

Feature Business: *ROLLING SPOKES - 1st in Home Health Care Products*

By David McConkey



You might be surprised to learn that Western Canada's second largest showroom for home health care products is right here in Brandon. Yes, Rolling Spokes at 215 - Sixth St. Here you will find a complete range of home medical equipment and services. And you will meet the owners: Vern Byers and Les Wedderburn.

There's an interesting story of how Vern and Les came to own the business. It was 2005. Rolling Spokes, which had been established 20 years earlier, was up for sale. Independently, both Vern and Les were looking to get into something new. They had diverse skills from previous occupations, including sales, the railway, and farming. The existing owner saw a potential partnership and introduced Vern and Les to each other. After meeting, Vern and Les decided to buy the business together. They have been delighted with the result.



"It has been a very rewarding business," Les says. "At the end of the day, we feel pretty good."

Over the years, Rolling Spokes has been at 12th and Rosser and also on First Street. In 2012, Vern and Les purchased the former auto dealership at Sixth and Princess. The building has a spacious 4,000 sq. ft. showroom as well a 6000 sq. ft. warehouse. The downtown location is excellent for visibility, access, and parking.

What will you see at Rolling Spokes? Well, just about everything that aids and enhances daily living: like walkers,

canes and crutches, clothing, kitchen and bathroom safety products, lift chairs, power chairs, scooters, wheelchairs, lift beds, ramps, stair lifts, and elevators.

“There’s no end to the products,” Les says. “If there’s a need, there’s a remedy.”

Vern and Les are ready to meet with you and discuss your requirements, either at their store or in your own home. Or meet with you in a personal care home; in a commercial or institutional location; or even – if you are interested in something like a scooter – out on the sidewalk. They will work with you and your family, with a health care professional like your occupational therapist, and with your insurance like Blue Cross, NIHB, MPI, Veterans Affairs as well as other 3rd party payers.

Vern and Les have the products, they have many practical suggestions, they do set-up and installation, and they provide on-going service. Need something for only a short time? No problem: they will provide it to you on a rental basis.

Rolling Spokes serves Brandon and area, going as far north as Swan River and to the border with the U.S. and with Saskatchewan. Les and Vern have specific weekly visits to all communities in the catchment area. As well, Steve services Brandon on a daily basis. There is also a branch location in Winnipeg that specializes in adaptive clothing call Ashley’s Adaptive Apparel.

Store hours are Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. But Vern smiles when he says that they are at work “usually earlier, and always later” than their set times. You can make an appointment to see them in the evening or on a weekend. (You can contact them by phone: 204-571-1260; toll tree: 877-655-0346; or email: rolspoke@mymts.net.) And check out their website at rollingspokes.com.

Vern and Les have lots of ideas if you are buying a place, building a new home, or renovating an older house. Sometimes only small changes are recommended. Other times, more substantial renovations – like a walk-in bathtub, ramp, or stair lift – are required to transform a limiting space into an accessible one.

Eliminating a few steps, for example, or adding a few inches to a doorway, hall, or bathroom can accommodate a wheelchair. Look for a bathroom with a low bathtub and a high toilet (instead of the other way around). Another tip for a new or renovated home: incorporate sturdy material that could be used later to support the addition of a grab bar or hand rail.



Chair lifts

Over the past few years, Vern and Les have seen a great shift in thinking in society and among the people they meet. Community spaces are becoming more inviting and accessible, including residences, institutional settings, and streets and sidewalks. Everyone is encouraged to live more fully, actively, and independently. Today’s goal: help people gracefully “age in place.”

In the past, people were more reluctant to get assistive devices. Vern remembers when he heard, “I’m not using that, people will think I’m old.”

Now – especially with the baby boomers – there is a more confident attitude. Folks want to take charge of their lives. They want to take advantage of available products and services. Les reports hearing more people say, “If I need that, I’m going to have it.”



Adaptive Clothing



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