

# DEALER POINT

Official Publication of the Wisconsin Automobile & Truck Dealers Association | 1928-2019 | Volume 55 Fall 2019



**INSIDE:**  
**David Cuene,**  
**Broadway Chevrolet**  
**Wisconsin Dealer of the Year**  
**TIME Dealer Nominee**



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The Wisconsin Automobile & Truck Dealers Association, an organization of licensed dealers of new and used motor vehicles, is dedicated to advancing the common good of its members, consumers and their communities by promoting professionalism and prosperity through education, advocacy, information and service.

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## FEATURE



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On the cover: Michael and David Cuene, owners of Broadway Automotive, Green Bay.

# A Titledown TDOY

BY CHRYSTE L. MADSEN

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

—Maya Angelou.

The quote accompanies every email sent by the person selected to be our 2020 Wisconsin Dealer of the Year and the TIME Dealer of the Year nominee. Many of us include quotes we find inspiring; on business cards, emails, etc. Yet few of us live them as well as David Cuene of Broadway Automotive. We don’t mean “live” them in a sticky, sweet, ingratiating way. Cuene does it in more of an amazing, exuberant, sincere way that just makes you feel good to be in his orbit.

David Cuene is representing Broadway Chevrolet & VW in his role this year as the Wisconsin nominee at the annual NADA Convention to be held in Las Vegas, February 14th–17th. Broadway Automotive also owns and operates another location with Ford and Hyundai franchises. The Cuenes also have Broadway Auto Credit and a Hertz Rent-A-Car location at the Austin-Straubel and Central Wisconsin airports.

If you speak with David about the business, you’ll know by the end of the first sentence that he hasn’t come to any success alone. Broadway Automotive has had multiple generations of Cuenes and David shares equal credit and responsibility for this generation with his brother, Michael. As David stated in his application to TIME, “As third generation business owners, my brother, business partner, and best friend Michael and I are looking forward to celebrating our 103rd year in business AND our 100th year as a Chevrolet dealer this year...”(see inset)

In the early 1950’s, David and Michael’s grandfather, Herb, was operating the Broadway store. At that time, the boy’s father, Duke, and their Uncle Jim joined Herb to run the Chevrolet dealership together. The brothers, Duke and Jim proudly proclaimed they never had an argument! David remarked, “They truly laid the foundation for our businesses’ success.”

David vividly remembers his very first day of work at the dealership when he was 15 years old. “My mom dropped me at the side entrance to the dealership. My dad was in his office

and I patiently waited for him to finish a call. When done, he smiled, rose and said, ‘Follow me’. We went through the office, the long length of the shop; all the way to the back of the building. Once out on the muddy lot, my dad told me to wait. Soon enough, a large dump truck appeared. My father, now grinning, pointed to an area of ground. It turned out the truck was filled with gravel and it dumped its’ load right in the area my father indicated. I hadn’t noticed, but as we walked through the shop, my father had grabbed a shovel and he now, proudly, presented it to me with the instruction, ‘spread that around and come and get me when you’re done’.

I may have been 15, but I knew the truck could have easily spread the load as it drove, and I shared this with my father. He just said, ‘I know, I know, just spread it around’ as he walked back into the building chuckling to himself. I spread the pile, and when I did, many more appeared.” Cuene went on to relate that following the gravel spread, sludge pits were emptied, walls were cleaned with solvent so strong it ate away at his gloved hands and he wouldn’t have traded his first summer of work at the dealership for anything. “Looking back,” he says, “there is not a floor, wall or piece of blacktop in our dealership that I have not personally cleaned.”

Following high school, David attended Northwood University. He was planning to join the family business at graduation, but his father and uncle had another idea. “I was expected to first gain industry experience in other dealerships, working for someone else. My time with the Germain and Bryan family dealerships in Florida ended up being invaluable,” David related. “Drive, passion and accountability were some of the traits I learned from early managers and role models, but integrity and honesty were two that came from my father and Uncle Jim were never compromised.”

It’s difficult to translate Cuene’s passion on paper. His commitment to his team and community is well described by his Executive Assistant, Kathy Kluck, who has been with the organization long term. Kathy says, “I’ve had the pleasure of working with David for 18 years and what a ride it’s been! He is not only my boss, he’s like a brother to me!

David’s got a quick wit and great sense of humor; these traits are what draw people to him. Give him a microphone and look out, he will have the entire room laughing! His high



energy level and enthusiasm are contagious and everyone around him feels it.

David is very instrumental in teaching and pushing their associates to do their best. He truly is everyone's biggest coach or cheerleader, hoping they become the best they can be! You will hear him say, 'Work hard, but I want you to have fun doing it.' His work philosophy is that we cross the finish line together as a team.

Another great attribute about David is that he truly cares about the greater community. He goes out of his way to make the world we live in a better place by serving on Boards, doing community service or helping the individual person. He is aware, he cares, he shares. All around," Kathy smiles warmly, "he's just a great guy!"

