

# Dealer POINT

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inside |

## 30 years of “Moving Forward”

### Toyota honors Don Jacobs

BY BILL NELSON

Remember 1977? The Eagles sang “Hotel California,” TV viewers watched “The Love Boat,” George Lucas’ “Star Wars” dazzled moviegoers, and the death of Elvis at age 42 shocked the world.

Car dealer Don Jacobs gave himself a special Christmas present in December 1977 – the Waukesha Buick-Subaru dealer took a chance and acquired a Milwaukee-area Toyota franchise.

It proved to be a wise decision. Spurred on by the 1973 oil crisis, American consumers had begun to seek out small cars with better fuel economy. Japanese motorists had long demanded small, fuel-efficient cars manufactured to high levels of quality. For this reason, companies like Toyota, Honda and Nissan seized the emerging opportunity in the lucrative U.S. market, establishing a growing presence in the 1970s – a trend Jacobs foresaw.

Toyota would grow and grow until today the Toyota Motor Corp. rivals General Motors as number one in the world.

Don Jacobs Toyota has prospered in



From left Steve Jacobs, Toyota sales, Jeanne and Don Jacobs, holding the Baccarat crystal glassware award from Toyota. Not pictured is son Dave Jacobs. Dave runs the Don Jacobs Buick/Subaru dealership in Waukesha.

the 30 years since that milestone decision and Toyota Motor Corp. honored him in January as a significant contributor to the company known for its slogan of “moving forward.” The 81-year-old Jacobs is now retired but is seen often

at the Toyota dealership at 5727 S. 27th St. on Milwaukee’s south side, and at his two other dealerships, Don Jacobs Mitsubishi, a stone’s throw away on S. 27th St., and Don Jacobs Buick Subaru

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## Northern Wisconsin gives boost to AYES

BY LINDA POULSEN

The students who enter Wausau East High School’s gleaming new state-of-the-art automotive training lab are taking their first steps into a bright future in the automotive industry. The northern Wisconsin school is now part of a \$2.5 million training equipment pool that serves the greater Wausau community.

Wausau East High School joined 13 other Wisconsin AYES programs and more than 360 high schools nationally in the Automotive Youth Educational Systems (AYES). “Wisconsin has one of the most active and successful programs nationwide,” said Ray Pedersen, executive director of The WATDA Foundation. Wausau East’s AYES program is so popular, the enrollment has

exceeded initial projection with an expected 88 students participating this year.

In the face of critical funding shortages in K-12 education, the school district, local automotive leaders, dealers and automotive foundations have made a major commitment to automotive technical education. “The kids, the community, and the industry will all benefit,” said Bob Marlowe, career and technical education coordinator for the Wausau School District.

“Many districts that are building new facilities are opting to exclude automotive labs because they are so expensive,” he said. “We feel that technicians are at a premium. We really saw a need for this type of programming.”

Constant change in automotive technology has made it difficult for traditional education and training systems to keep current. As a result, there is a serious shortage of qualified automotive technicians.

When voters supported the new high school building, Wausau educators and auto businesses seized the opportunity

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Jerry Brickner, left, of Brickner Family dealerships in Antigo, Marathon and Wausau, was among the dealers present for the Wausau School District’s AYES program launch on Feb. 25. Bob Slane of Wausau is a retired technical instructor and consultant for The Foundation of WATDA.



### 15 | Ten tips to give your dealership an edge



## CENTER STAGE | Awards, honors, milestones

**Neuville Motors, Inc.** in Waupaca was recently awarded the Waupaca Area Chamber of Commerce Large Business of the Year award for 2007.

Last October, **Tim Neuville** purchased Waupaca Motors Sales and Stiebs Jeep. Now Neuville Motors on Waupaca's west side is the home of Pontiac, GMC, Chevrolet and Buick vehicles, while Neuville Chrysler on Waupaca's east side is the home of Chrysler, Dodge and Jeep vehicles.

Neuville Motors has grown from 11 employees when Tim started in 1976 to over 60 full-time and 15 part-time employees.

Tim recently celebrated his 25th wedding anniversary with his wife, Joy, and has two children Eric and Lindsay. Lindsay is a junior at St. Olaf while Eric will graduate with his masters degree from the University of Texas-Austin this May. In addition to being active in the Waupaca Area Chamber of Commerce, Neuville is also a member of the Waupaca Breakfast Rotary Club and is the assistant chairman of the Waupaca Area Community Foundation.

**Zimbrick of Madison** is among 31 dealership nationwide to win the annual Center of Excellence award presented by BMW of North America. The Award recognizes sales leadership and customer service.

**Jim Neustadt**, former WATDA vice president of member services, has joined Smart Motors in Madison as the director of human resources and compliance.

Congratulations to the following dealers who have reached the 25-year mark in 2007 as GM dealers: **John Bergstrom**, Neenah; **Lee Baird**, Ripon; **Len Dudas**, Stevens Point; **Don Johnson**, Rice Lake; **Charlie Klein**, Clintonville; **Vern Trecek**, Portage; **Pete Smith**, Ft. Atkinson; **Gordie Boucher**, Milwaukee; **Mike Hutson**, LaCrosse; **Ray O'Leary**, Janesville; **John Devinck**, Superior; and **James Rabas**, Algoma.

**Pat Witt** of the **Witt Automotive Group** celebrates over 62 years in the automotive business. A full story is planned for the summer issue of *Dealer Point*.

## FROM AROUND THE STATE | Changes

**John Erickson Chevrolet** in Verona was purchased by GM in March, and closed as a point.

**Ernie Von Schledorn, Ltd.**, purchased the GMC franchise from **Andrew Buick Pontiac** in Milwaukee.

**Jim Lecher**, owner of the **Hub Chrysler Group** in Milwaukee has retired. **Hub West**, located in East Troy, was sold to **The Lynch Group** of

Burlington. **Hub South** was sold to Jim Griffin of Milwaukee and closed.

Bryan Compe of Cal Compe Chevrolet in Coleman has sold his franchise to GM. The dealership will specialize exclusively in pre-owned vehicles. The new dealership is known as Cal Compe Automotive.

**Mike Mikula**, formerly a Milwaukee Chevrolet dealer, has purchased **Bill Zaharia's Ashland Ford Chrysler** in Ashland.

**Walter Steffen** of **Brookside Chevrolet** in Brookfield has sold his franchise back to the GM. Steffen continues to operate as an independent dealership in Brookfield.

**John Kolosso**, of **Kolosso Jeep** in Appleton, has purchased the **Darrow Appleton Chrysler** franchise. Kolosso has also acquired **Larry Carey's Dodge Country** of Appleton store. John is combining the Chrysler group at the Dodge Country location.

**Jim Flynn** of **Flynn Motors** in Beaver Dam is retiring and closed his dealership in April.

**Mike and Rich Karcz** of **Karcz Motor Company** sold their Ford and Mercury franchises to Ford. They will continue their used vehicle sales, service and body shop departments and have plans to expand the service and body shop operations to accommodate all makes and models of vehicles as well as complete diesel engine and transmission rebuilding services.

## Madison Auto Dealers present \$46,000 to HospiceCare, new car to raffle winner

The Madison Automobile Dealers Association presented HospiceCare Inc. and its employees a check for \$46,025 and a brand new Subaru Impreza to Millie Swenson, this year's Madison Auto Show raffle winner. This is the ninth year that MADA has donated full proceeds from the auto show car raffle to HospiceCare.

