

Dealer POINT

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inside |



Smart life in the fast lane

BY LINDA POULSEN

Dealer. Racer. Friend. J.R. Smart loves fast cars. He is in the prime of his life and the new CEO of Smart Motors, a Madison Toyota-Scion dealership, founded by his grandfather O.D. Smart in 1908.

My friend Steven and I thought it would be fun to drive to Elkhart Lake to visit J.R. during his first weekend of racing in the Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) at Road America. The SCCA is a 60,000-member not-for-profit organization featuring the most active membership participation organization in motor sports today, with over 2,000 amateur and professional motor sports events each year. J.R. has been a member for 30 years and is no stranger to car racing, a passion he has embraced all his life.

Steven is J.R.'s college fraternity brother who gave up ownership of his father's hot dog stand to become a dentist. He wondered if Road America still looked the same. Both of them had fond memories of student life at the UW-Madison in the 1970's. Both share the adrenaline high they get from driving high performance automobiles.

We make our way into the paddocks

near the pits where all the drivers and crew "camp out" between races. We see what J.R.'s Team Smart refers to as the screamin' "Van Diemen." It is the name of the English-engineered chassis that is J.R. Smart's race car, a rather odd looking thing, low to the ground, something you wouldn't see on I-94 but it is the second fastest class in the June Sprints, averaging 100 mph in the 13-lap races.

The tires are off and the new trailer doubles as a temporary office and shady napping place for J.R. and his crew. There are also spare parts, folding chairs and a full box of tools inside. Chris Dashney is J.R.'s newest crew member whose expertise is computer technology.



JR Smart's "Screamin' Van Diemen" boasts the number "1". These Formula Continentals race an average of 100 mph can pull three G's around a corner. Top inset: Gerhard Banfi and J.R. push "Bad Boy" into the impound area after taking second place the his first race of the season at Road America.

He will make sure all the latest information is available and do whatever needs doing.

Gerhard Banfi is a longtime crew chief and his name is printed under the Team Smart name on the trailer. He owns Gerhard Auto Service, specializes in import service technology and shares his mechanical passion and talent with J.R. We can feel his passion for racing, too. It is flowing through his veins as he explains the logistics of racing.

High speeds around hairpin turns put a lot of stress on these racers and their cars. Last year, J.R. won three races, but it cost him. He blew a connecting rod out of the side of the engine. It is a mangled, machined, solid metal part that could have hurt somebody when it cracked, I thought. There are over 30 cars that raced with J.R. during the first double race. They are divided in groups of like-type vehicles and JR's is the Formula Continental group. These four-speed, speed demons are the second fastest group racing in the Sprints.

J.R. is racing "Bad Boy No. 1." He started seventh overall in the qualifier race and came in second in the first race. He was only behind the winner by 5.738 seconds traveling an average of two minutes and eighteen seconds per lap. His average speed is 100 miles per hour while he winds around 14 turns.

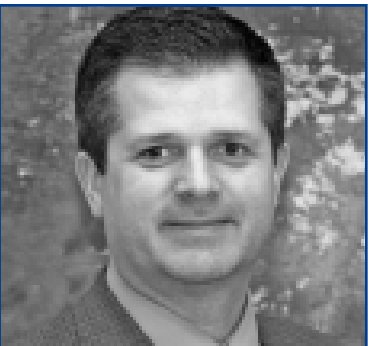
"Racing is like a ballet," says J.R. "a kind of balancing act, always different and always challenging. It is pure adrenaline and concentration. I look for a target and try and stay out of trouble."

J.R. is quick to mention others who help him race. "Augie Pabst III from Oconomowoc runs Pabst Racing Services and preps my alignment and chassis before the season of racing," he says. "And Steve Knapp of Elite

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CENTER STAGE | Awards, honors, milestones

GERRARD APPOINTED TO WISCONSIN WOMEN’S COUNCIL

Senate President Fred Risser (D-Madison) has appointed Mary Ann Gerrard to serve on the Wisconsin Women’s Council. The 15 members of the council are appointed either by the governor, the senate president or the assembly speaker. The mission of the council is to enhance the ability of all Wisconsin women to participate fully in all aspects of life.

Recognition of women’s achievement in education programs, health issues and business education are just some of the areas of the council’s work.

“I’m looking forward to this opportunity,” said Gerrard. “I am grateful to Senator Risser for this appointment.”



MAILBOX | Correspondence

The Foundation of WATDA and Team Wisconsin would like to congratulate Tyson Larson and his students, Jon Dethardt of Seymour and Sam Thiel of Black Creek, on winning the National Competition in New York.

Wisconsin wins two years in a row! (Carl Hader, Grafton High School won in 2006.)

It shows that Wisconsin Teachers are on the right track and working together for the betterment of the industry.

We are proud of all of you and the high standards that you all strive for making Wisconsin the leader in automotive education.