Kathy's assessment of David's ability to see a problem and create a solution is nowhere more evident than in the Broadway Better Leadership Training program or B2L. In his community of Green Bay, David worked with the Green Bay school system and, as he put it, "discovered something that completely changed the way I look at our team". Prior to freshman year, students in the district meet with a counselor and decide what they'd like to do upon graduating. Together, they plot the path to accomplish the goal. The next year they do the same thing but, being human, growing and changing, as all of us do, the counselor asks if the student still wishes to pursue the same path. If the answer is no, class schedules are adjusted, and of course, grades are reviewed all along the process. David discovered the disconnect comes when students graduate and enter the workforce. He says, "Industry throws a yoke on the graduate and tries to drive them like a team of workhorses. After a period of time, the once promising new hire becomes frustrated, quits and their supervisors grumble about millennials. That's not the problem. The problem is we aren't speaking their language."

What Cuene managed to successfully do with this information was the implementation of a dealership program to retain top talent by ensuring everyone has the tools and the training they need to be successful. The dealership adopted the

"Broadway Better Leadership Training" program. It cultivates skills in managers, enabling them to effectively coach and lead employees and allows current employees with potential to grow into leadership roles.

Hear David's explanation of the program: "Imagine that you walk into work one day and your supervisor asks you where you want to be in three to four years and then they help you put together a game plan to get there. With 'Broadway Better Leadership Training', we do personal career planning once a year, every year, with every team member. The meetings are usually a celebration of success. On other occasions, their goals change, or we talk about what the associate needs to change or focus on to get to their goal. "B2L helps us build and maintain our culture, as well as identify areas of improvement as needs arise," Cuene said.

Through the years the Cuene family has always been very philanthropic but when David was asked which award was most meaningful to him, there was no hesitation and he answered Urban Hope. The dealership has been recognized several times for fundraising, instructing and steering the organization.

eHub/Urban Hope began originally with Green Bay Packer Reggie White and his wife, Sara. They had a vision of empowering aspiring entrepreneurs to realize their dreams of owning and operating their own businesses.

In a moment of reflection, David recalled how he accepted what he thought was a simple invitation to an Urban Hope graduation ceremony from a friend. "The stories I heard that day moved me to take action," he said. "Some of the graduates got up and addressed the audience, telling their personal stories. Many had the cards stacked against them, while some were even homeless. Several lost their jobs due to downsizing and still others simply had a great idea that needed to be put into action. eHub/Urban Hope helped these people take their dream and turn it into a functioning and thriving business. At the end of the ceremony, I tracked down the program director and offered my help."

David continued, "Inc. Magazine has rated Green Bay, Wisconsin one of the Top 10 Places to Start a Business in the



Bobbi Giles Director of Philanthropy for St Mary's/St Vincents Hospital and Mayor Jim Schmitt.



Broadway Automotive partner with The Salvation Army Red Kettle Match Day with Casey Cuene and Kathy Kluck.

United States. I believe Urban Hope played a significant role in that recognition. My involvement has earned me several awards with them, and though each was important, the energy I get from these students continues to amaze me.”

Cuene served on the WATDA Board of Directors from 2009 through 2014, a very busy time in our industry both nationally and statewide. Of course, everyone was still navigating the recent bankruptcies of General Motors and Chrysler Corporation. Legislatively, WATDA was involved in making major updates to the state franchise laws and, again, the trade-in credit was under attack. David also participated in the annual trips promoting federal advocacy to Washington, DC for both AIADA and NADA.

While David has made a huge commitment to his business, community and industry, he supplies equal dedication to his personal life. He says, “I didn’t fully come into my own until I met my partner, Jairo, and we started our own family. We met 19 years ago, and while it was considered unconventional at the time, 14 years ago we had out twins. Our boys and Jairo have opened up a world of slack-jawed wonder while simultaneously allowing me to see more clearly what is truly important.”

When we asked Jairo how they make their busy schedules work with the boys he said this, “When I first met David, he was working all the time. When we had children, he changed his schedule to allow him to be home for dinner and time on the weekends. He didn’t want to miss anything raising the boys. Even though he volunteers a lot in the community, family always comes first.”

Jairo continued, “David and I share the same values and interests – sports, traveling, animals and boating. I have been lucky enough to share my country/culture with David and my family. We travel to Colombia once a year to see my family in Sogamoso, Colombia. My adjustment to the culture here has been easier since I met David because of the person he is. He introduced me to a great community of close friends and family. Since then, I have a better understanding of the American culture.”

Ironically, Jairo’s brother-in-law’s family owns the largest Toyota dealership in Colombia.



Duke, Jairo, Pablo and David at the lighthouse South Manitou Island on Lake Michigan.

