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Batteries included at Interstate battery retail store in Moncton

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A9 By Hanne Armstrong

Kings COUNTY **Record**

Is now, in the depths of an economic recession, a strange time to open a new retail business? It all depends on what you're selling. For Moncton native Al Snelgrove, the time is ripe - he sells batteries.

"The average household has 21 battery operated devices," he said, "and now people are holding onto everything longer, so they'll replace batteries instead of devices or cars."

Interstate All Battery Centre at 593 St. George Blvd. in Moncton opened its doors to the public in late January.

Snelgrove had eight years of experience with Interstate as a wholesale battery distributor and developed a respect for the company's products and policies that continues as he spreads his wings into the retail market.

He's the sole proprietor of the local franchise, one of eight such franchises in Canada. More than 100 franchises operate in the United States, built on the same principles of quality and customer satisfaction.

"I went to Dallas, Texas, for a four-week training course on small batteries," he said.

"We'll install the right battery for you in anything from watches to cars and we're happy to give you any tips we can on how to prolong the life of your batteries."

One thing most people tend to do is overcharge their rechargeable batteries, by letting devices such as phones sit too long in the charger. Overcharging shortens battery life. Snelgrove recommends a cordless phone, for instance, should be put on the charger on the same day each week for 25 hours and should spend the rest of the week out of the cradle.

The All Battery Centre will even build battery packs for you if you have an obsolete or oddball pack in your cordless phone or other device. They'll take your old batteries off your hands for recycling, whether you're buying something from them or not. They send rechargeable batteries to a smelter in Quebec and alkaline batteries go to a centre in the U.S.

Prices compare favourably with other retailers selling high quality batteries. The difference is that by going to the All Battery Centre, you can avoid the frustration of hunting around and meet all your battery needs in one place.

Extend the life of your shaver, drill, hearing aid, lawn tractor or even your remote car entry key fob by taking them to Snelgrove for new batteries.

"And our batteries are fresh," he promised.

"Batteries go dead sitting on the shelf. We rotate anything older than four months. They get recharged and retested before going back on the shelf. If there's a battery that's been on the shelf more than a year, it gets sold as a used battery."

He also carries power-related items such as flashlights and battery chargers. Looking for something to power your cabin or cottage? Talk to Snelgrove or store manager Randy MacDonald about their solar panels.

The store is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays.

"Our guidelines are more stringent than our competitors," said Snelgrove. "People who've tried us come back."