Raymon L. Pedersen
Jeff Dowd
Julie L. Olson

Dear Ray,
Thank you for visiting UW-Platteville along with Jeff and Larry. I am excited about the opportunities we discussed. Frank Steck and his colleagues will soon begin reviewing our articulation agreements with the technical colleges

you identified. As these are updated we will proceed to identify curricular “pathways” by which students can most efficiently transfer from the technical colleges automotive programs into our technology education program. We will keep you informed on progress.

I have also asked leaders in our Department of Business and Accounting to work with their col-

FROM AROUND THE STATE | Changes

Lavon Felton has purchased Peterson GM and is now operating it as **Sleepy Hollow Chevrolet-Buick-Pontiac-GMC, Inc.**, in Viroqua. Felton was an independent dealer in Viroqua for many years.

Five Corners Dodge, Inc. of Cedarburg has acquired the former Abhold dealership in Mt. Calvary. It is operating as **Five Corners Dodge-Chrysler-Jeep** and both dealerships are under the ownership of **Roman Weninger, Mark Demler** and **Donna Howarth**.

The East Troy dealership, **Hub West**, has been purchased by **Dave Lynch**, Lynch GM Superstore of Burlington. The East Troy location is operating as **Lynch Chrysler-Jeep-Dodge**.

Jim Griffin of **Griffin Ford** in Waukesha and **Griffin Dodge Mitsubishi** in Menomonee Falls, has purchased the **Hub South Chrysler-Jeep** dealership in West Allis, formerly owned by the Lecher family.

Rudy’s Pontiac in Whitehall has joined the **Gunderson family** of Osseo, which currently owns and operates **Osseo Ford** and **Nels Gunderson Chevrolet**.

John Bowditch and sons, **Matt** and **Brian**, have purchased the **Whitewater Chevrolet** dealership owned for many years by **John Sanderson**. The Bowditch family has owned and operated Burtness Chevrolet of Orfordville and the new store will be known as **Burtness Chevrolet** of Whitewater.

Dan Toycen and **Andy Lamb** have purchased the **Nielsen Ford** dealership in Bloomer. Jim Nielsen will continue working with the dealership, which is now known as **Bloomer Ford**.

leagues in the Department of Industrial Studies to see how we can help address the need for more mid-level managers in auto and truck dealerships. Thank you for pointing out models at Northwood University and Ferris State University.

Duane Merlin Ford, Dean
College of Business, Industry,
Life Science and Agriculture
UW-Platteville

Save the date!

The Used Car Conference will be September 24-25 in Wisconsin Dells at the Glacier Canyon Lodge at the Wilderness Resort.

Keynote speaker will be Jim Ziegler, noted industry speaker, trainer and author. We will also offer various workshops allowing attendees to choose the topics that are most meaningful to their dealership success. Don’t miss it!

WATDA REGIONAL MEETINGS

DAY/DATE	TIME	CITY	FACILITY	
Monday-8/6	3 p.m.	Rhineland	Holiday Inn Express	668 W Kemp St.
Tuesday-8/7	9 a.m.	Superior	Richard I Bong WWII Heritage Center	305 Harbor View Pkwy.
Tuesday-8/7	2 p.m.	Eau Claire	Plaza Hotel & Suites	1202 W Clairemont Ave.
Wednesday-8/15	9 a.m.	Janesville	Holiday Inn Express	3100 Wellington Place
Wednesday-8/15	2 p.m.	Platteville	Country Inn	630 S Water St.
Monday-8/20	3 p.m.	Wausau	Westwood Conference Center	1800 Westwood Center Blvd.
Tuesday-8/21	9 a.m.	Green Bay	Radisson	2040 Airport Dr.
Tuesday-8/21	2 p.m.	Sheboygan	American Club	Highland Ave.
Wednesday-8/22	9 a.m.	Racine	Marriott	7111 W. Washington Ave.
Wednesday-8/22	2 p.m.	Oconomowoc	Oconomowoc Lake Club	4668 Lake Club Circle
Monday-8/27	3 p.m.	Madison	Hilton Garden Inn	1801 Deming Way
Tuesday-8/28	10 a.m.	Milwaukee	ADAMM	10810 W. Liberty Dr.
Tuesday-8/28	2:30 p.m.	Oshkosh	Hilton Garden Inn	1355 W. 20th Ave.
Wednesday-8/29	9 a.m.	Wisconsin Dells	Glacier Canyon Lodge	45 Hillman Rd.
Wednesday-8/29	2 p.m.	LaCrosse	River States Truck	3959 N Kinney Coulee Rd.

These items are important to me to discuss at the Regional Meetings:

NAME

DEALERSHIP

PHONE

Return this form to WATDA, Attn: Regional Meetings, PO Box 5345, Madison, WI 53705-0345

Dealer POINT

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GARY'S BRIEFS | Gary Williams, WATDA president

UW-Madison connects to auto industry

Is there maybe something better than ethanol coming?