What is it like for brother Michael to work with this dynamo? Michael said, “What can I say about my brother? When David walks into the room, you know he’s there! He’ll fill the room with a bit of laughter and cheer! To be serious, I believe there is an old quote stating, ‘brothers are what best friends can never be’. Not only is David my business partner, but he is a true friend to me and our entire family. Loyal, generous, intelligent with a family-first attitude; dedicated to both the Cuene Family and the Broadway family.”

Whether at home, work or in the community David Cuene’s passion, humor and optimism do not fade.

## A Century of Chevrolet at Broadway

**B**roadway Garage opened for business in 1916 and was franchised to sell Apperson, Maxwell & Buick automobiles. It was originally owned by Grove McGeehan. In 1917 Herb Cuene, Michael and David’s grandfather, joined Grove in the business and the Chevrolet franchise was added in 1919.

By 1933, Herb was the sole owner. At that time, he offered several of his brothers the opportunity to enter the business with him. Herb’s brother, Hugo, opened a separate location for the Buick franchise when General Motors requested they separate it from the Chevrolet store.

David and Michael’s father, Duke, and their Uncle Jim joined Herb in the business in the early 1950’s. Together they ran the dealership for several decades.

Chevrolet is now owned and operated by Herb’s sons, Michael and David Cuene, The Broadway organization has been celebrating this milestone 100th anniversary throughout 2019. They were recently recognized by General Motors for their 100 years as a highly successful Chevrolet dealer.

Congratulations to the Broadway family! ●

(Left to Right): David Cuene and Michael Cuene, dealer principals and managing partners of Broadway Chevrolet in Green Bay, Wis., receives a 100-year award from Alex Walsh, regional director, and Mike Schmitz, zone manager, for Chevrolet.



When asked what he feels has been most rewarding to him in his career, he said the following, "I was born and live in Green Bay, Wisconsin, a football town. I literally drive by Lambeau Field four times every day. The Green Bay Packer logo is everywhere. It has had a profound effect on me and has shaped the way I run my business. We think of ourselves as a team and every team has their Super Bowl. We select market or customer satisfaction objectives, philanthropic goals and associate experience targets as our "Big Game". The most rewarding aspect of my career has been the ability to create opportunities for leadership and participation.

- Leadership is not about being the best.
- Leadership is about making everyone else better.

True to life, we all cross the finish line together. We win as a team and we fail as a team. Our unique approach to business has all eyes to the future; we work hard but we also make sure there is always fun in the mix.

This applies to anything that I do. You can feel the impact of this philosophy in our business and the charities I work with such as eHub/Urban Hope, Children's Hospital or the Green Bay School System. It applies to how I want to live my life and raise our children. It is all about making this a better place than we found it. I have been blessed with wonderful people in my life; peers, great community leaders, wonderful team members, customers and most of all, family."

What are his thoughts on receiving the 2020 Wisconsin TIME Dealer of the Year nomination and 2020 Wisconsin Dealer of the Year Award? Cuene sums them up with a thoughtful smile as his arm punctuates the air, "Humbling and Awesome!" ●



Green Bay Police Chief Andrew Smith.

Superintendent of the Green Bay School System, Michelle Langenfeld receives donated engine for City Stadium Automotive education center.



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# CenterStage

AWARDS, HONORS, MILESTONES

## ► Best Dealerships to Work For in Wisconsin 2019

*Automotive News* 'eighth annual list of the Best 100 Dealerships to work for, ranked by Best Companies Group is based on employee surveys and information from management. The list of Wisconsin winners is below (#) indicates their ranking on the list.

- (43) Bergstrom Lexus, Appleton
- (51) Bergstrom Mini of the Fox Valley, Appleton
- (55) Bergstrom Infiniti, Appleton
- (57) Bergstrom Acura, Appleton
- (67) Kunes Country Chevrolet Buick GMC. Elkhorn
- (73) Bergstrom Kia, Oshkosh
- (76) Bergstrom Volkswagen, Oshkosh
- (80) Bergstrom Ford-Lincoln, Neenah
- (88) Bergstrom Buick-GMC. Cadillac, Green Bay
- (93) Don Johnson's Cumberland Motors. Cumberland

Congratulations on your outstanding achievement!

## ► Workforce Secretary Visits Fillback in Boscobel

Department of Workforce Development Secretary Caleb Frostman joined CESA3 officials at Fillback Automotive in Boscobel to visit a recent graduate of the Fillback Academy, a highly successful program in recruiting and training skilled youth. Kolton Swenink met with Secretary Frostman and his CESA 3 instructors to discuss how students gain the industry-related skills they need while also earning credits at no cost to the students. Programs like this provide youth clear career pathways with opportunities for advancement, while also helping businesses in the auto industry fill entry-level positions.



(l-r) Fillback owner Mark Fillback with service manager Shea Mueller, mechanic Kolton Swenink, and DWD Secretary Caleb Frostman.