"The auto dealers are very supportive of HospiceCare," said Jennifer Sweet, donor relations and special events coordinator for HospiceCare. "They put a lot of work into this raffle and don't make a cent. The auto dealers donate the car and their time to benefit the more than 500 patients served by HospiceCare each day," said Sweet. The money we receive from the auto show raffle helps HospiceCare to fund programs so that all in our community are able to receive our expert services,

regardless of their ability to pay," said Dan Chin, spokesperson for HospiceCare.

"These donations also allow us to provide expert grief services to all in our community, to train and staff over 900 volunteers that serve our patients and families and to develop a world-class education program to educate the community on end-of-life issues that affect them and their families."

HospiceCare Inc. is a nonprofit, community-based hospice dedicated to providing physical, emotional and spiritual support to patients and families dealing with life-limiting illnesses. HospiceCare Inc. has offices in Madison and Janesville, HospiceCare serves residents in Dane, Rock, and parts of Walworth, Green and Jefferson counties.



From left are Dan Morse, development director; Tom Thorstad, Susan Phillips, HospiceCare president & CEO; Madison Auto Dealers Association President Pat Baxter; Don Miller, Jennifer Sweet, HospiceCare donor relations and special events; Tom Zimbrick, Sean Baxter, Joe St. Marie, Madison Auto Show and Raffle Director TJ Johnson of Smart Motors; and car raffle winner Millie Swenson.

## MAILBOX | Correspondence

To The Foundation of WATDA board:

On behalf of the board of directors of The Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin, it is a privilege to acknowledge your contribution of \$1000 to the Merrill Area Community Foundation Fund. The responsibility for making north central Wisconsin a great place to live, work, and raise a family rests upon us all. Working together, we continue to build a strong community for our children and their heirs, and assure a quality, sustainable future. We thank you for sharing our vision for the future through your commitment to giving back to the community that has contributed to your livelihood and quality of life.

Jean C. Tehan  
Executive director, Community Foundation of  
North Central Wisconsin

Dear Linda and Foundation members,

Thank you for your investment in the kids of the Wisconsin Rapids area! Your donation of \$1,000 in matching funds from Mark Motors, Inc., Wisconsin Rapids, helps fill a critical need for our club. With your help the Boys & Girls Club will build character through daily leadership and guidance in behavior and attitude; young people of all nationalities, races and creeds will join together in wholesome recreation and companionship. With your help, trained professional staff can be positive adult mentors and role models. They will provide nationally recognized program that help young people succeed in school, stay healthy, learn important life skills, pursue interests in the arts and sports, and explore vocational

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Thank you again for the luncheon and gifts. While I really appreciate the beautiful leather case, there is nothing to compare to Barb's clever gifts. I will always remember the great people I worked with at WATDA and the opportunity given me to learn and advance my career.

All the best to you,  
Bob Foulks



# Dealer POINT

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GARY’S BRIEFS | Gary Williams, WATDA president

ON DISCOVERY

The “Future Fax” is about our world unfolding. Great stuff!

Your WATDA has many critical roles, but number one is keeping ahead of the knowledge curve. The world today, as challenging as it is, is incredibly exciting. What is being discovered, how we communicate, who we must fend off or make a friend ... what one of us could have predicted a few years ago?

Dealers must be part of what is unfolding. For the most part, you must react to the realities of the day. Your WATDA must be influencing what is impacting the political sense of what is unfolding. Your WATDA proacts. Your WATDA shows a path that leads, incorporating the new consistent with what needs to be our enduring values.

Discovery will flourish. Discovery affects society. Society gains new



expectations from discovery. The legislative arena reacts to societal expectations. This is normal. This is your WATDA’s and NADA’s role. Wow!

A good operating model is this:

“Take lessons from the past.  
Take care of today.  
Influence the future.”

Doyle recognizes Money Conference organizers

Gov. Jim Doyle’s Council on Financial Literacy has selected five individuals and 10 organizations to receive its 2008 Governor’s Financial Literacy Awards. The awards recognize excellence in promoting financial literacy among Wisconsin citizens and were presented at a ceremony at the executive residence in April.

Two organizations that have partnered with WATDA and its charitable organization, Asset Builders of America, Inc. and M & I Bank, received awards. The winners were selected by the GCFL based on nominations received from the Council’s Awards Committee. Evaluation of nominees was based on four criteria: innovative implementation, demonstrated measurable results, collaboration with partners and scope – either statewide or having the potential to be statewide or focused to need-based groups.

“I congratulate the individuals and organizations for their wonderful contributions to financial literacy,” said Doyle. “They are enhancing Wisconsin’s economy by making people more knowledgeable about their own money. We all benefit from that.”

The social and economic costs of financial ignorance are high. Money problems are the leading cause of divorce and a leading cause of suicides.

Stress caused by money worries among workers results in low morale, low productivity, theft, fighting, absenteeism, tardiness and other problems that hurt the bottom line of employers and ultimately the economy.

Today’s youth appear to be following in their parents’ financial footsteps. In a nationwide study conducted in 2006 by the National Jumpstart Coalition, Wisconsin twelfth graders achieved an average score of 53.1 percent on a test of their financial knowledge. While it was above the national average of 52.4 percent, the score remains an “F” on any grading scale. A similar survey is currently taking place and results will be announced later this year.

The GCFL was formed in early 2005 to advise Doyle on how to improve the financial literacy of Wisconsin’s citizens. Two years ago it launched Money Smart Week Wisconsin in conjunction with the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. It was the first-ever statewide campaign in the country to promote financial literacy. DFI provides coordination and administrative support for the GCFL and Money Smart Week Wisconsin. For more information about the Governor’s Financial Literacy Award contact David Mancl, Director, Office of Financial Literacy at 608-261-9540 or email him at david.mancl@dfi.state.wi.us.

Philanthropy makes good business sense!



Ray Pedersen,  
Executive Director

It’s a point and a click away. Visit [watda.org](http://watda.org) and click on our Foundation Planned Giving page.