Is our Earth warming or cooling?

Who knows more about how power is created through internal combustion?

Which of over 100 university engineering students again

won the national competition for racing on created vehicles and achieving great fuel economy?

There is hardly a week that goes by that some startling information comes out of the UW that has huge implications for how life may become based on current discoveries and achievements. Obviously, I love the world of discovery and the realm of accomplishment by humans of all types and ages, marveling at what possibilities may be next.

After all, discovery drives technological change, which then drives social change. And political change. And the political world is your WATDA's world. It is where the new rules are set or denied. And if set, what is set? And how will compliance be measured? Heavy stuff. Only your WATDA and NADA are there to carry your water.

In the same week that our U.S. Senate took a purposeful, strident, and probably destructive majority position on CAFE standards for the future, lab scientists and their students at the UW Madison announced a further breakthrough toward providing non-petroleum based mobile fuel created from simple sugars, manufactured by converting fructose derived from fruits and plants. (Bio-mass).

In the lab it took far less energy to create the new fuel than ethanol, and yet it produced about 40% more oomph. Ethanol has other serious drawdowns. This new stuff may be cleaner, less



volatile, and it definitely does not mix with water, as does ethanol. This is huge. The footnote is...more study is needed. It is called DMF.

Reid Bryson is now in his 90's. He's been retired for twenty years. He goes to work every day at the UW Meteorology building, probably the highest single structure on the campus...the one with all the big dishes and bulbs on the top. If you haven't visited there, put it on your "To Do" list soon before you die.

Reid is like the godfather of the science of climatology. Where will it rain? Or snow? Or dry up? Or will hurricanes and typhoons wreak more or less havoc? Are we getting warmer or colder? Does it make a difference?

Bryson's take today is that all the hoopla about man's input into global warming is really just hoopla. (Actually, he has stronger words.) There is some warming he agrees, but it's a blip on the screen of eternal time. Overall we may be slowly dropping toward another ice age.

Obviously others in generations younger than Bryson disagree, and claim that the rate of global temperature change is particularly alarming. Nevertheless, Reid Bryson deserves a standing "O" for sticking with his beliefs as a rigid scientist where only deductions from hard facts deserve public pontifications.

Our UW Madison engineering students did it again. They won the national SAE Formula Racing competition, a collegiate event of over 100 entries where students design, build and race a formula-style racing car. Among the top ten finishers, the vehicle from the UW Madison was the only one using alternative fuel (E-85).

The "Provost" of a major university is like the second in command. Gary Farrell is the somewhat new provost at

Madison. Three years ago he spoke at a dinner of your WATDA Board, including spouses and staff. He was peppered with questions for nearly an hour after his PowerPoint presentation.

What was it about? Motors. Fuels. Everything that is coming. He is a leading researcher about internal combustion, and how to maximize power.

Again, a facts-driven UW scientist/engineer making a difference, making the connection to the worldwide auto industry.

The point of all of this is that sometimes people in our UW Madison do things so well that they really do help us in the long haul. They deserve our gratitude and encouragement to keep at it.



The Dealer Viability Task Force creates a resource through WATDA that provides for a confidential peer review and consultation regarding factors of business viability, exit strategies and protection of assets. Attending the first meeting at WATDA in Madison from left is Mike Schmit, Norm Mueller, Task Force Chair Pat Baxter, John O'Malley, Tim Vernier and Gary Williams.

WISCONSIN AUCTIONS INTERESTED IN WISCONSIN DEALERS



Recently Wisconsin DMV and WATDA met with several Wisconsin auto auctions to talk about issues that concern both auctions and auto dealers. Title branding, lien releases and out-of-country sales were just a few of the subjects covered in the course of the meeting. "It was a very beneficial meeting," said Mary Ann Gerrard, WATDA legal counsel and lobbyist. "By talking to the auctions before we pursue legislation we can get a better result for everyone."

"The auction perspective is very different from auto dealers," said Sue Miller, of WATDA. "We don't want to recommend changes that appear to help dealers but end up slowing down commerce because of undue burdens on the auctions." The groups intend to meet again in the fall.

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*Best's Review, Nov. 2005, "The Art of Underwriting".
**UH Class of 2000 and Class of 2001 Studies

Starkman selected MATC dean



Ken Starkman has been selected as the dean for the division of Construction, Manufacturing,

Apprenticeship and Transportation at Madison Area Technical College.

Starkman served on Team Wisconsin and helped develop key technical programs involving The Foundation of WATDA.

From 1996 through 2007 Starkman was a consultant with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction where he supervised the k-12 technology and engineering programs and served in several leadership positions in Wisconsin, the U.S. and most recently with the International Technology Education Association as immediate past president.

Starkman has over 18 years of education experience including teaching middle school and high school courses, university and technical college courses, and serving as the state executive director for the SkillsUSA student organization.