## ► Countryside Auto donates to Moraine Park Promise Program

Moraine Park Technical College recently received support from Countryside Auto Group of Beaver Dam to benefit their Promise Program, a total of \$12,500 between 2018-2019. The program offers five consecutive semesters of debt-free tuition, as well as additional services including mentoring, tutoring career guidance, financial aid workshops and counseling to low-income students who couldn't otherwise afford it. "At Countryside, we strongly believe in serving our community," said Keith Ghanian, President. "we are proud to support Moraine Park and recognize the power of education to transform the lives of families and communities."



(l-r) Dana Bourland, director of college advancement at Moraine Park; Keith Ghanian, president of Countryside Auto Group; and Bonne Baerwald, Moraine Park President.

## ► Kettle Moraine YMCA Receives Donation from Russ Darrow Group

Representatives of the Russ Darrow Group West Bend dealerships present a check for \$7,500 to Kettle Moraine YMCA representatives for the "Send a Kid to Camp Campaign." Russ Darrow Nissan, Toyota and Chrysler Jeep Dodge RAM dealerships of West Bend contributed a portion of their sales to the campaign, allowing more than 100 kids in need to attend Summer Y Camp. (L-R) Danny Shutts, GM of Toyota store; Glenn Leinen, GM of the Nissan dealership; Justin Pohl, GM of the Chrysler Jeep Dodge RAM location; Rob Johnson, Kristina Chapman and Jenny Zaskowski representing the Kettle Moraine YMCA.



## ► Tom Finley Inducted into Beloit Historical Society Hall of Fame

Owner of Finley Buick, GMC in Beloit, Tom Finley was recently inducted into the Historical Society Hall of Fame for his many contributions to the community. Finley graduated from UW Madison with an accounting degree in 1979. A year later he started working at the dealership owned by his father Maurice. There was a brief relocation to South Beloit, but the dealership was back in Beloit by the 1990s. Matt Finley, Tom's son is the finance manager of the dealership.

Outside of his business, Finley has been deeply involved in the community, including co-chairing the Beloit Memorial High School 1992 referendum committee for funding a \$26 million-dollar renovation project; served on the Stateline Boys and Girls Club Board for seventeen years, (president for two years); Family Services Board for nineteen year; Beloit Health System Foundation for fifteen years (two terms as president); co-chaired a fundraising effort raising over \$3 million to remodel the Beloit Memorial Hospital emergency room, as well as \$7 million for the Heart Hospital campaign.

## ► Dahl Automotive Event Sponsorship Facilitates \$7,500 Charitable Donation

Leadercast La Crosse has made a \$7,500 donation to Adult & Teen Challenge of Western Wisconsin, a long-term, faith-based recovery program for those struggling with drug and alcohol addiction will open its doors in La Crosse this fall. "We are grateful for such a large donation which will fully furnish four bedrooms for six female clients. It is through partnerships like this with Leadercast La Crosse that put hope within reach for many women struggling in our area", says Kevin Schaler, Executive Director of ATCWW. Leadercast La Crosse, hosted by Dahl Automotive for the last six years, is part of the largest one-day leadership event in the country, broadcast live from Atlanta, GA, to thousands of host sites around the world. "It's a privilege to bring this world-class leadership development event to over 430 local and regional leaders and business professionals", says Andrew Dahl, President of Dahl Automotive, "and is one way that we live out our core value of giving back to the community. It's exciting that, through this leadership event, we're able to provide this significant contribution to Adult & Teen Challenge of Western Wisconsin, filling a great need in our community."



Team Hidalgo/Warner presents a check from the Seventh Annual Hidalgo/Warner Memorial Golf Outing to Fisher House Wisconsin President Andrew Roberts, far right.

## ► Seventh Annual Golf Outing Raises over \$50,000 for Charity

Team Hidalgo/Warner hosted their Seventh Annual Hidalgo/Warner Memorial Golf Outing at Western Lakes Golf Course in Pewaukee this summer, benefitting military members and their families.

With 154 golfers and over 300 event attendees, Team Hidalgo/Warner raised a total of \$50,000 to benefit Fisher House Wisconsin, the Daren M. Hidalgo Memorial Fund and Richard D. Warner Memorial Fund. The fundraising event included an 18-hole scramble, banquet dinner, raffle and silent auction.

"This year's event was our most successful golf outing to date, and I am in awe of our community's constant support and generosity surrounding this cause," said Jorge Hidalgo, Wilde East Towne Honda principal partner. "We are honored to host this annual event, not only to remember Daren and Rich, who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our country, but also to support those in uniform who currently serve, veterans and military families."

The families of Army 1st Lt. Daren Hidalgo and Marine Lance Cpl. Richard 'Rich' Warner presented Fisher House Wisconsin with a donation check on Aug. 21 for \$18,000, representing their contribution from funds raised at the Seventh Annual Hidalgo/Warner Memorial Golf Outing.

