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Meet the **NCPA Innovation Center's 2019 NICE Award** Recipients

by Chris Linville

NCPA has many programs to help its members be successful beyond the prescription department, led by our own front-end guru, Gabe Trahan. These include live programming at our conferences, a focused one-day Front-End Profit Building Seminar sponsored by Good Neighbor Pharmacy, and regular columns in America's Pharmacist®, along with a plethora of great advice, examples, tools, and resources on the NCPA website.

Last year, the NCPA Innovation Center decided to start recognizing pharmacies that have demonstrated excellence in their marketing and merchandising with The NICE Awards (NCPA Innovation Center Excellence).

"The purpose of the NICE Awards is to showcase the best in community pharmacy branding and marketing – the innovations and redesigns that make promotions more effective and patients' experiences more rewarding," says NCPA Innovation Center President Kurt Proctor. "Marketing is the lifeblood of a community pharmacy. The aim of the NICE Awards is to spotlight what good pharmacy marketing looks like – and what it accomplishes for a pharmacy business."

"Wouldn't it be nice if others could see and learn and achieve marketing success as a result of these examples?" Proctor added.

The NCPA Innovation Center accepted nominations for the following award categories:

- Best Customer Convenience Improvement
- Best External Remodel
- Best Marketing/Promotion
- Best Delivery Vehicle
- Best Exterior Sign
- Best Internal Remodel
- Best In-Store Display

With one pharmacy (Economy Pharmacy in Muskogee, Okla.) excelling across more than half the categories, the NCPA Innovation Center decided to recognize it with an unplanned award, the Overhaul of the Year. In the following pages we highlight the NICEest entries, as determined by this year's judges — Bruce Kneeland, Judy Aspinall, and JoAnn Gaio.

Thanks to all who submitted entries for the 2019 NICE Awards. If you are planning on making pharmacy improvements this year, take plenty of pictures and let us know and you could be named among the nicest of the NICE in 2020. Look for nomination information coming this autumn.

Check out more photos of the winning entries at www.ncpanet.org/feo.

Meet our judges



BRUCE KNEELAND

After a long career in the pharmacy supply chain, Bruce Kneeland is a semi-retired industry consultant who interviews successful community pharmacy owners and managers all across the country. He shares what he learns by delivering live CE programs and writing for several pharmacy journals.



JUDY ASPINALL

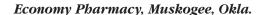
Judy Aspinall worked for 15 years at the Chain Drug Marketing Association, an association centered on the front-end of independent and regional retailers, while also servicing wholesalers with products. As vice president, she guided her team in sales and marketing.



JOANN GAIO

JoAnn Gaio has more than 30 years of sales and management experience with IBM and Upsher-Smith Laboratories, Inc. She retired from Upsher-Smith in 2016 after 15 years, having been responsible for managing national sales and distribution of Upsher's consumer portfolio. She currently works with nonprofit organizations in business development and fundraising.

OVERHAUL OF THE YEAR





Economy Pharmacy submitted applications in more than half of the NICE categories in 2018. The NCPA Innovation Center was so impressed that it decided to recognize it with an unplanned award, the Overhaul of the Year.

Economy Pharmacy has four locations, two in Muskogee and two in Tulsa. The original Muskogee location was built in 1988 and was showing its age, according to Becky Schiller, wife of CEO Chris Schiller. "The major change was moving the pharmacy area out 10 feet. This allowed for a new work flow system most compatible with modern computer technology." The entire pharmacy was basically turned inside out and provided with a vast array of physical upgrades and amenities

"Our latest full remodel of our 'mothership' was all about customer conveniences," Becky says. "The removal of curbs into the automatic doors at the entrance were a much needed necessity. Not only does it make it easier for handicapped individuals, but no one wants to touch door handles sick people have been in contact with all day."

