keep doing the little things, like home delivery, and serving the community. You have to be competitive. In the long run, it will probably be a good thing and make us a better store."

With the completion of Walgreen's, the Back Mountain will be home to eight pharmacies in a 3.7-mile stretch of highway – from the Trucksville Pharmacy on Carverton Road to Eckerd's Drugs in the Country Club Shopping Center in Dallas Township. And that doesn't include outlying pharmacies, such as the Sweet Valley Pharmacy.

"We're a spread-out community, but the population isn't dense," said Lombardo, whose family has owned the pharmacy for almost 30 years. "There are a lot of pharmacies in a small area. (Walgreen's) will take a little from everyone. They'll get a piece of everyone's pie. The people who will be going there won't be coming from Scranton. They're going to be from

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PHOTOS FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Pastor Marc Ramirez gets a hug from Carol Thomas following a worship service at the Fellowship Evangelical Free Church of Dallas.

Fellowship, faith and familiar faces

By DAVE KONOPKI
Post Editor

DALLAS TWP. – Ten years ago, God called the Rev. Dwight Hodne to leave the Fellowship Evangelical Free Church of Dallas to become the senior pastor of the Montgomery Evangelical Free Church in Belle Mead, N.J.

Now, He's calling Hodne back. Church members recently voted bring Hodne back as the church's senior pastor. The man who helped transform the FEFC from a tiny church holding services in a classroom at College Misericordia to a large church on Hildebrandt Road expects to move back to area in late May or early June.

"The Lord has called us back," said Hodne, during a telephone interview from his office at the MEFC. "There's a great need at the church. I feel that it's time to come back and complete something that was started."

Last fall, Hodne began having conversations with several church members about the possibility of returning to the Back Mountain. Those conversations led to a formal interview by the search committee and the eventual vote two weeks ago by church members.

Hodne and his wife Holly have kept in contact with

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Pastor Marc Ramirez prays near the conclusion of a worship service.



FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Dan Shilanski helps install a window support frame for a case-ment window in the basement.



Back Mountain resident Collin Bessmer spackled drywall as part of a Habitat for Humanity renovation project.

Back Mountain residents help build better tomorrow

BY GENELLE HOBAN
Post Correspondent

WILKES-BARRE – Last weekend, a group of about a dozen volunteers from the Trucksville United Methodist Church, as well as some other residents from the Back Mountain, pitched in to renovate a home in the city.

The big blue house located at 874 S. Franklin St. is being renovated by Habitat for Humanity, a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry that provides affordable housing for low-income families.

Volunteers did everything from sanding and spackling sheetrock to installing a duct heating system.

"We were working (on rebuilding homes) after some arson fires in the Back Mountain in 1989 and that's how it all started," Clarence Michael, a member of the Trucksville United Methodist Church said. "It was a neat experience working together on the barns. After that we joined forces with the Rev. Ken Carder in Wilkes-Barre and started volunteering for Habitat."

Although Michael is a veteran volunteer with Habitat, there were many first-time helpers assisting at the home. Dan Shilanski of Shavertown was one of the many newbies.

"I came because I had a desire to be more involved with the community," said the 49-year-old. "I have done remodeling and additions to my own home so I kind of like this."

Kevin Carey, a family physician from Noxen, said his wife, Nichole, was the one who persuaded him to volunteer.

"She hates to see me have a day off," he said with a smile.

Carey's brother, Rich Harris of Harveys Lake, was also "roped into" lending his helping hands.

"They called me last night and told me I was going," said Harris who recently returned from a two-year tour of duty with the 365th Combat Engineers Army Reserves.

Spencer Martin, a board member of Habitat since 1999, said he started lending his helping hands after he retired from his engineering business.

"My good friend got me involved and here I am seven years later," the 77-year-old resident of the Back Mountain said. "They won't let me go now."

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