"On behalf of Fisher House Wisconsin and the veteran families Team Hidalgo/Warner supports, I extend a heartfelt thanks for the very generous donation and for allowing us to be part of your mission," said Andrew Roberts, president of Fisher House Wisconsin. "We are humbled and privileged to accept the donation on behalf of Daren and Rich and will always do our best to honor their memories."

## ► Richard Stockwell receives 40-Year Award

Richard Stockwell, left, dealer principal of Rock County Honda in Janesville, Wis., receives a 40-year award from Bruce Lee, zone manager for American Honda Motor Co.



► **Van Horn Helps Grant a Wish at MAKE-A-WISH® Golf Outing**

What started out as a beautiful morning for golf at Blackwolf Run, became a magical day for Cambellsport resident Craig Hatch, who aced the 17th hole on the River Course to win a 2019 Chevrolet Camaro from Van Horn Automotive Group.

Hatch, a brain cancer survivor himself, was participating in the annual Make-A-Wish Wisconsin golf outing, sponsored by Sargento and Johnsonville. Van Horn Automotive was the sponsor of two, hole-in-one contests at Blackwolf Run.

With an 8 iron in hand, Hatch approached the 154-yard 17th hole of the River Course for his first tee shot of the day during a shotgun start. Hatch stated, "I didn't think the ball actually went in! It was my first shot of the day and I was in disbelief. As the witness walked to the hole to verify that it was in there, I ran next to her because I couldn't



believe it. It was my first hole-in-one and my first-time golfing in the Make-A-Wish golf outing."

"This is my second time volunteering as a hole-in-one contest witness for the Make-A-Wish golf outing, said Sunday Strong, Executive Assistant at Van Horn Automotive Group. "It's such a fun day for everyone. I've seen many golfers get close, but never make a hole-in-one; to see Mr. Hatch achieve this feat was truly an exciting experience." Teresa Van Horn, Co-CEO of Van Horn Automotive Group added, "We enjoy sponsoring great causes like Make-A-Wish alongside other area businesses to thank our communities for their patronage." ●

2020

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JANUARY							FEBRUARY							MARCH						
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# NADA Report

JOSHUA JOHNSON • [jjohnson@donjohnsonmotors.com](mailto:jjohnson@donjohnsonmotors.com)



All dealers need to be aware of the FTC's recent efforts to change the Safeguards Rule. Across myriad industries, including retail automotive, the data landscape is changing drastically and the volume of data our dealerships collect is growing exponentially. As dealers, we rely

on this data to serve our customers—whether it's assisting with finance transactions or alerting owners of the need for service. The data we maintain is at the heart of our businesses and core to both our customer relationships and individual reputations. We understand that we must diligently protect our customers' private information, and that will remain an essential priority for all of us going forward.

Recently, however, the Federal Trade Commission issued a notice of proposed rulemaking to amend the Safeguards Rule. These changes would require our dealerships to adopt specific minimum technological standards to protect the data we collect. Some of these requirements include encrypting customer information, implementing multi-factor authentication, and hiring a chief information security officer (CISO) to oversee and report on this new information security program. While employing these measures may be desirable, they do not exist in a vacuum, and there has been no evidence that they are all necessary to protect customer information.

Not only would these prescribed measures add enormous compliance costs—an average one-time, up-front cost of \$293,975 and an average annual cost of \$276,925—they don't account for business size, risk, and sensitivity of the data collected by entities required to comply with the rule.

The existing Safeguards Rule has afforded us all the flexibility to employ data safeguarding tools that make sense based on the nature of our respective businesses. In contrast, the FTC's proposed changes would dictate that every dealership across the country implement all items on a long list of security tools and requirements. The cost of these changes might be easy for a megabank such as Citibank to absorb, but as we're all aware, most Wisconsin dealerships are small, Main Street businesses, and we don't have the same resources available.

While we all support protecting customer information and every one of us should proactively review with our vendors the adequacy of their security measures, the FTC's proposed one-size-fits-all rulemaking is not the right approach.

NADA is hard at work on this issue and I am serving on the Association's ad hoc Data Committee. In addition to submitting detailed comments to the FTC, we are leading comprehensive educational sessions with key reporters and media outlets, including *Automotive News*. Our priority is opposing the proposed sweeping amendments to the rule and highlighting the significant impact they would have on dealers if adopted. NADA's and WATDA's goal is to secure a regulatory approach that protects sensitive data and allows dealers across the country to focus on our core business: serving customers and meeting their needs.

