

Rite Aid officially opens

Thursday, March 19, 2009 11:20 PM EDT

By SLOAN BREWSTER, Press staff

MIDDLETOWN — A bright and shiny drive-through pharmacy now sits on the Main Street corner that one year ago was occupied by The Middletown Press building.

Mayor Sebastian N. Giuliano was on hand to cut the ribbon Thursday morning when the Rite Aid officially opened, as were Police Chief Lynn Baldoni and Deputy Chief Pat McMahan, all of whom offered congratulations to District Manager Jim Paquin.

The store itself is the first of its type in the area, Paquin said. Called “Customer World,” it hosts wider aisles and, with more than 14,000 square feet, includes more open space. In addition, there are more products than were in the now-closed 10,000 square foot location a block north on Main Street.

“This is new; we got stuff from GNC,” Paquin said, pointing out some shelves in the back of the store near the pharmacy.

“We have a much better selection of cosmetics and health and beauty.”

There is also an area with plenty of food. At about 10:30 a.m., Pharmacy Manager Tony Ajegba said no customers had used the drive-through yet, but so far he enjoyed the new work space.

“It brings a good feeling and it brings a great feeling to the neighborhood,” he said of the store as a whole. “It’s a different kind of pharmacy.”

Paquin explained the set up of the pharmacy was designed to encourage a quicker flow for customers who will move from one station to the next to pick up medication instead of waiting in one clogged area where everything is done, like at the old store.

“Clutter free,” Ajegba said. Store Manager Jeremy Cowles came to the Middletown store from Portland two months ago. “So far the customers love it,” he said. “We had a line out the door this morning — 10 people.”

Carol Maloney, who purchased a full carriage of merchandise, said she had walked to the store and enjoyed the convenient location. The official grand opening is March 29. That day there will be a raffle for a 10-speed bicycle and during the following four-week period there will be several other raffles, including one for a secret prize.