Becky says other upgrades included signage clearly marking all areas and departments, a pack and ship counter with supplies by the U.S. Post Office, and the public restroom. Over-the-counter shelving has gone from 86 inches high to 55 inches,

creating much needed visibility from the front to the back of the store. Any shelving or fixtures that we've added have locking wheels to make it easy to move and clean the floor underneath. The retail square footage space was decreased by slightly more than 1,000 square feet, but Becky says the customers all are amazed with "how much bigger it is in here."

The pharmacy also has its own fulltime graphic designer who designed a new branding package to include guides for usage of logos, fonts, sizing, and colors. New signage was designed in an Art Deco style.

The only downside was that the remodel took eight months instead of the originally planned three, and although the pharmacy stayed open the entire time, Becky says the pharmacy decided to have a "grand re-opening" to show off the "new" Economy Pharmacy.

The reviews have been overwhelmingly positive. "The remodel was a huge challenge, but everyone is now thankful it happened," she says.

Fast Facts: Economy Pharmacy, Muskogee, Okla.

Established: 1988

Management: Chris and Becky Schiller, co-owners

Products & Services: Includes standard retail, compliance packaging,

compounding, mobile app, flu clinic information,

pediatric, and online bill pay.

NCPA member since: 2011









BEST CUSTOMER CONVENIENCE IMPROVEMENT

Jasper Drug Store, Jasper, Ga.



Jack Dunn, owner of Jasper Drug Store, Jasper, Ga., was looking for a way to get younger people into his pharmacy, as most of its patient base is over 50 years old.

"I had spoken to a lady last year who had opened up a section in a pharmacy for mothers who were expecting," he says. "She told me that they had done quite well with it."

With that in mind, Dunn says he started looking into the dynamics of adding a baby section at his pharmacy.

"I spoke with the ladies on our staff, and they thought it would be good to have a room available for breast feeding," he says. "Soon after that our local hospital came to us and wanted our store to step forward with the baby section as well. They said they wanted a central location to send young mothers for training for breast feeding as well as other products that babies would need after they were born." Dunn also says

the staff is thoroughly trained to know all of the products the pharmacy sells for newborns. In the above photo, Angie Burgess (at left) and Morgan Haynes (right) are shown with some of the baby products.

Dunn says the convenience of having everything in place for parents was a huge success. "They don't have to go and look at several locations to get products for their child," he says. Dunn says that when a new mother is released from the hospital with her baby, she is given a form with the services that Jasper provides. And anyone with infant children knows that they can get sick, no matter what the time. That's why the store has an after-hours phone number that parents can call if needed. Dunn also employs a certified staff person who provides education for breast feeding for new moms.

Fast Facts: Jasper Drug Store, Jasper, Ga.

Established: 1952

Management: Jack Dunn, owner (his father, Lee, opened the

pharmacy in 1952)

Products & Services: Includes standard retail, compounding,

medication therapy management, medication synchronization, immunizations, diabetes products and education (including socks, shoes and fittings), weight management, blood pressure control, smoking cessation, natural medications, and long-term care services.

NCPA member since: 197

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BEST EXTERNAL REMODEL

Getwell Pharmacy, Philadelphia





Fast Facts: Getwell Pharmacy, Philadelphia

Established: 1985. In current location since 1988.

Management: Riaz Rahman, owner

Products & Services: Includes standard retail, front-end,

OTC, medication therapy management, immunizations, and an emphasis on opioid

abuse prevention.

NCPA member since: 2010

Getwell Pharmacy has been in its current downtown location for more than 30 years and has developed ties with its patients, many of whom it considers family. A few years ago, through a partnership with the city of Philadelphia, and Esperanza, a local non-profit community organization, Getwell began work on a storefront remodel.

Esperanza has a storefront improvement program designed to encourage businesses and property owners within targeted neighborhood commercial corridors to improve the front exterior of their commercial properties. The program reimburses owners of commercial buildings and businesses providing goods and services to the community up to 50 percent of the total cost of eligible improvements, for a maximum reimbursement of \$10,000 for a single commercial property or \$15,000 for a multiple address or corner business property.