Thank you, as always, for the opportunity to serve as your NADA Director. Should you have any questions or concerns about this, or other industry-related issues, please feel free to reach out. ●



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# Legal & Legislative Update

BY CHRIS SNYDER

## Once Again...This Time with Feeling

### Surcharge Bill

In 2011, the Wisconsin legislature passed Act 91 which made several much-needed updates to the Wisconsin Motor Vehicle Franchise law. One of those provisions established a new labor reimbursement formula that accurately determines the manufacturer's labor reimbursement obligation of paying the average customer pay rate. Four years after Act 91 became law, General Motors expressed their objection to the formula and demanded that the dealers and legislature change the law to something of their liking.

In September of 2016, in an effort to bully their dealers, GM announced that they were going to impose a \$389 surcharge on every vehicle purchased from GM on dealers receiving warranty reimbursement under Option A. In response, 13 Wisconsin GM dealers filed a lawsuit to prevent or clarify manufacturer surcharge rights. That lawsuit was filed in October 2016 in federal court. In September of 2018 a decision was handed down that basically concluded, that because the Wisconsin law is silent regarding surcharges, manufacturers are allowed to surcharge whoever they want, for whatever reason they want and in any amount they want. Consequently, GM informed their dealers receiving warranty reimbursement under Option A, that GM would begin surcharging them \$279 for every vehicle they purchased from GM.

In an attempt to rectify the 2016 situation WATDA worked on a bill in the 2017-18 session that would have prohibited surcharges as a means for the manufacturers to recoup for expenses associated with paying dealers as provided under the law. That bill made it through the Assembly, but despite having secured 27 of the 32 Senators votes at the time, the bill did not make it on the Senate floor for a vote.

With a new legislative session starting in 2019, WATDA has worked to pass Senate Bill 304 and Assembly Bill 335. These bills are identical and they spell out nine adverse actions that manufacturers are prohibited from taking against dealers in an attempt to prevent the dealer from exercising a right that they have under the Wisconsin Motor Vehicle Franchise law. This session's bill is designed to help keep a level playing field between dealers and help Wisconsin consumers by keeping customer pay repairs competitive.

SB 304 recently was passed by the Senate in a 27-6 vote. By the time this article reaches you, the bill will be working its' way through the Assembly.

### Direct Mailer Prize Giveaway Bill

Senate Bill 292, would amend the Wisconsin statute regarding how prize giveaway mailers need to be constructed. This bill recently was passed out of committee and waiting to get to the senate floor for a vote. The bill would allow dealers to make one disclosure in at least 10- point font, explaining the fair market value and odds of winning, on the same page as the various prizes being offered. WATDA believes that it should make complying with the law while offering prize giveaways easier.

### Washington Conference

In September, NADA held its' annual Washington Conference. Wisconsin was represented by WATDA staff, ADAMM staff and six dealers (Josh Johnson – Rice Lake, Mike Toycen – Ladysmith, Karmala Sutton – Bristol, Andy Schlessinger – Milwaukee, Grant Sommer – Mequon, and Mike Darrow -Milwaukee) from throughout the state attended. NADA provided insightful industry and political speakers.

This year's event was held on a Monday and Tuesday so getting in to speak directly with Representatives and Senators was a bit challenging but we were able to meet directly with Representatives Grothman and Pocan, and Senator Johnson.

Federal issues discussed included the U.S. – Mexico – Canada Agreement (USMCA), Proposed Recall legislation and FET. The most pressing issue is the USMCA, this is the NAFTA replacement trade agreement. NAFTA was passed in 1994 and it opened trade across North America. However, much has changed industrially, technologically and economically throughout the world since 1994 and quite frankly, NAFTA was in need of some tweaking.

The vast majority of economic experts agree that the proposed USMCA is a major improvement for the manufacturing and farming industries for all three countries. Currently the Trump Administration and Congress are negotiating a few minor points. However, they cannot make many major changes to the Agreement without it having to go back to Mexico and Canada for their approval.

So, the time is ripe for Congress to get to some of the people's work and ratify the USMCA!

### U.S. DOL Issues Salary Changes to White Collar Overtime Exemptions

The U.S. Department of Labor is updating and revising the earnings thresholds necessary to exempt executive, administrative or professional employees (EAP or "white

collar”) from the Fair Labor Standards Act’s overtime pay requirements. The final rule will be effective January 1, 2020. Employees who work more than 40 hours in a workweek but who meet both the salary and duties tests for an EAP exemption do not have to be paid the federal overtime premium of 1.5 times their regular rate of pay. The EAP exemption salary threshold is increasing from the current \$23,660 to \$35,568 per year (or from \$455 to \$684 per week). The DOL is allowing up to 10% of these salary thresholds to be satisfied by nondiscretionary bonuses or commissions. No changes were made to the EAP exemptions duties tests. The salary threshold for highly compensated employees (HCEs) also is being increased from the current \$100,000 to \$107,432 (there are no duties tests for HCEs). The new rule requires that HCEs receive at least \$684 per week in salary, but the remainder of their compensation may be in the form of nondiscretionary bonuses or commissions.