WISCO | John Hackman

BENEFITS OF WISCO MEMBERSHIP

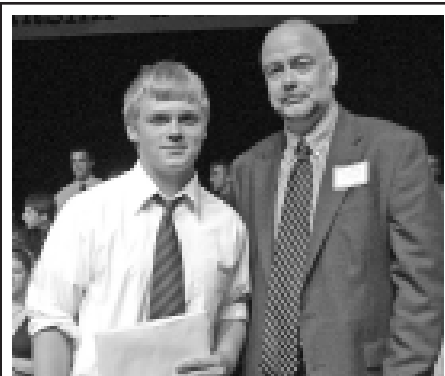
BY JOHN HACKMAN

WISCO's sole purpose for existing is to provide quality products dealerships use at a savings to the WISCO members. With very few exceptions WISCO provides everything an auto or truck dealership needs but the vehicles. Since WISCO is a true cooperative we are owned by our member dealers. Because our members are the owners they receive any profits the co-op generates in the form of their year end rebate checks. This patronage rebate is determined by how much the member purchased from WISCO. The more a member uses WISCO the bigger the rebate check. So not only does the dealership save on the original purchase, but at year end they receive the profits from the cooperative. The staff at WISCO is focused on taking care of our members because not only are they our customers, they are also our owners and bosses. With WISCO our members receive well known quality products, at a savings, with that excellent WISCO service.



If you are a member of WISCO are you getting all the benefits you can from WISCO? We can only save you money on your purchases if you use us. That continued message, especially from the dealer owners and managers, is invaluable to WISCO and to the bottom line of your business.

If you are not a member isn't it time to check us out? Today auto and truck dealers are forced to look toward their parts department, service department, and body shop to provide more of the dealership's profit. Joining WISCO is really a no lose proposition. To become a member, fill out a simple application and purchase a \$1,000 share in WISCO. That one time investment of \$1,000 is not an expense, but stock in WISCO. If for any reason you ever leave WISCO your \$1,000 is refunded. While you are a member WISCO pays you 5% interest on this stock. You can start today using WISCO to add to your bottom line by calling (800) 274-2319 or by going to www.wisco.com.



Jim Bloedel, right, service director, Russ Darrow Nissan Honda Suzuki, Milwaukee, presents an Automotive Technician Scholarship Award to Joshua Kiefer at Grafton High School's scholarship presentation ceremony on May 30.

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JANUARY-JUNE 2007 • THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

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Thanks to the SkillsUSA event team of volunteers



Judges Gale Slane and Karen Ayres



Chrysler trainer, John Hirschmann



Consultants Ginna Schenk, Bob Slane and Jeff Dowd.



Ford trainer Craig Kuehl with student.



Julie Olson.



MATC-Madison college winners with Craig Lathrop of MATC.



Carl Hader with Grafton High School winner Dean Large, and Ray Pedersen.

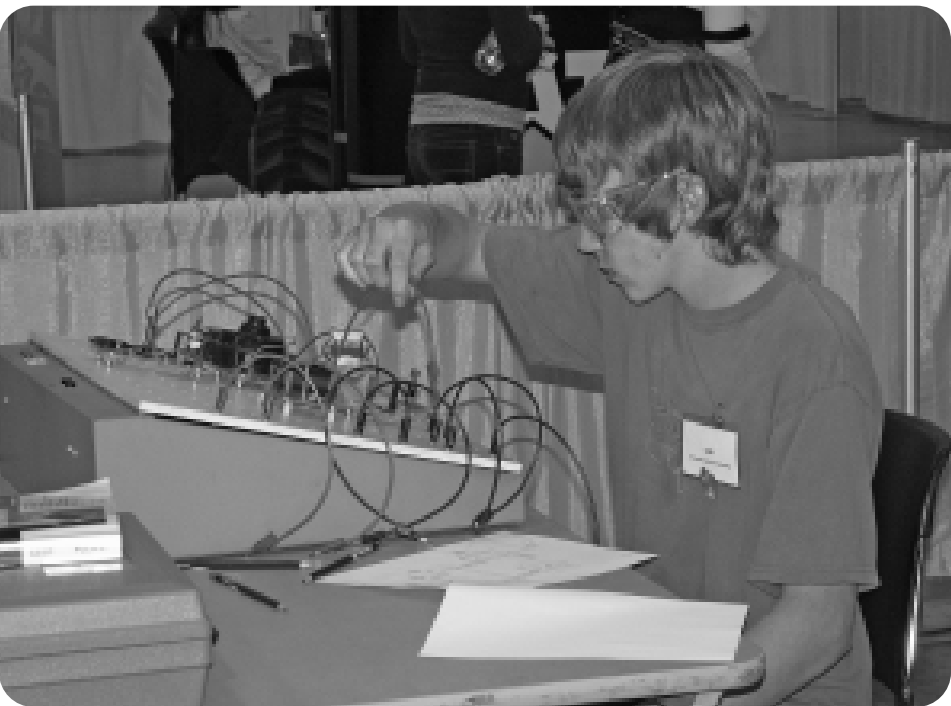
Over 100 automotive volunteers, sponsors, teachers and students participated in the SkillsUSA event held at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison April 24-25. WATDA and The Foundation of WATDA wishes to thank everyone who made this possible for young people interested in a career in the auto and truck industry.