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- **Who Owes Whom?** Poor countries, (annual per capita income of <\$875 – Bangladesh, India, Nigeria, etc.) have borrowed \$1.8 trillion through 2000. Pacific Ecoinformatics and Computational Lab, Berkeley, Ca. figures rich nations (per capita income >\$10,726 – Japan, U.S., Europe) have caused up to \$2.5 trillion in negative environmental impacts on poor nations from 1960 to 2000. Middle income nations did about the same damage to low-income countries. Impacts include climate change, ozone depletion, expanding agriculture, deforestation, over fishing and loss of mangrove swamps. (*Bigfoot; Science News; 1/26/08*)
- **Wearable Healthcare System** monitors the wearer’s vital signs and beams data to a computer. Sensor stress measures movement. Other components gauge EKG data, temperature and soon, the heart. Thin, pliable strands of steel are spun into yarn with cotton or polyester fiber. Electrodes and conductive leads are woven into the fabric. Software algorithms clean up the data and reconstructs the wearer’s movements. Smartex, the clothing manufacturer, is developing a Piezo electric shirt that will let disabled people operate a wheelchair using only shoulder nudges and spider-man-like gloves that allow sign language to be translated into words by a computer. (*Ready To Wear; Wired; February 2008*)
- **Miniature RFID Tags**, the size of powder, a possible anti-counterfeiting technology. The chip responds only to a scanner, reflecting a unique 128-bit id number that can be verified in a database anywhere in the world. The 128-bit architecture allows 10<sup>38</sup> unique identifiers. Chips can be incorporated into high-value items like gift certificates, tickets, securities and, of course, high value currency. (*RFID Power; Scientific American; February 2008*)
- **Electronic Eyes With Bionic Displays**. Circuits and lights printed on a contact lens allow viewers to see electronic information superimposed over their view of the world in front of them. Potential applications include heads-up displays for pilots and drivers as well as virtual reality enhancements for video gamers. Electronic circuits a few nanometers thick can be printed on delicate, biologically compatible plastics used for contact lenses. Future models may also correct the user’s vision. Could also include wireless communication and imbedded solar cells. (*Futurist Update; February 2008.*)
- **Switchgrass Biofuels Yield 5X the Energy** of current row crops. Switchgrass, a perennial prairie grass, grows on marginal lands unsuitable for food crops. Biofuels from fertilizer and tractor intensive corn and other food crops consume more energy than they produce. (*Switchgrass May Yield Biofuel Bounty; Science News; 1/19/08.*)
- **Antibiotic Resistant Genes** – a growing health problem. Implicated in some 90,000 potentially fatal infections a year in the U.S. – more than automobile and homicide deaths combined. MRSA (Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus Aureus) kills more than 18,000 American a year, more than AIDS. It caused only 2% of staph infections in 1974 – now nearly 65%. The surge in drug resistant bacteria results from the microbial equivalent of sexual promiscuity, swapping genes among closely related and even widely divergent species. Collecting soil bacteria around the world identified nearly 500 streptomyces strains and species. Each was resistant to multiple antibiotics and could neutralize 7 or 8 drugs; many could shrug off 14 or 15 and together resisted every one of 21 antibiotics tested. (*Super Bugged; Discover; March 2008*)

RAWHIDE PROFILE | Morgan

My name is Morgan and I am 16 years old. I am from Milwaukee County and have been at Rawhide for three months. In my spare time I enjoy playing basketball and boxing at gyms around Milwaukee. Making people laugh and helping out those in need is something that is enjoyable for me.

Rawhide’s Work Experience Program is one of the many things that brings me fulfillment. This is because we help people in the community, and I am giving rather than receiving. My About Face project coordinator, Major O’Brien, and field trainer, Captain Guerin, are easy to work with and are able to make a day of hard work fun. They inspire me to do well



and get a job when I return to the community.

A couple who I would like to give special thanks to is my brother, Tremaine Walker, and his wife, Melissa (whom I am proud to call my sister). They have been with me since the beginning, showing and giving me love and support. I would also like to thank Coach CJ, Coach Scott, and Coach Andy for helping me develop mental toughness and encouraging me to do my best.

Thanks to everyone both at Rawhide and out in the community that keep me going.

The Foundation of WATDA

Contributors to The Foundation of WATDA  
January–March 2008  
Thank you for your support!

- |                      |                                |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| ADAMM                | Journal Communications         |
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# Distractions, recklessness deadly in Wisconsin’s work zones

Tim Johnson didn’t see the car that nearly killed him. The Milwaukee County sheriff’s deputy was too busy clearing up a car crash scene that cold January morning in 2006 to watch traffic.

At the time, he was surrounded by the bright, flashing lights that border all road-side work zones. He trusted drivers to see those warning signs and slow down or move over, as the law requires. Most drivers did. One didn’t. A car swerving to avoid stopped traffic spun into the work zone and struck Deputy Johnson, throwing him 60 feet—headfirst into a cement median.

Johnson’s injuries were critical, but his wasn’t the first work zone crash that year, or the most deadly. Nearly 1,100 people are injured in Wisconsin work zones every year. And, on average, eleven of those crash victims die. Like Dennis Roessler.

In December of 2003, the seven-year county highway employee was struck and

killed by an impatient driver who tried to pass a truck while in a work zone. The vehicle sped through the area at 50 miles per hour, knocking over three cones before hitting Roessler. He died on impact.

Wisconsin Highway Commissioner Ernie Winters still remembers telling Roessler’s wife what happened. “We didn’t have to (tell her). She knew when she saw us there,” said Winters. “She cried quite a bit. The children did as well, obviously. Their father was dead.”

The number of work zone crashes proves that any time people are working near traffic, drivers and workers are at risk. But such crashes are preventable. According to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, following a few safe driving basics can help everyone be safer

in the zone.

Drivers should slow down and pay extra attention to their surroundings whenever they see flashing lights, maintenance, utility or emergency vehicles, orange signs, barrels and cones or people along the road. Eliminating distractions like food, loud music, and cell phones also helps.

And of course, drivers should follow the law. That means slowing down whenever flashing lights are present. Drivers should also move over, if possible, to leave the lane beside the work zone open. And in hazardous construction areas, lowered speed limits are posted and must be obeyed.

Breaking these rules can be costly. Tickets for traffic violations are doubled in work zones, and the penalties for injuring

or killing someone in a work zone are especially high – up to \$25,000 in fines and 10 years in prison.

But as Tim Johnson can tell you, the consequences of reckless driving can be much costlier. Two years after his crash, the deputy is still dealing with the aftermath.

“I miss being on the street in the squad car instead of behind a desk,” says Johnson. A light duty officer until his health improves, Johnson is now a crusader for work zone safety. “People need to move over or slow down, so nobody gets an injury like the one I had.”

For more information on work zone safety visit the Wisconsin DOT online at [www.dot.wisconsin.gov/safety](http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/safety).

Story by Knupp & Watson

MAILBOX | Correspondence

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

choices.

With your help, our Boys & Girls Club will show youngsters that someone really cares about them and wants them to realize their fullest potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens.

You can be proud that you stepped up to ensure the futures of Wisconsin Rapids area children. Thanks to you, we can be The Positive Place for Kids!

Nicole L. Bessey  
Interim Executive Director, Boys & Girls Club of the Wisconsin Rapids Area

The Foundation of WATDA:

Thank you for your thoughtful gift of \$500 to benefit the Mukwonago Catastrophic Medical Fund. Your donation will have an immediate impact on the community we serve by providing support to patients and families whose medical care presents a hardship to the family.

Since 1984 when the fund was established, our goal has been to assist families during medical hardships. The ability of the Mukwonago Catastrophic Medical Fund to carry out this goal has been made possible by the generous support of people like you.

William Kasch

Dear Mr. Pedersen,

Thank you and all of the WATDA personnel for your involvement with the 2008 ADAMM Technician of Tomorrow competition. In its fourteenth year, it is one of the events that continues to set the pace for businesses working with education. Bringing dealerships together with technical colleges for the benefit of high school programs is truly a way to sustain the technician supply line for the future. Please pass along our thanks to all of the staff at WATDA who were involved in arranging this spectacular event. We will continue to strive for success as we represent ADAMM and WATDA in the upcoming national event.

Carl Hader, instructor; Ken McCormick, principal; Paul Bretl and Chris Cheek, competitors, Grafton High School



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# Toyota honors Don Jacobs

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on Highways 164 and 59 in Waukesha.