NADA is amending its Dealer Guide to Federal Wage and Hour, Child Labor and Wage Discrimination Compliance to reflect these new changes. Important: under federal law, it is possible for more than one overtime exemption to apply to a given employee and for certain state laws to restrict how federal overtime exemptions may be applied.

For more information email [regulatoryaffairs@nada.org](mailto:regulatoryaffairs@nada.org).

## Dealer Websites can Lead to Liability

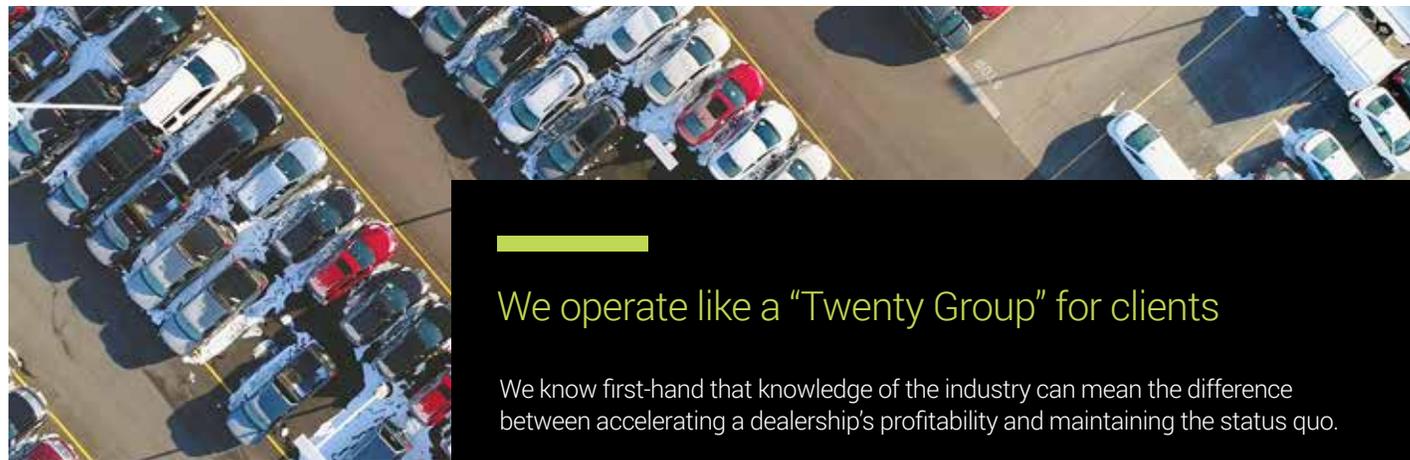
A little over 20 years ago the hottest topic in the automotive retail industry was the Internet and dealers need to develop

effective websites. As Internet communications have become second hand now, with dealers not only controlling awesome interactive websites, and other social media platforms, dealers are facing an old nemesis with a modified tool. Trial lawyers are creating cottage industries suing dealers, among others, for have websites that are not accessible to the blind and others with disabilities.

Last year alone, more than 2,200 suits were brought under the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), seeking equal access to the products, services and information offered through dealers’ websites and social media. While there is no specific state or federal language that addresses this issue point blank (the ADA law was passed in 1990, well before any thought of Internet communication accessibility was even in the vernacular) courts have held that the law appears to require accessibility to all.

Dealers need to get with their Internet provider or webhost to make sure their online platforms are accessible. You can start by ensuring that you are following the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, which is designed to make web content more accessible to people with various disabilities, including visual, auditory, physical, speech, cognitive, language, learning, and neurological disabilities.

Unfortunately, ADA claims allow for reimbursement of attorney fees and those types of cost shifting laws bring out trial attorneys looking to pay their bills. Dealers need to get out front and take steps to actively address total accessibility to all of your online platforms. ●



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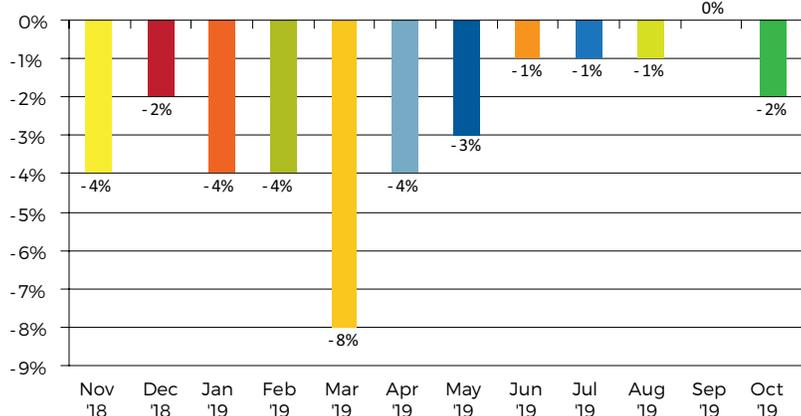
**RAWHIDE**<sup>SM</sup>