Bill Fell of Gateway Technical College with student.



Mike Gabron and Rick Olson of Snap-on.



Student participant.



Ford trainer Margi Zamorski.



Ken Feist, Ursela Szumski and Mary Sontag of GM.

WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

You may be eligible for a community challenge grant through The Foundation of WATDA. To find out more, visit watda.org and click on "About the Foundation."

Bell Ford honored with eighth president's award

BY SHARYN ALDEN

Since the early 1900s, Bell Ford has been one of most distinguishable landmarks in Arlington, Wis. For over 75 years, the familiar Ford logo has been associated with the dealership.

Along the way, there have been many milestones, and this year is no different. Repeatedly, Bell Ford has gained exclusive memberships in Ford's most exclusive club – the President's Award that acknowledges Ford Lincoln Mercury dealers who have led the nation in outstanding service, as well as the Gold Medallion Club for excellence in achievement for the parts and service department.

For those who know firsthand, Bell Ford's excellent customer service, it may not be much of a surprise to learn the business has received another prestigious "Gold Award." But dealership owner Bill Bell knows the President's Award is not given out lightly.

"Ford honors only 416 out of nearly 5,000 dealerships with this prestigious annual award," he said.

So not long ago, when a black UPS box arrived at Bell Ford's doorstep, Bell thought the box looked suspiciously familiar.

"I was ecstatic even before opening it," Bell said. "I took one look at that box and thought it might be the 2006 Ford Motor Company's President's Award,



Bill and Caroline Bell

since our 2004 and 2005 President's Awards arrived the same way."

Bell Ford is obviously doing something right in the President's Award department. "We have won a total of eight President's Awards starting in 1994, and we are extremely proud of every one of them," he said.

A COMMUNITY FIXTURE

When the horse and buggy was a mainstay of America, the emergence of the motor vehicle inspired four local resi-

dents, including William Bell, to open an automotive garage in town. Looking back, the forward-thinking group, were "in the right place at the right time." William eventually bought out his partners and was subsequently joined by his son Gene in the business in the early 1930s. In 1931, Bell became a Ford dealership and the rest, as they say, is history.

Never let it be said that Bell Ford doesn't provide outstanding customer service for cars and their owners in all stages of distress. A case in point is the

1934 car accident that became a notorious footnote in the dealership's history. A fancy car with Illinois license plates was in an accident, crumpling the bumper. But that isn't why this shop repair still remains an interesting part of Bell Ford history.

The dealership later learned that it was the Chicago gangster Baby Face Nelson at the wheel along with his companion, and they were headed to northern Wisconsin to hide from the law. It wasn't until later that Bell Ford personnel learned who was driving the car. They heard about the shootout at John Dillinger's hideout at Little Bohemia, and it involved Baby Face Nelson, the man who drove the car into the Arlington garage.

Bell Ford has been helping "stranded" motorists for decades in more ways than one. One time a woman who was driving to Minneapolis with her sister was stranded when her car broke down on the Interstate near Arlington. Her car was towed to the Bell dealership, but she wasn't comfortable continuing on her journey with one of the service loaner cars. So what did Bell Ford do? They made arrangements for her to continue traveling by Amtrak. "We took her to the railroad station and picked her up the next week," said Bell.

Out of state vacationers traveling to the Wisconsin Dells have also become stranded near Bell Ford. "Many times we have delivered service loaners or repaired their vehicles and delivered them to their motels," said Bell.

In another situation, a negative situation turned into a win-win all around. A couple had blown the engine in their vehicle and Bell gave them a service loaner so they could continue on their journey. While they were vacationing Bell conveniently arranged financing for them on a new vehicle.

Nearly 30 years later, Gene Bell's son, William became a partner in the family-owned business. "Our strong cohesive team has been important to being recognized with so many high honors over the years," Bill Bell said.

It's not always easy to assess why an award is given, but Bell says there are several things that stand out at the dealership. "All dealership personnel take the highest Ford Certification courses available," he said. "Our parts and service managers both won Ford Medallion Elite Gold Awards in 2005. Our parts manager won the silver this year and our service manager won the gold."

Other points behind the recent accolades include loaning customers current model cars free when their car is being serviced. An after-hours customer drop-off box for keys is available for their use.

"We have a multi-point inspection report card for our customers' cars. We advise them of our findings by phone or when they come in to pick up their vehicles," said Bell. In the near future, customers will enjoy a new customer rewards program.

