

store photo laboratory, an extensive magazine section and high-end cosmetics and fragrances.

Hellier will carry both brand name merchandise as well as the Life-Brand products and offer the Optimum Rewards Program.

"We will continue with our free delivery service for prescriptions from both the downtown and superstore locations," he said.

The superstore's grand opening will be Saturday with special in-store promotions and prizes.

The downtown Shoppers location began its new Monday-to-Friday hours earlier this week. It will be closed weekends.

"The store will be kept open on a restricted basis because we want to continue offering a service to both local residents and those who work in downtown Belleville," said Hellier.

Plans are in the works to modernize and refit the store over the next couple of months to cater more to customers with prescriptions and needing over-the-counter medications.

"For the time being, the store

will remain as is," he said.

All dispensary staff will remain at the downtown store. Pharmacist Malcolm Jones will be based at the store on a full-time basis.

"Nobody will lose their job because of the alteration in the downtown store format," Hellier said.

News that the downtown Shoppers store will remain open was applauded by several officials.

Mike Malachowski, president of the Belleville Business Improvement Area, said having Shoppers downtown is important as the village proceeds to convert empty space into more residential development.

"I am very pleased to hear that Shoppers will continue to be open downtown providing services to the local community, especially downtown residents," he said.

"We have a whole seniors community living downtown and it's important that a pharmacy be open nearby for them," he said.

Having a downtown pharmacy is important to helping the village carry out its vision, he added.

"Part of the vision of downtown is to have a vibrant residential community and having a pharmacy downtown will certainly help us achieve that."

Ross Benway, a Quinte Living Centre resident, is relieved Shoppers is staying downtown.

"You have a lot of seniors living in the two McNabb Towers and the Quinte Living Centre and most of them get their prescriptions and medication at Shoppers. It's the only drug store where they can walk, otherwise they have to take a bus or drive," he said.

Tamara Bournival said she was happy to relinquish ownership of her downtown Shoppers store "to someone as capable and experienced as Paul Hellier" so she can devote more time to her Quinte Mall operation. At the same time, she's glad the downtown Shoppers will remain open.

"We heard the concerns of the community and we are pleased to keep the downtown store open. Downtown needs a pharmacy."

Intell, Feb. 17/05 p. 2