"We had two storefronts, so we were granted \$15,000 from the city of Philadelphia," says owner Riaz Rahman. "Esperanza granted us about \$10,000. We were responsible for just under \$20,000." Jeffrey Brummer Architects designed the project.

Rahman says the remodel, completed in August 2018, has had a dramatic impact on the pharmacy. "Business has improved since the remodel for our OTCs and other front-end sales," he says. "We have gained patients who we hope will soon become family."

BEST MARKETING PROMOTION

Brossart Pharmacy Compounding and Medical Equipment, Cleves, Obio



For Small Business Saturday in 2018, Brossart Pharmacy Compounding and Medical Equipment decided to go all out. It sent out 8,000 flyers, boosted posts on Facebook, promoted it on its website, and did plenty of word-of-mouth marketing.

"We extended our hours," says pharmacy president John Brossart. "We actually had people showing up on Black Friday thinking the sale was that day instead of Saturday. Compared to the 2017 Small Business Saturday we did five times the business."

John's wife Karen Brossart says the company hired a "professional" Santa, as opposed to simply having a person dress up as Santa, and the \$300 investment for two hours paid off.

"In 2017, we were dragging kids in to see Santa," John says. "This year, Santa was busy from start to finish and we had triple the kids from last year. And outside we had a 20-foot inflatable Santa in front of the store to help people find us."

Karen says some tips from NCPA marketing guru Gabe Trahan proved valuable.

"With all this we still made a profit. It wasn't like in past years where we used a circular company to promote our merchandise," she says. "We took Gabe's advice and went to Americasmart in Atlanta where we found special merchandise on which we could earn a profit. Our advertising also brought in several new faces that we hope will turn into customers. To incentivize our employees, we also had a contest for a \$50 gift card for the person who sold the most candles."

Fast Facts: Brossart Pharmacy Compounding and Medical Equipment, Cleves, Ohio

Established: 1989

Management: John Brossart, president

Products & Services: Includes standard retail, compounding,

immunizations/vaccinations, diabetes products and education, vitamins, durable medical equipment, refill mobile app, and health

screenings.

NCPA member since: 2004

BEST DELIVERY VEHICLE

Tayloe's Hospital Pharmacy, Washington, N.C.



For years Tayloe's Hospital Pharmacy contracted out its delivery services, so the deliveries were made by drivers using their own vehicle. Then in 2013, the pharmacy had the opportunity to purchase a 2006 Volkswagen Bug diesel for \$12,500. They "wrapped" that car with the pharmacy's logo and colors (the wrapping acts like a sticker and attaches to the exterior).

Tayloe's pharmacy business manager Lori Melton says the vehicle certainly draws attention. "We get lots of feedback," she says. "People have named it the 'Drug Bug' or 'Pills on Wheels.' For advertising and identity it's been great, and as far as I'm concerned it's a good investment. It's a diesel, so it gets good gas mileage." The car makes two delivery runs daily Monday through Friday, and another on

Saturday, and not having to spend significant money on fuel makes a difference. Melton also says that customers feel more secure seeing a car with the pharmacy's markings coming to their house as opposed to an unmarked vehicle.

Unfortunately, the car is so popular that it has been stolen several

times, once being found in New Bern, about 45 minutes away. Melton says that a pharmacy customer who happened to be in New Bern called and said it was sitting on the side of the road. When asked why somebody would steal a vehicle with such distinctive markings, Melton says with a laugh, "I guess that means you're an idiot."

Fast Facts: Tayloe's Hospital Pharmacy, Washington, N.C.

Established: 1889, incorporated in 1991 **Management:** Ten-person ownership group

Products & Services: Includes standard retail, free local delivery,

medication consulting, medication flavoring, durable medical equipment, immunizations, and

OTC medications.

NCPA member since: 2012

BEST EXTERIOR SIGN

Davy Crockett Drug, Crockett, Texas





Fast Facts: Davy Crockett Drug, Crockett, Texas

Established: 1961

Management: James Martin, owner

Products & Services: Includes standard retail, durable medical

equipment, long-term care, medication synchronization, medication therapy management, immunizations, and delivery.

