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Robert Kinsey, RPh  
Kinsey's Pharmacy  
4290 Kinsey Dr.  
Tyler, Tx 78703

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## PHARMACIST PLANS TO MOVE BUSINESS AROUND THE CORNER

Tyler Morning Telegraph  
Greg Junek, Business Editor  
Oct. 4, 2003

If Kinsey's Pharmacy customers cannot remember the pharmacy's name, maybe they can remember the street, or vice versa.

Owner Robert Kinsey said his pharmacy will move, probably next spring, to a new location at 4290 Kinsey Drive. Although the new pharmacy will be less than a thousand yards from its current location at 1420 WSW Loop 323, it will have much greater access, Kinsey said.

When the Texas Department of Transportation install medians on Loop 323, it made the pharmacy much more difficult to access by people traveling west on the loop, Kinsey said. The new location will eliminate that problem, but just as important, he said, it will also give himself and his employees some room to breathe.

"I have 1,000 square feet here," Kinsey said of his current location. "I'm going to occupy 3,000 square feet in the (new) pharmacy. Pretty much what you see here is what will be over there. We're just going to take what we have here and we'll expand that."

The pharmacy's compounding laboratory will be expanded, and it will offer more over-the-counter merchandise, he said.

And it will still have the drive-up service window. Kinsey's became the first pharmacy in Tyler to offer this service, installing it in 1990.

Plans for the new pharmacy are with the city of Tyler, awaiting the issuance of a building permit, Kinsey said. Total square footage will be 6,500 square feet and the project will represent a construction investment of around \$550,000 to \$600,000.

Jacobe Brothers Construction Inc. will be the contractor on the project. Ron Mabry & Associates is the architect.

Kinsey will also become a landlord, as the remaining 3,500 square feet of the building will be a lease space. He said he is looking for a tenant.

"That may be a physician, it may be a dentist, it may be a chiropractor, it could be an insurance company," he said.

### NO COINCIDENCE

The names "Kinsey's Pharmacy" and "Kinsey Drive" are more than coincidental. Kinsey said, however, it makes an interesting play on words.

"We're looking at Kinsey's Pharmacy on Kinsey Drive, which is kind of an interesting scenario," he said.

Kinsey Drive was named after his father, Bob Kinsey, a real estate entrepreneur in the 1960s and 1970s. He and a partner owned about 60 acres behind Doctors

Memorial Hospital. They dedicated the street to the city of Tyler in the late 1970s.

Kinsey employs eight people, a far cry from when he struck out on his own in Tyler in 1979.

"The number of employees has grown; the square footage hasn't," Kinsey said with a laugh. "We have this many people working here and we all like each other, and that's a good deal because we have cramped quarters here."

Kinsey graduated from pharmacy school at the University of Texas in 1966. He served as a pharmacist in other cities and began business in Tyler in 1975 when he and Larry Craig opened Kinsey-Craig Pharmacy at 1406 S. Fleishel Ave. They purchased Glenn Pharmacy at Kinsey's current location, and Kinsey operated it as Kinsey-Craig Pharmacy.

In 1979 the men dissolved their partnership and Kinsey purchased the loop location and renamed it Kinsey's Pharmacy. He will celebrate his 25th anniversary next spring.

The only employees in 1979 were himself and a cashier.

"When I first opened this store I still used a typewriter to generate prescription labels," Kinsey said. "That was back in the days when the business in pharmacies was simple. A patient came in with a prescription, gave to me, I typed the label, counted the medication, gave it to the person, we visited, they paid for it and they left."

Kinsey also used part-time delivery people from Robert E. Lee High School through the former Distributive Education program.

In those days, the loop did not carry nearly as much traffic as today. It had four lanes

and a grass median. Businesses included Chili's, Red Lobster, Jack O'Diamonds and Courtesy Pontiac, which later became the Peltier dealership.

Kinsey said Rice Road was a blacktop road and Old Jacksonville Highway only had two lanes. When Kinsey Drive was opened, there was nothing but thick woods around it, and Kinsey said it was not unusual to see a coyote walking across it.

"There were a lot of business that weren't here, so there was a lot of land for sale out here in this area when I came out here," Kinsey said.

Doctors Memorial Hospital was open, along with the row of doctors' offices that Kinsey's Pharmacy fronts.

"All these offices were full of physicians, and that has gone by the wayside now," he said. "I'm the only business left here and there are two dentists and one physician here. Everything else has moved out."

### **GROWING BUSINESS**

Kinsey grew his business over the years by purchasing the inventory and prescription files of two Tyler pharmacies in 1980 and 1998.

"That's a good way to increase your business," he said.

Since Kinsey began his business in Tyler, chain pharmacies and pharmacies in large department stores have grown in number and predominance. Chain pharmacies sell merchandise and perform services, such as film developing, that Kinsey's does not provide.

Although independent pharmacies used to offer more merchandise and services, nowadays many smaller, independent pharmacies cannot compete economically

with some of the larger chains by offering those services, he said. But Kinsey said his business concentrates its efforts on friendly and fast customer service, and believes this has kept his same customers coming back even if the traffic situation made the jaunt more difficult.

"What keeps us alive is our customer relations," he said. "I train my employees to garner relationships with our customers. We call them by name when they come in, once we get to know them. Some people have traded here so long, we're not only taking care of their medication needs, their children's and their grandchildren's. And their parents' needs, as they age and go to retirement centers, we service their needs, too."

Unlike the chains locally, the pharmacy still offers a delivery service, and will continue

to do so when it moves to its new location. It also has prescription compounding, where prescriptions are made in the pharmacy. Kinsey calls that a niche not normally found in the chain pharmacies.

"Physicians still write prescriptions for compounds," Kinsey said. "Things that have been discontinued, they will have us make that in our lab, and we dispense that to their patients. We compound for dogs and cats and zoo animals and birds."

Being an independent also means a lot of legwork and public relations work for Kinsey at doctors' offices.

"I go out to their offices and I talk to them about what we do here and how we can take care of their customers," he said.