"Earning this award for three consecutive years is a reflection of our entire staff's commitment to delivering the best customer experience possible," said Bell.

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To get started, visit the Reading Room on our Web site and look for the article, "Buying or Selling a Dealership: What You Need to Consider," in the Automotive Services section. Then call us to discuss your needs.

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BURKHART FORD
EARNS HIGH HONORS

Dean Dallman, service manager at Mike Burkart Ford in Plymouth, understands the importance of award recognition from a personal perspective.

Dallman, who has worked at Burkart Ford since 1973 – right out of high school – has been the dealership’s service manager since 1990.



On Feb. 28 Dallman learned he was being honored with the Medallion Elite Club Gold Award for work the dealership’s high marks earned in 2006. It was the third “Gold Award” from Ford for Dallman. Each award is a significant landmark in his illustrious career at Burkart Ford.

Asked what characterizes a Ford “Gold” winner, Dallman said, “First, I have about 15 great people behind me in the service department, and that helps drive a successful service department.” The Gold Award is based on overall service satisfaction and Ford measures that in several ways.”

One of the metrics for measurement is the “First Appointment Retained” metric.

“In conjunction with new car sales, Ford looks at what percentage of new cars return to the dealer for oil changes and other servicing, within six months after the car was sold,” said Dallman. “The idea is to retain customers after selling the new car.” Dallman reports their level of customer retainment is very high. “About 80 percent of our customers return to us for service.”

The Medallion Elite Club Gold Award isn’t the only award won at Burkart Ford. “Our dealership has won Ford’s President Award for sales and service for the last five years in a row,” Dallman said.

While it’s wonderful to be recognized with these distinctive awards, Dallman said the dealership strives for excellence. “Mike Burkart, owner and general manager, has done an outstanding job in instilling the importance of great service into the culture. The dealership feels customer satisfaction is an extremely important priority,” he said.

—By Sharyn Alden

KUDOS TO BRANTMEIR FORD

Roy Marquardt, parts and service director at Dick Brantmeier Ford in Sheboygan, knows all about Ford’s Medallion Elite Club Awards. Marquardt is ecstatic about having just received the “Gold Award” for the first time. He has been recognized with two “Bronze” and five “Silver Awards” in the past. “We finally did it, all the pieces came together this year,” he said.

Brantmeir also noted that of the five Medallion Club Elite awards that the dealership was up for this past year, they took home all five. In addition to Marquardt’s Gold Award, Brantmeir was recognized with three Silvers and a Bronze award.

In 1986, Marquardt started working in Brantmeier’s parts department, fol-

lowed by department manager through 1992. At this time he left to pursue other opportunities before moving to Indianapolis.

Dick Brantmeier hoped Marquardt would return to the Sheboygan dealership some day. “In 2004, during one phone call with Mr. Brantmeier, I decided to return to my roots in Sheboygan,” he said.

Asked what helped him win the Gold Award, Marquardt said that while it’s hard to quantify, the right attitude and atmosphere, combined with having the right people in place, all play a part.

Marquardt said his department’s goal is to put smiles on customers’ faces. “Sometimes out on the driveway, we replace customers’ turn signal bulbs and other small jobs without charging them. Or we’ll deliver a spare set of keys or jump-start vehicles without

charge. This type of personal service helps bring customers back to the dealership when they need us.”

In addition to the five or six times a year that his team gets together to keep up-to-date with industry changes, Marquardt’s service team gets together for informal brainstorming sessions for about 15 minutes every morning. “It gives us an opportunity to talk through upcoming challenges, get our game face on, and make sure we’re all rowing in the same direction,” he said.

From his experience working at other stores, he says these daily problem solving sessions are not typical at other service departments.

“It’s part of the reason why our team does so well not only in servicing our customers’ cars but also in winning awards,” he said.

—By Sharyn Alden

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FOUNDATION NEWS | Ray Pedersen, Gary Beier

Does charity enhance company revenue stream?

BY GARY BEIER AND RAY PEDERSEN

How many times have you asked that question? The ability to identify a direct return on investment is what separates winners from losers in the corporate world.

Can the charitable gifts you provide to a nonprofit foundation positively affect your dealership or company revenue stream?

A team of researchers from New York University and the University of Texas spent 11 years collecting data to settle the ongoing debate about the legitimacy of charity at the corporate



Gary Beier

level – with good reason. In 2005 alone some \$14 billion in corporate gifts were made to US charities, including the Foundation of WATDA. Sixty-six percent of the annual fund of the Foundation is provided through companies like yours.

The research team analyzed 95 individual studies on the effects of corporate charity done over three decades. The same question recurs throughout. Does corporate social responsibility have a direct link to corporate financial performance? Absolutely!