Two representatives of the Chicago regional office of Toyota Motor Sales came to the S. 27th St. dealership Jan. 25 to salute Jacobs, present him with an award made of Baccarat crystal and take the Jacobs family to lunch. The day gave the two Toyota officials, Paul Holdridge, Chicago regional office general manager, and Angela Wollenberg, the office's market representation manager, an opportunity to honor the family owned and operated dealership for its good work ever since its doors first opened during the Jimmy Carter presidency.

One of the reasons for Jacobs' car-selling and servicing success is the dedication and loyalty of employees. "We've always felt that people don't work for us, they work with us," he said. To Jacobs each person is an important cog in a team approach whose goal is total customer satisfaction and repeat business.

His performance has not gone unnoticed. He was selected as the Wisconsin Automobile and Truck Dealers Association Dealer of the Year in 1998 and Wisconsin's nominee for the 1999 TIME Magazine Quality Dealer Award. The TMQDA award, given in associa-

**The Don Jacobs story reflects enterprise and willingness to take a well-thought-out risk. In his early years, he had established himself well in the auto industry in Madison and hoped to buy into a local dealership. Instead, in the late 1960s he bought a downtown Waukesha Buick dealership and what had been a disappointment – not being able to buy into the ownership of the Madison dealership – “worked out to be my best break,” Jacobs now says.**

tion with the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, salutes exceptional performance and distinguished community service.

Jacobs has long been active in community affairs, serving on the board of the Waukesha Area Chamber of Commerce and is a recipient of the Chamber's Volunteer Leadership award. He also has been involved in civic fund-raising, including the United Way, Carroll College and the Waukesha Symphony.

The Don Jacobs story reflects enterprise and willingness to take a well-

thought-out risk. In his early years, he had established himself well in the auto industry in Madison, rising through the ranks to become general manager of Kayser Ford in the capital city. He had been with the dealer for 20 years but his hope of buying into the dealership did not materialize.

In the late 1960s he bought a downtown Waukesha Buick dealership, a decision that did not come easily. Jacobs, his wife, Jeanne, and their five children lived on Lake Monona, with a view of the state capitol. "It was our hometown and the kids had to leave



their schools and friends," he remembers.

What had been a disappointment – not being able to buy into the ownership of the Madison dealership – “worked out to be my best break,” Jacobs says today. It kick-started his dealership career in new locations. That rewarded him well and brought him a house beside the fourth tee at Waukesha's Merrill Hills Country Club and, in recent years, winters in Florida.

The automotive business, he said quietly, “has been very good to us.”

## Northern Wisconsin gives boost to AYES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

to significantly upgrade the local automotive training program. The district recruited Mark Poppe, a top-notch new teacher with both industry and education experience.

"In real estate, we think about the location, location, location," said Brad Peck, Wausau East High School principal. "In education, we think: teacher, teacher, teacher." Poppe grew up in

Wisconsin, went to Iowa to teach for a few years and when the position became available, he jumped at the chance. "It is important to me to teach automotive technology and when I came here, I knew everyone was committed," he said.

Do partnerships work? Ask dealers, educational charities and the local auto businesses. They are providing lab equipment, certified instruction, and current-model vehicles for technician

training. "Thanks to the hard work of this district, staff members, the business community, our WATDA Foundation's Team Wisconsin and the generosity of the Judd S. Alexander Foundation, Wausau now has the newest AYES program in the country – and we think it will become one of the best," said Marlowe. "This is something we have been striving for the last five or six years. It is great to be working with a lot of good people at the state level

who are willing to help us out with this process."

The Foundation, which makes education its primary focus, joined with AYES in 1998 and created the AYES-Team Wisconsin initiative. The goal is to promote and enhance technology education in Wisconsin and build the critically short supply of trained technicians for the state's auto service businesses. The total community benefits from Wausau's involvement in AYES, along with the student and the industry, because skilled technical workers stay in Wisconsin.

"We are helping the local community by graduating students with a strong basic understanding of the automotive industry, who will work and go to a post secondary program in the community," said Marlowe. "You hear about the 'brain drain.' We will be able to retain talented students in the area."

The AYES-Team Wisconsin program is market-driven, helping ensure that the teaching and the students stay current. The statewide network of auto service shops and dealerships that employ AYES graduates do continuous reporting on their training and preparedness.

"AYES is all about partnership that results in lifelong careers for young technicians," said Pedersen. "The Wausau AYES program is an outstanding example of this. The Foundation's resources most certainly must grow to ensure that these exciting training opportunities stay vital."

## At times of business transition, legal matters take a front seat.

When you're ready to buy or sell a dealership, Boardman Law Firm can help you map out a successful approach ... and protect you from unpleasant surprises.

We'll help you identify and then work through the legal issues, which can include buy-sell agreements, real estate, environmental, tax implications, franchise, financing, stock transfers and more. We've advised Wisconsin dealers for many years and understand the special issues you face.

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.....

WISCO | John Hackman

# WISCO: The dealer's partner

It's always a good time to be a member of WISCO Co-op, but especially this time of year. In June it will be time for the owners of WISCO to receive their share of the profits on WISCO's record-setting 2007. Since we are a true cooperative the owners of WISCO are its members.



WISCO will be sending out its annual rebate checks, over \$756,000 this year, to more than 600 member dealerships. Member auto and truck dealers are paid the yearly profit in direct proportion to the amount of their purchases. WISCO adds to your bottom line in two ways. First and foremost, you save money on your purchases from the cooperative up front due to our low prices on products your dealership uses everyday. Secondly, any profits the Co-op earns are paid back to you in your annual rebate check. Who else pays their profits back to you?

If your dealership is a WISCO member, are you getting your share of the savings? Are you using the WISCO programs for equipment purchases, bulk oil, supplies, accessories, parts, batteries, vehicle appearance, and the many other products WISCO offers? If not you may be missing an opportunity to make your dealership more profitable. An increasing percentage of a dealership's gross profit is coming from its parts, service, and body shop operations. WISCO can help you make these areas more profitable.

For those who are not members, check us out. It's easy to become a member. By filling out a simple application and investing in a one time \$1,000 share you too can save on your dealership's purchases. The \$1,000 is not an expense, but stock in the cooperative. If for any reason you would ever want to get out of WISCO we will refund the money. While you are a member we pay you 5 percent annual interest on the stock even if you purchase nothing. This year the average rebate to our members will be over \$1,200. That is above and beyond the value of the stock. It really is a no lose situation. Call us at (800) 274-2319 or visit us on the web at [www.wisco.com](http://www.wisco.com) to start adding to your bottom line.

Those of you who are WISCO members please mark your calendars for the WISCO annual meeting and golf outing. This year the meeting and outing will be held on June 24 at Lake Arrowhead Country Club south of Wisconsin Rapids. There will be a complimentary lunch, refreshments, and golf immediately after our meeting. Plan a day of fellowship with other WISCO members.

## SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

|   |                         |                 |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------|
| F & I Conference  |                         |                 |
| May 21, 2008  | Country Springs         | Waukesha        |
| Title & Registration  |                         |                 |
| August 12   | Cranberry Country Lodge | Tomah           |
| August 18   | Holiday Inn American    | Madison         |
| August 20   | Bridgewood Resort       | Neenah          |
| August 21   | Country Springs         | Waukesha        |
| Controller Conference   |                         |                 |
| August 13   | Hilton Garden Inn       | Oconomowoc      |
| WATDA Education Conference <i>(Formerly the Used Car Conference)</i>  |                         |                 |
| October 13-14   | Clacier Canyon Lodge    | Wisconsin Dells |
| The Money Conference™ <i>For more information visit <a href="http://assetbuilders.org">assetbuilders.org</a>.</i> |                         |                 |
| Madison   | Aug. 16                 |                 |
| Wausau  | Sept. 27                |                 |
| Racine/Kenosha  | Nov. 1                  |                 |
| Fox Cities  | Nov. 8                  |                 |

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# Wisconsin dealer go



Gretchen Hall, Milwaukee; and Don and Noelle Goben, Madison.

President Gary Williams was honored at the event for having the vision of starting The Foundation of WATDA:



"The next Foundation benchmark will be important for the community and important for WATDA members. Our work in the education arena will preserve our mission to help children and families. Ray showed me a comprehensive report that concluded that kids coming out of our high schools are not prepared for the workplace. Soft skills are lacking. Four hundred corporations took part in a study to research how we can advance the soft skills in communications, speaking and writing. I invite The Foundation to take a look at how this could impact our future work."

Don Broman, left, of Snap-on Corp., and Gary Williams, WATDA.



Andy Hall and Brian Ewald, Milwaukee.



Curt Anderson and Elaine Anderson, New Richmond, with Ray Pedersen (center).



Dick and Ginger Uehing, Shawano, and Roberta Vance, Eau Claire.



LuAnn Williams, Madison, with Joan Kolosso and Jean Kromer, Appleton.



# et-together 2008

Thanks to our co-hosts and sponsors: John and Cindy Amato, Mark and Carol Tousignant, Ken and Roberta Vance and Bill and Carol Wuesthoff



Mollie and Mary Markquart, Eau Claire.



Barbara Ewald, Betty and Brian Ewald, Milwaukee.



Bob and Carol Sorrentino, Madison.



Gary Williams and Bob Cornog, former CEO, Snap-on Corp.



Ken Vance, Eau Claire.



Lee Markquart, Eau Claire.



Retired Supreme Court Justice Bill Callow and Gary Williams.



Meet your directors | profiles of your WATDA directors By Sharyn Alden

## Entrepreneurial spirit sparked in the heart of road racing country

While some auto dealers can say they grew up around the auto industry, not many have had the entrée to the world of wheels like Mike Wolf did growing up in the midst of auto racing.

Wolf, president of Wolf’s Motor Car Company, Inc., in Plymouth, was raised in the Village of Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin at a time when road racing was

in its infancy. “It was the beginning of a new era in auto racing,” he said. “The birth of road racing on the streets was happening all around me, and so too was the construction of Elkhart Lake’s Road America.”

In addition to the world of auto racing, Wolf’s father and his uncles, all hard-working entrepreneurs, also influenced Mike. “Their work ethics definitely had a positive effect on me,” said Wolf. “These were people who didn’t leave a job until the job was done.”

Wolf, who has served on the WATDA board for six years and is serving his last year in 2008 due to his district’s realignment. “It has been a great pleasure serving with our group,” he said. “WATDA has a great work ethic—it is an organization I feel proud to be associated with.”

The excitement associated with the world of wheels started when Wolf was 10 years-old. “That’s when I was racing Go Karts at the Karting Kettle in Elkhart Lake,” he said. By the age of 16, he was driving a motorcycle to work everyday. It



Leoda, Bart and Mike Wolf

may not have been a race car, but Wolf also remembers his first car with great fondness.

When it comes to cars, that first car showcased his creative spirit. “It was a 1958 Chevy Impala two-door, and it was really ‘something,’ he said. “It was in need of some engine repairs so to dress it up I put ‘baby moons’ on its wheels.” Unfortunately, he didn’t get a chance to drive the car because he was 14-years-old at the time.

A few years later, Wolf became even

ever the entrepreneur, rented his garage to a premier race car team. His father owned an excavating and trucking business, but if it was a major race weekend in Elkhart Lake, Wolf’s father rented out his six-stall garage to the Cunningham Race Team. “It was great growing up and having a racing team fine-tune their cars for competition in my father’s garage,” he said. “That excitement also includes doing a test run down a local country road in a ‘D’ Jaguar with Walt Hansen driving. Those were ‘wow’ moments.”

Wolf also looks back on the time when the movie “Winning” with Paul Newman, was filmed near his hometown. “They filmed the movie in 1967 on location at Road America, and it was such an amazing experience. Excitement was everywhere in Elkhart Lake — the exhaust sounds were overwhelming and the cars were fast and beautiful.” The excitement of auto racing was also contagious for the film’s central figure. “That film ignited Newman’s interest in auto racing, and later it brought him back to Elkhart Lake as a competitor,” Wolf said.

This collection of fine autos also inspired Wolf. That excitement about being around such inspiring cars was the catalyst that led to a career in the auto industry.

Wolf started his career in the auto business as an automotive technician at a local AMC, Jeep and Dodge dealership. With 10 years of experience behind him, he started his own independent repair business, Wolf’s Car Care.

After a decade of growing the business, Wolf said, “It was time to grow in another direction. That’s when I purchased the Chrysler and Plymouth store in 1988. “My first sales challenge was to convince Chrysler that I had what it takes to succeed as an automotive dealer.”

Wolf has been married to Leoda, part-owner and CFO for Wolf Motor Car Company, for 36 years. Their oldest son, Bart, is not only the company’s sales manager he has inherited his father’s love of auto racing. “He juggles being both sales manager and race car driver,” said Wolf.

Other members of the family are Annalee, who teaches 7th grade, Zac, a chef, and Nathaniel, a student at Lakeland College. “They all have served time at the dealership. It’s a family thing,” said Wolf.

When he’s not running his business or racing autos, Wolf also serves on the Planning Commission for the Village of Elkhart Lake. He has also just completed his 14th year on the LTC Auto Tech Advisory Board.

Asked who he would like to have dinner with, Wolf doesn’t hesitate when he said, “Auto racing greats, Carroll Shelby, John Fritsch and Briggs Cunningham, as well as Cliff Tufte, the developer of Road America. They were all pioneers in the auto racing industry in the 20th century.”

If Wolf could wave a magic wand he would host this magical dinner at the venerable Siebkens Resort, a 1916 family-owned retreat at Elkhart Lake. The atmosphere, as repeat guests know, is perfect for reminiscing and relaxing. It’s also where Paul Newman, co-owner of Newman/Haas Racing has come to dine and relax.

While auto racing is an important element in Wolf’s life, he says keeping his customers happy is of utmost importance to him.

The drive of meeting the needs of his customers, and paying attention to small details, are the same work ethics that his father and uncles handed down to him.

“Our motto...Everything we do is driven by you, reflects this.” Today, this is the mainstay of Wolf’s business acumen.

“These are the principles that I enforce in my employees,” he says. “It’s important that our customers know that we truly care about them.”

## Former CPA is dealer of 22 years

If you believe in serendipity, you’ll appreciate the story of how Frank Porth, owner of Frank Porth Chevrolet Buick, Inc. and Frank Porth Chevrolet in Crivitz, got started in the auto industry.