NCPA member since: 2018

Davy Crockett Drug is located on a busy town square that has traffic flow similar to a roundabout, says owner James Martin. "It is very difficult to navigate when you are looking for the store," he says. "We had many customers complain that they could not find us."

Martin says that he and his staff attended a Front-End Seminar by NCPA marketing guru Gabe Trahan at AmeriSource Bergen's Thought-Spot in Las Vegas, and Trahan suggested some changes.

"Our store is an old Rexall store from the 1950s, so we stuck with the blue and orange theme to make an eye-catching sign while implementing some of the tips we received from Gabe," Martin says, adding that the difference was drastic.

"Our sign was installed in April of this year. Since then our frontend sales have increased by nine percent, and now everyone knows where Davy Crockett Drug is."



BEST INTERNAL REMODEL

City Drug Store Health Mart, Parsons, Tenn.







City Drug Store Health Mart completed an extensive internal remodel in the summer of 2017, says owner Kim Phillips. Among the renovations were a private consultation room, a compounding and adherence packaging counter, a bigger front end near the main entrance, and new shelving and slat wall displays. The store also relocated an office and restroom, built a new employee break room, replaced the flooring, and applied a fresh coat of paint

Phillips says the current counter and fixtures were resurfaced. She says the benefits were improved visual appeal and visibility throughout the pharmacy. There is more patient privacy during consultations and in-

creased space for customers to shop and wait. Phillips says the front-end merchandise is better organized, and it's easier for employees to focus on compounding and adherence packaging. For proof the remodel accomplished its objective, Phillips points to this recent customer comment: "Wonderful service, beautiful store, and the most helpful and friendly staff. Absolutely awesome."

Fast Facts: City Drug Store Health Mart, Parsons, Tenn.

Established: 2003

Management: Kim Phillips, owner

Products & Services: Includes standard retail, medication

synchronization, diabetes products and services, adherence packaging, free delivery, blood pressure screening, compounding, drive-thru, flu shots, immunizations, Medicare Part D enrollment assistance, and medication reviews.

NCPA member since: 2016

BEST IN-STORE DISPLAY

Jefferson Pharmacy, Palmyra, Va.

Jonathan Oliver, a co-owner of Jefferson Pharmacy in Palmyra, Va., considers himself the store's "Swiss Army knife," doing a bit of everything as manager of the front end. Oliver knows that with the challenges facing independent pharmacy these days, the goal is to create a buzz with interesting displays that get attention and, ideally, additional sales.

Last year Oliver, who has enjoyed carpentry since he was a kid, built a cart using an old wood pallet as a base and stocked it with natural and gourmet food. All it took was a \$20 sheet of plywood, some hardware, and eight hours of labor. Additionally, he fashioned an endcap with a display of local honey, another easy and inexpensive effort.

"I would like to think the displays have helped," Oliver says. "These are lines that you do not expect to find in a pharmacy but are doing great in creating impulse sales. The honey was a very big hit with shoppers."

Oliver kept the cart on display for several weeks last spring. He prefers not to recycle displays, always looking for something fresh and new. Oliver is a regular visitor to the



Atlanta International Gift & Home Furnishings Market where he gets ideas and purchases products.

"I take cues from what I see there, and then make it my own here," he says. "A lot of stores will just use what their wholesalers provide, but you can do a lot more."

For Oliver, creativity knows no bounds. "My thought process is to go as far as I can to get people's attention and create impulse sales. I know that our front-end sales have picked up significantly."

Fast Facts: Jefferson Pharmacy, Palmyra, Va.

Established: 2009

Management: Jonathan Oliver, co-owner

Products & Services: Includes standard retail, medication adherence, durable medical equipment, medication

therapy management, travel vaccines, health screenings, immunizations, Medicare open enrollment consultation, multi-dose pill packaging, and medication synchronization.

NCPA member since: 2013