Professor Philip Bardes and Assistant Professor Christine Petrovits of New



Ray Pedersen

York University along with Professor Suresh Radhakrishnan from the University of Texas built a complex data model to quantify the benefits of corporate charity. What they discovered, in their own words, is “Contributions can improve brand awareness and the reputation of a company among customers as well as alleviate concerns about corporate misconduct. Firms that are sensitive to public perception have greater incentives to appear charitable to increase demand for their products ... the most sensitive audience to corporate contributions – is the customer.” The research team’s evidence showed a positive bottom line relationship between giving and annual revenue.

And there’s more. This style of corporate philanthropy has the potential

to increase perceived company value for the long term in both the eyes of the consumer as well as the employee base.

There is real evidence that this corporate philanthropy or “corporate social responsibility” is working right here at home. The at-work retention rate of our scholarship technicians is one of the highest in the country. So much in fact, that other tech-based industries are looking to duplicate some part of our process. Your collective brand as “Wisconsin’s Auto & Truck Dealers” is perceived by consumers, government and big business as entity the solves problems ad gets things done.

In the winter 2005 *Dealer Point*, I wrote about how this Foundation could become your action bank through a charitable investment that could produce positive results for you and your company.

There are numerous options, which you will find on our new gift planning website. You can access it through The Foundation’s main page at watda.org. Click on the Gift Planning Opportunities heading and see for yourself.

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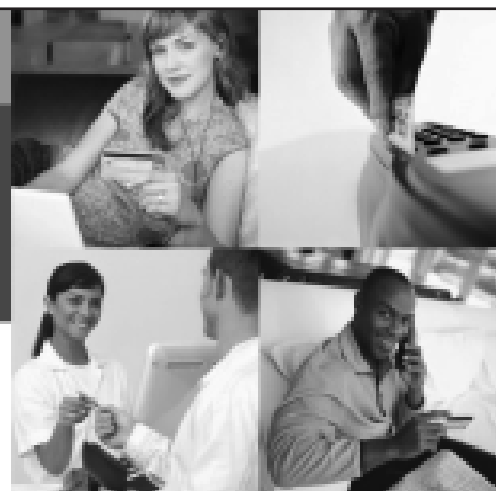
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Smart life in the fast lane

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Engines builds my engine." Months of prep must occur before the first race in the season.

It is the team spirit, however, that bonds Team Smart. And some of the team members are there only in spirit — such as JR's dad, the late Jim Smart, who also raced. Toni Smart, JR's wife of 20 years, will be there next weekend; her name is also listed on the Team Smart trailer as "Lovely Wife, Toni."

"She was working in our dealership administrative office when I met her and she liked the way I dealt with customers," Smart recalls, "This year will mark our 20th anniversary. I was racing before we met, so racing has always been a part of our lives together."

In 2008 the Smart Family will celebrate Smart Motors' 100th year as an auto dealership. The Century Award is given by NADA to franchised dealerships that have been in operation for 100 years or more. J.R. believes Smart Motors will be part of the Wall of Fame at NADA head-

quarters in Virginia this year.

Smart points out that there are only a handful of dealerships in the country that can claim selling cars for a century. "We have sold cars for 100 years. Most were carriage dealers before they sold cars," he notes.

As a third generation dealer, J.R. has the same name as his late father, F. J. "Jim" Smart and shares the responsibility of running Smart Motors with brother, Brian Smart. "The first car my grandfather sold was a 1908 Apperson Jackrabbit," he says. "We didn't sell the mainstream cars. Ours were off-brands. After the turn of the century, there were literally thousands of different vehicle manufacturers and all were made manually up until Henry Ford invented the assembly line."

"We sold 26 different franchises over the 100 years as a family dealership," says Smart. "And we've outlasted every one. My grandfather never sold a popular car in his life." Things may have changed for JR in that regard, as business has been good to the Smart Family.

Buy from WATDA services, buy from yourself

BY DONNA MICHAELIS

WATDA Services exhibited its products during WISCO's 36th annual show at Kalahari Convention Center, Wisconsin Dells in March.

"WATDA Services extends a thank you to John Hackman and the entire WISCO staff for inviting us," said Donna Michaelis, forms and products manager at WATDA. "Thanks to all of the attendees that stopped at our booth."

Three of the attendees received iPod giveaways. "We chose iPods as giveaways because they would grab attention prior to the show," said Michaelis. "Apple reported 10.5 million iPods sold in 2007's second quarter, over a hundred sold every minute, and they're a hot item."

WATDA Services has products to put a dealership's name in front of the customer and has upcoming products like Hitch Hiders and auto accident camera kits that are going to be very popular, she said. Michaelis pointed out that WATDA Services continually strives to provide dealers with sales, office and service forms and incentives.

"Participating in the WISCO show provides WATDA Services exposure to display many of our most popular products, such as car lot signage, promotional products, embroidered shirts & jackets, thermal mugs, air fresheners, key tags, blankets, swooper flags and much more," Michaelis added.