In 1978, he moved to Columbus, Wisconsin as a partner of a Marshfield CPA firm. When his first client, Cal Meier Chevrolet Buick decided to retire, he approached Porth to see if he was interested in purchasing the dealership.

“I knew nothing about the auto business, but the industry interested me because Ford Motor Company was a client when I was with Coopers & Lybrand, a CPA firm in Detroit.”

Porth, a Michigan native, graduated from Northern Michigan University

with a degree in accounting. He earned his CPA certificate while working at the Detroit accounting firm. “Interestingly, our offices were in the Renaissance Center downtown Detroit in the same building which General Motors now owns,” he said.

After Porth seized the opportunity to buy the Columbus dealership, there were plenty of challenges ahead. “Learning how the auto dealership works was the biggest challenge of my 22-year career,” he said.

Porth has made his second career a success by viewing challenges and changing dynamics as new opportunities. “Every day I look forward to being involved in all departments and aspects of the dealership,” Porth said.

He also enjoys serving on the



WATDA board. “I was motivated to serve so that I could meet other Wisconsin dealers and gain different

perspectives about our industry,” he said. “I wanted to help improve the quality of business for Wisconsin auto dealers.”

In 2002, Porth bought Banaszak Chevrolet in Crivitz, Wis. Not only did it offer another opportunity to have a dealership in a different location in the state, it gave Porth a good reason to set down business roots in the northern part of the state.

Since he has a lakeside home in Crivitz, he has a deep fondness for this northern Wisconsin area. “My favorite activities are hunting and golfing so it was a natural fit for me to be able to spend more time in the North Woods,” he said.

Porth lives in Columbus with Cindy, his wife of 40 years. Their son Adam and his wife, both high school teachers in Sun Valley, Idaho, have three children. The Porth’s daughter Amy is in



# Barbara Anderson learns auto business from scratch

BY SHARYN ALDEN

Barbara Anderson, who was born on a farm five miles north of Baldwin, still has strong roots in her community. Today, she and her husband Larry have two Ford dealerships in Baldwin and Ellsworth. It has been a long and winding, but interesting road from farm life to dealership ownership.

The couple’s son Tracy lives in Woodville and also works at both dealerships as an expert technician. Their daughter Tami works at the dealership in Baldwin and her husband Doug, a registered nurse, works at Regions Hospital in St. Paul, Minn.

Barbara says learning about cars didn’t happen overnight. Twenty-two years ago she didn’t have any experience working in the auto business, but she was willing – make that eager – to learn. In 1985 Barbara and Larry received noticed that their Montgomery Ward catalog store would be closed down. “We knew we wanted to stay in the communiy but we weren’t sure what was around the next corner,” Barbara said.

The motivation to increase her knowledge about the industry led Barbara to serve as a WATDA board director. Even though she’s been in the industry for many years, she said, “I thought serving on the board would be a rewarding learning experience. I felt that meeting other dealers and finding out how they do things at their store would be beneficial to my stores.”

For several years Baldwin’s Ford

dealership had been closed. “So we thought it might be an opportunity waiting in the wings,” said Barbara. “We called Ford, met with their representatives, and before we knew it, we were in the car business – even without our having prior auto experience.”

In January 1986 the sign for Anderson Ford of Baldwin went up and the Andersons became owners of the local Ford dealership. Then, as many auto dealers can attest, real-world challenges, along with plenty of rewards, came flowing into their lives.

## A LOVE OF LEARNING

If you ask some people to name the biggest challenge in their business career, it might revolve around attracting and retaining good employees or managing costs during an economic downturn, but Barbara says her biggest challenge was just being in the business. “I didn’t know any aspect about it. I found the bookwork and accounting systems were the most difficult,” she said.



On top of that, when the Andersons started out in the industry, technology hadn’t yet made bookkeeping what it is today. “When we started out we didn’t have computers. We did everything by hand, including writing out finance contracts,” Barbara said.

Sixteen years after plunging in as owners of the first store in Baldwin, they bought their second store in Ellsworth in 2002. “I became dealer of that store while Larry continued with the Baldwin location,” she said. “It was an entirely new experience for me and I love it.”

## A LOVE OF WISCONSIN

Barbara says travel is one of her favorite forms of relaxation. “Larry and I have visited many places in the last 10 years but for us, Wisconsin ranks tops as the best destination of all. When you have the opportunity to see the state in its four seasons it is an awesome experience,” she said. “Larry and I love to take drives on country roads to absorb the beauty of our state.”

Barbara’s other down-time pursuits include reading – she’s currently reading “Don’t Bet Against Me” by Deanna Favre, and watching movies. Scanning a list of all-time favorite films that she has enjoyed, she says Pretty Woman” and “Dirty Dancing” are standouts.

Oprah Winfrey may not know a lot about the auto industry but that doesn’t matter to Barbara. That’s who she would choose to have dinner with because, Barbara said, “Oprah is a very intelligent and genuine person.”

Given the chance to change things in her life Barbara says she wouldn’t change a thing. “I have been very fortunate to have a loving family, and even we have had our share of difficult times, our love and faith has made us stronger.”

She also gives credits having a life well lived to working in an industry she thoroughly enjoys. “I love my work in the auto business and the people who have been for us over the years. I have been truly blessed,” she said.

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# Book exchange popular at Brennan Buick

pharmaceutical sales and lives in Stevens Point with her husband Scott, a basketball coach at University of Wiscosnin-Stevens Point, and their three children.

When Porth isn’t hunting or playing golf, he enjoys reading mesmerizing books. One such book is “The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald.”

“I thoroughly enjoyed it because my dad was chief engineer on a carrier in the Great Lakes,” he said.

It’s not surprising to learn that Ernest Hemingway, great author and big game hunter, would be a chosen dinner companion if you could wave a magic wand. “He was such an interesting character, and he lived in so many fascinating places in the world.”

The family-owned business, Brennan Buick Inc., of Green Bay, has been keeping customers happy for several decades. Mike Brennan, owner of Brennan Buick, along with his brothers Dan and Bill, says his interest in the auto business is due to his father Jim, who remains very much involved in the dealership today.

“My father started working for the founder of this Buick franchise when he was 17 years old,” says Brennan. At the age of 16, Mike was following in his father’s footsteps. “I did the same things he did as a teenager – cleaning the cars, the floors, anything that needed attending to – that’s what I did.”

Up through 1986, Brennan worked on the service side of the auto business as a technician, shop foreman, and then service manager. Then came what he describes as “the biggest challenge of his career.”

“Transitioning from service to sales was a huge challenge,” he points out. “So much so that I left my tools here for about three years until I decided if I wanted to stay in sales.”

Brennan is currently in his second term as a WATDA board member. “When I was asked to serve, I felt it would be an honor to be involved,” he said.

Today Brennan said he agreed to run



for the second term for several reasons. “During the first term, I learned a lot about how much the organization does for the dealers of the sate. It is unbelievable how many important issues are addressed each year,” he said.

Brennan sees his second term is even more of a positive experience. “Hopefully, I can contribute more in my second term, on the board,” he said. “One of the biggest benefits for directors is being able to meet very involved and friendly dealers and WATDA staff members. Having a network like this is invaluable.”

