After seven months of having no pharmacist in Holyoke, Abts Express will fill the void as a full-time pharmacist will begin at the store March 1.

Abts Express will celebrate with a grand opening on Friday, March 1. A variety of door prizes will be given away for the occasion.

For the past seven months, the local store acted as a drop-off facility. Patients were able to pick up their medication, but likely had to wait for the prescription to be filled in Haxtun and brought over.

Cindy Cooper will take over as Holyoke's new pharmacist.

Abts Express manager Nici Bishop, pictured at left, is excited to introduce Cindy Cooper to the town of Holyoke as a pharmacist.

—Enterprise photo

Cooper received her bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in biology and her pharmacy medical degree from the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Although she spent the past three and a half years working in North Platte, Neb., she spent more than 20 years of her career in Boulder.

"Holyoke's infrastructure reminds me of Boulder," Cooper said. "People love the town and I get a good sense of commitment to the town from the people."

Cooper has spent the past three months traveling between Julesburg, Haxtun and North Platte and is ready to settle down in Holyoke.

One of the biggest attractions to Cooper was Holyoke's size. She commented on how she had to give up so much living to be in a city, but now she can enjoy the clean, country lifestyle where she has more down time and the dollar stretches further.

With more down time available to her, Cooper can pursue some of her favorite hobbies such as getting out on the water with her paddle board, running and diving into a romance novel.

She is also looking forward to traveling to Massachussettes in May to see her youngest son of three graduate from Amherst College.

With Cooper available in the Holyoke store, patients will have direct contact with a physician for consultation. Prescriptions will be filled inhouse so the waiting period will be drastically cut as well.

Manager Nici Bishop stressed that although the store did house a pharmacy before, Abts is a completely different pharmacy with no ties to Pamida.

One of the biggest points of emphasis that Bishop has set her sights on is ensuring the best customer service possible.

Bishop, who has been in Holyoke for eight years, said she is excited for people to come in and interact with the staff and see how passionate they are about the people in the community.

She has a personal approach to running a business that she learned early on in life from watching her parents work at an animal health supply store. It was there that she was taught the importance of building strong relationships with customers.

She explained that she is looking forward to helping patients as much as possible, because they are not just patients but neighbors and friends. She expressed that being able to step into a position to help has been personally fulfilling.

Bishop takes pride in building a strong team at Abts Express as well as building the leadership skills necessary to run the store.

For 16 years Bishop has been a volleyball official for the Colorado Volleyball Official Association and has been president of the organization for five years. She has two years left on her term and believes the position has helped her sharpen her leadership skills.

Holyoke Enterprise February 21, 2013