WISCO's members own the company

and it is one of the best and most viable buying groups of automotive parts, supplies and



Sue Miller, John Strange and Tammie Brunner.

equipment in the nation. Their mission is to save dealer members money through group purchases and to return any year-end earnings to the participating members in cash or equity. Their motto: "Buy from WISCO, Buy from yourself."

Like WISCO, when you buy from WATDA Services you are also buying from your Association and helping Wisconsin auto and truck dealerships. WATDASI's tagline: Your compliance and marketing resource center.

The more you use WATDASI, the more can save.

"We hope to see more of our WATDA members and their managers at next year's show April 12, 2008, at the Regency Suites Convention Center in Green Bay," said Michaelis.

Call your WATDA Services at (800) 236-7672 for further information on forms, car lot signage, garments and promotional products. Watch for John Strange, your account manager, to visit you this year with a revised catalog and a token of our appreciation.

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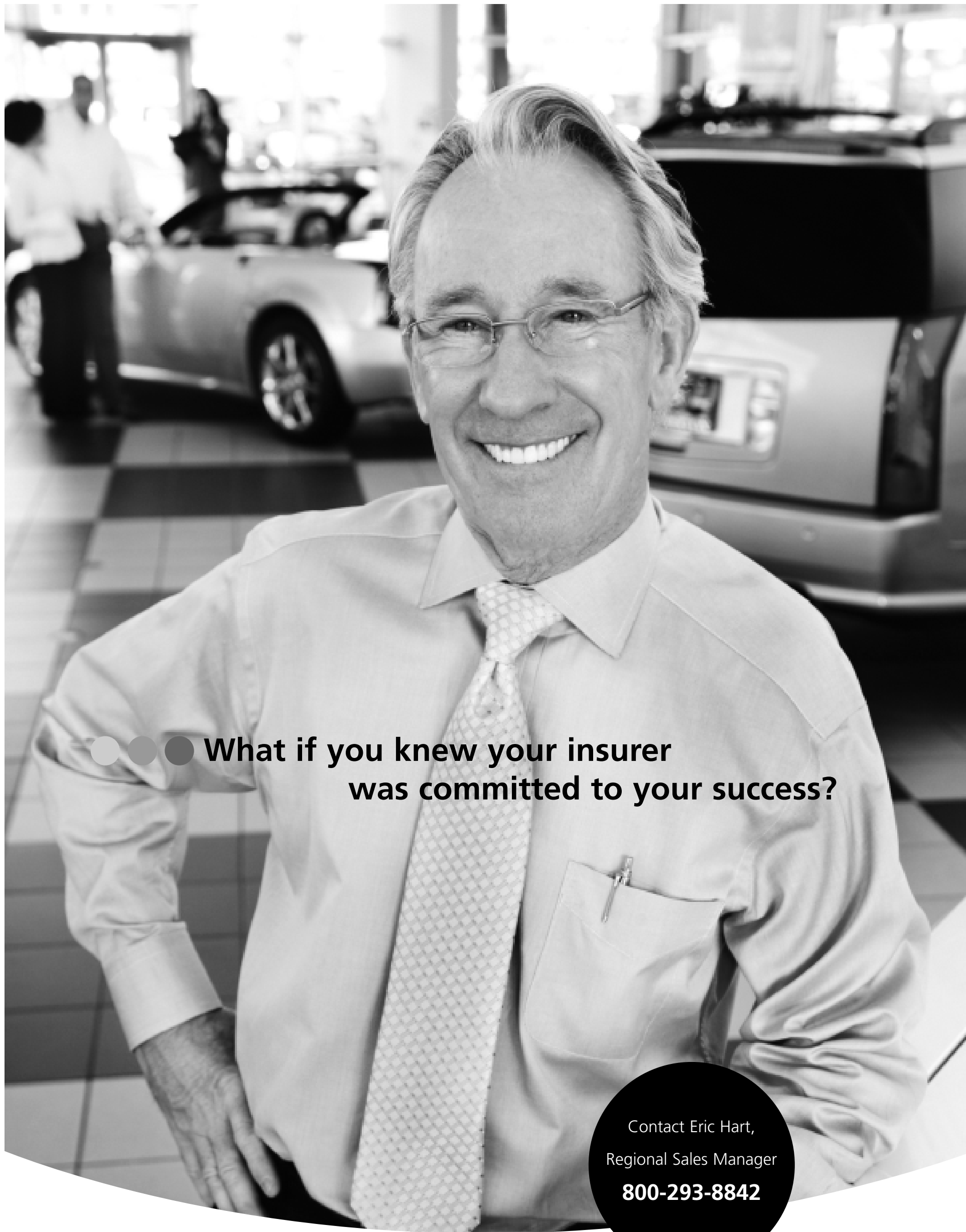
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