Brennan and his wife of 33 years, Patty, have three children. Jamie, a

teacher and head of the gifted and talented program for the Two Rivers school district, lives in Two Rivers with her husband Travis. The couple has two children. Matthew lives in Charlotte, N.C., and is a mortgage and bond trader. He and his wife Kate have one son. Last year the Brennan’s daughter Melisia earned a Ph.D. in physical therapy and she works at Aurora Hospital in Manitowoc.

It is probably comes as no surprise to learn that one of Mike Brennan’s favorite pastimes is visiting his children and grandchildren. “In addition to spending time with my family I also enjoy golf, and fly-in fishing in Canada,” he said.

Brennan also enjoys reading. The dealership recently began a book exchange program for employees who want to bring in books and exchange them with others at the dealership. “Since the program began, many employees have found interesting books that they can take home to read,” said Brennan, who recommends the practice of book lending to other dealers.

What has he read that he likes? “I’ve read several books by James Patterson, but my favorite author so far is John Grisham,” he said.



# Sky's the limit for Pat Baxter

BY SHARYN ALDEN

Sometimes a first career unrelated to the auto industry later becomes a great springboard to owning a dealership.

That describes the career path of Pat Baxter, president of Kayser Ford, Inc. in Madison. Even though he grew up in the shadow of an auto dealer, he initially took a different path. "My father had a small Ford dealership in 1959 in Oregon, Wisconsin," said Baxter.

One of the things on his career path that he points to with great pride is serving on the WATDA board. For the past three years he has been a WATDA director saying he was motivated to serve because he wanted to give back to this high-functioning, important organization. "As a lobbying organization, they do so much for auto dealers. They are on top of legislation that really matters; I wanted to be part of what I could to help other dealers."

## FROM CPA TO AUTO DEALER

Baxter has lived in the Madison area all his life. After graduating from Edgewood High School he earned a degree in accounting from University of Wisconsin-Madison and worked for the next several years as a CPA.

In 1977 Baxter was at a transition point in his career when he saw an ad for vice president of leasing with Kayser Ford. Not only did he get the job, he remained in that position until 1984 when the leasing department was sold.

"I had an opportunity to buy the dealership, which at that time was the largest auto dealership in Madison, but I knew I needed some expertise behind me," he said. "I got it from Ford who sent me to Indiana for several days of educational training. It was an excellent experience, resulting in my buying the dealership in 1985."

If you ask some people to name the biggest challenge in their business career, it might include managing costs during an economic downturn, but Baxter said his biggest challenge was trying to learn the business from top to bottom. When I bought the dealership, I didn't know anything about running



Pat Baxter and his Cirrus SR22 GTS aircraft.

sales operation in a very hands-on capacity. "My sons are now doing many of the things that I used to do." His training as an accountant is still very evident. "I still like to come in and look at the most recent sales records." Brendan, 24, works with F&I at the Sauk City dealership, and the Baxter's daughter, Bridgit, 17, is still in school.

## A PASSION FOR FLYING AND RANCHING

If you have a chance to ask Baxter about what he likes to do to relax, prepare to be dazzled. Not everyone gets to put on a rancher's hat and drive a tractor on their ranch. But Baxter does just that at his 200-head Red Angus cattle ranch near Lancaster.

"I really enjoy being a weekend farmer and driving a tractor," he said.

He's also at the helm of his first plane, a Cirrus SR22 GTS ultra-sophisticated aircraft which he flies for business and pleasure. He enjoys giving people a vicarious tour of its amenities.

"It's a fast airplane at 180 knots," he said. "It has a glass cockpit, its own parachute and a high-tech cockpit with features like exceptional weather visuals."

If you're thinking about learning to fly, Baxter will tell you that in his experience, it was a dream come true. "For a long time, I had been thinking about wanting to learn to fly," he said. "So in March, 2005, I started flight instruction at Morey Field Airport in Middleton (named for Howard Morey, a Wisconsin aviation pioneer), and by August, after 70 hours in the air combined with additional classroom instruction, I received my flying certificate."

The Baxters also spend time in northern Wisconsin enjoying fishing and water sports at their home base at Three Lakes.

Baxter said the person he would love to sit down and have a conversation with is a "regular guy" with long roots in the Midwest. "I'd love to talk to Abraham Lincoln to hear what his thoughts were about the split in the country during the Civil War," said Baxter. "He knew how to play by a new set of rules. It would be fascinating conversation learning about how he broke new ground."



The Baxter Family in November 2006 at Baxter's Flying B Red Angus Ranch and from L to R Brendan, Pat, Sean, Lee, Bridget, and Ryan. Horses, Ice and Thunder look on.

it," he says. "In the years since the biggest shift or change in the market has clearly been the surge of import cars."

## A FAMILY BUSINESS

Asked what professional "thrill" has made him proud, he points to the growth of the Kayser Automotive Group. After taking those first steps as a new dealer back in 1985, he went on to buy five other dealerships, two in Stoughton, and others in Watertown, Sauk City and Pulaski. "It is really exciting to see how far we've come," he said.

Three of Baxter's children are making their own strides in the family business. Baxter and his wife Lee have four children. Sean, 30, and Ryan, 27, head the Madison



Pat Baxter's first buck was shot on the ranch, opening day of the 2006 gun deer season.



## Jim Tessmer motivates people to perform their best

Jim Tessmer, vice president of Jack Safro Toyota in Brookfield, learned early in life the importance of completing expected job responsibilities on time or even earlier than anticipated.

Tessmer, who was born in Milwaukee and comes from a family of 12 children – five brothers and six sisters, recognizes the rigors and rewards of hard work.

“There was a lot of work in a family the size of mine, everything from cleaning, preparing meals and cleaning up after meals, to maintaining the house,” he said. “In our household my mother had a job list where every child had job to do before and after each breakfast and dinner.”

He transferred those hard-earned values of hard work and the benefits from working as a team into the job force. “One of the things I learned as a member of our family’s team is that if you complete your responsibilities early and completely, you’ll also have free time to do the things that you enjoy,” he said.

As a WATDA director Tessmer also relishes the opportunities and responsibilities that go with board membership “I feel I can bring years of experience in managing both import and domestic franchises to the work of the board,” Tessmer said. “I believe WATDA has the goal of protecting our industry and I want to contribute to that success.”

His love of the auto business started in high school. “I sold auto parts at BS Wisniewskis on the South side of Milwaukee while I was in high school,” he said. It was 1979, somewhat of a watershed year for Tessmer because he started selling cars at Ernie Von Schledorn in Menomonee Falls and never looked back. “What really inspired me were the countless opportunities for helping people and working with customers,” he said.

Tessmer loves to motivate others to do perform to their best. “I look forward to it,” he said. “I think a good motivator can see in someone’s eyes when they are down and find a way to pick them up, either by suggesting a goal or story or just listening to them. For many years I was motivated by Brett, a friend with multiple sclerosis. Even when his health was failing, he would always offer a smile and a handshake when I walked in.”

His friend passed away last year but the positive impact he had on Tessmer is very much still felt. “Brett showed me that most of our problems are very small compared to what he was going through. More importantly, he maintained a positive attitude through it all,” Tessmer said.

Motivation is also very important on the business front. The dealership does many things to give its employees positive reinforcement such as handing out two-pound steaks to each employee after a good month.

During the Christmas holiday season, Santa, Mrs. Claus, three elves and a three-piece banjo band pay a visit to each dealership to sing carols and give turkeys to every employee.

Challenges and rewards have long been part of the auto industry. “One of the most rewarding things for me is to see a novice salesperson become a sales professional who really enjoys their work,” Tessmer said. “Another challenge is working with a disgruntled customer and turning them into a satisfied customer for life.” He knows it’s how you work with people that makes the difference. “Most customers that are disgruntled just need someone who will listen to their situation and care enough to find a solution,” he said.

Today Tessmer oversees five dealerships. His biggest challenge? Without hesitation he sums it up in two words: “Staying organized. You have to prioritize your responsibilities.”

Tessmer conceded he’s a hands-on type of person, but he recognizes that he can’t be hands-on all the time at every store. “It’s an impossibility,” he

said. “But I have been able to surround myself with great people who share the same beliefs as I do in caring for customers. That’s what leads to long-term relationships.”

Jim and his wife Nancy have two children – Jim, 25 who works as the pre-owned manager at Lexus and Infiniti Northshore, and Amy, 23, who is part of the human resources team at Jack Safro Toyota.

Growing up in a big family, Tessmer still recognizes the benefits that come from hard work – a work ethic that was instilled in him years ago.

When he isn’t working he enjoys spending time with his family, traveling, boating and hunting.

In step with many others who have found the 2007-2008 extreme winter weather something to escape, Tessmer has enjoyed some time off this year in the British Virgin Islands.



“It’s wonderful to get away for awhile, scuba dive, cruise around the islands and spend more time with my family,” he said.

The trip also coincided with his 50th birthday. “It was a terrific way to celebrate any birthday, but this year it was even more special because it was something of a landmark,” he said.

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The following organizations were helped as a result of dealer philanthropy through The Foundation's 2007 Dealer Community Challenge Grant program:

Langlade County 4-H, Antigo  
Merrill Area Community Foundation, Wausau  
Neighborhood House of Milwaukee  
Mukwonago Catastrophic Medical Fund  
Salvation Army Emergency Shelter, La Crosse  
Hayward Foundation for Education

Enrichment  
Children's Museum of Fond du Lac  
Nature's Edge Therapy Center  
Boys & Girls Club of the Wisconsin Rapids Area  
Bobbie Nick Voss Charitable Fund  
Women with Courage Foundation, Ladysmith  
Eau Claire Community Foundation  
Thanks to all of the dealers who were a part of this. For more information about the 2008 Community Challenge Grant Program contact Linda at (608) 251-5577.



Jerry Brickner of the Brickner Family Auto Group in Wausau and Antigo, presents Langlade County 4-H Association treasurer Adeline Hess, right, and 4-H Fair Director Rhonda Klement, left, a check as part of The Foundation Dealer Community Challenge Grants for 2007.



As part of the Foundation of WATDA's 2007 Dealer Community Challenge Grant program, Tom Horter Chevrolet donated the proceeds from its third annual car show to the Mukwonago Catastrophic Medical Fund with a matching grant from The Foundation for a total of \$1,000. Horter's fund began when a local boy accidentally drank cleaning fluid and required a great deal of reconstructive medical treatment. The fund was set up to help families without the means to pay medical bills resulting from such accidents. From left is Tom Horter and Richard Sellhausen of the dealership and Don Hotz, president of the fund.

Photo courtesy of Carol Spaeth-Bauer, Mukwonago Chief

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# Ten tips that will give your dealership an edge

**Q. How can you make your dealership more attractive to customers?**

A. First, recognize that in order to survive and thrive, you have to grow. And to grow, you have to attract new loyal customers who see your dealership as the brand they want to identify with.

It also pays to recognize that you can't rest on your laurels and expect business to increase if you haven't done your homework, and purposely planned on developing new symbiotic customer relationships. After all, every dealer is apt to lose a percentage of their customer base due to attrition every year.

Here are some ways to use the tools you already have to do a better job attracting and retaining loyal customers.

- Take a hard look at what your dealership's image looks like from your customers' perspective. Sit down with your marketing team and ask yourself, "Why should customers visit your dealership?" This may seem sophomoric, but it's good to go through this exercise every so often. If you're not doing it, your competition probably is.

- Take a good look at your demographics. Maybe it's time to market to younger or older customers or to other target markets that you've thought about but have not actively pursued.

- What are the top three things that differentiate you from your competition? If you haven't built that into your branding or messaging, it's time that you did. Put away the old slogans unless they are part of your logo, and roll-out a message that reflects your dealership, now, today.

- Maximize the use of your website. If it is streamlined and easy to navigate, it's a great marketing tool for advertising current promotions. It is also a cost effective way to build you're a positive image and to build new relationships. Just make sure your site is updated on a very frequent.....as often as daily, basis.

- Are you using your website as an interactive tool? Don't use it just for a brochure site to impart information. Use it to interact with customers. On every single page make sure your e-mail and phone numbers are highly visible.

- Does your dealership's physical building/s have curb appeal? Sure, you'd probably say. But when was the last time you actually stood on the curb and looked at your business from a cus-

tomers' perspective. How visible is your signage and logo? Does your business have adequate customer parking? Is the exterior well maintained and inviting? Would you want to do business here?

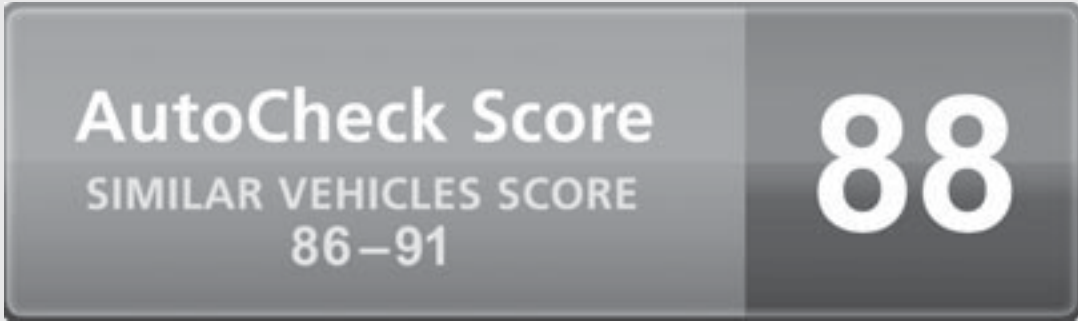
- Does your showroom have a customer friendly atmosphere, staffed with pleasant sales personnel who are ready to answer questions but don't hover unnecessarily around customers.

- Do you have coffee perking in the background and available to customers? Even if customers don't want to take you up on your coffee offer, that welcoming gesture is usually appreciated. It's a small gesture but it's a perk that can go a long way in keeping customers happy and interested in doing business with you.

- Make shopping at your dealership a highly pleasant experience. Turn off loud TVs and overhead music that competes for attention. Did you know that customers often subconsciously choose to shop at stores where soft lighting is used versus retail establishments where hard, glaring spotlights vie for attention?

- Make sure your dealership is involved in the community. People may not retain all the information in your TV or print ad, but they usually remember which businesses are contributing to good works in their community. To learn more, contact Linda about your WATDA Foundation Dealer Community Challenge Grant Program at (608) 251-5577.

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