# New Vehicle Sales Trends

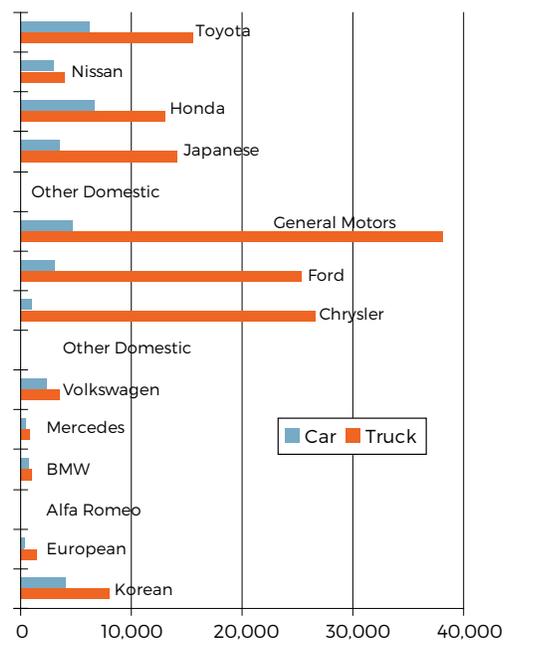
## Wisconsin New Vehicle Trends: October 2019

	Previous Two Months			Year to Date			Year to Date Market Share		
	9/18	9/19	% change	'18 YTD	'19 YTD	% change	'18 YTD	'19 YTD	change
Industry Total	40,078	39,584	-1.2%	191,136	186,525	-2.4%	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Car	8,329	6,777	-18.6%	43,032	35,685	-17.1%	22.5%	19.1%	-3.4%
Truck	31,749	32,807	3.3%	148,104	150,840	1.8%	77.5%	80.9%	3.4%
Japanese	14,013	14,230	1.5%	65,813	65,585	-0.3%	34.4%	35.1%	0.7%
Toyota	4,874	4,888	0.3%	21,927	21,541	-1.8%	11.5%	11.5%	0.0%
Honda	3,906	4,274	9.4%	18,940	19,658	3.8%	9.9%	10.5%	0.6%
Nissan	1,755	1,485	-15.4%	8,080	6,899	-14.6%	4.2%	3.7%	-0.5%
Other	3,478	3,583	3.0%	16,866	17,487	3.7%	8.8%	9.4%	0.6%
Domestic	21,552	20,447	-5.1%	103,972	98,436	-5.3%	54.4%	52.8%	-1.6%
General Motors	8,656	8,857	2.3%	43,373	42,693	-1.6%	22.7%	22.9%	0.2%
Ford	6,729	5,885	-12.5%	31,400	28,296	-9.9%	16.4%	15.2%	-1.2%
Chrysler	6,167	5,705	-7.5%	29,199	27,447	-6.0%	15.3%	14.7%	-0.6%
European	2,047	2,264	10.6%	10,114	10,463	3.5%	5.3%	5.5%	0.2%
Volkswagen	1,097	1,317	20.1%	5,313	5,810	9.4%	2.8%	3.1%	0.3%
BMW	327	334	2.1%	1,689	1,709	1.2%	0.9%	0.9%	0.0%
Mercedes	243	259	6.6%	1,200	1,146	-4.5%	0.6%	0.6%	0.0%
Alfa Romeo	26	11	-57.7%	153	76	-50.3%	0.1%	0.0%	-0.1%
Other	354	343	-3.1%	1,759	1,722	-2.1%	0.9%	0.9%	0.0%
Korean	2,466	2,643	7.2%	11,237	12,041	7.2%	5.9%	6.5%	0.6%
Other	2,466	2,643	7.2%	11,237	12,041	7.2%	5.9%	6.5%	0.6%

**3 Month % Change – and view annual trend. Compares most recent 90 days vs. same 90-day period from last year.**



**YTD Registrations by Vehicle Type.**





# From Around the State

Please send your news From Around the State to [jfarmer@watda.org](mailto:jfarmer@watda.org)

## KAYSER AUTOMOTIVE ACQUIRES BALLWEG CHEVROLET BUICK, SAUK CITY

Kaysar Automotive Group and Ballweg Chevrolet-Buick, Inc. jointly announced that they have come to terms under which Ballweg will sell Kayser its Chevrolet and Buick franchise assets in Sauk City. Kayser Chevrolet-Buick, owned by the Baxter family, and operated by General Manager Greg Mauch should experience no interruption of service for customers or employees.

Jason R. Brickl, CEO of Ballweg Management Services, Inc. said; "The Baxter family was selected to succeed my family as owners because they recognize and value not only the strength of the brands, but also the talent and potential of our employees. Kayser Automotive has a long-standing record of giving back to the Sauk Prairie community, ensuring that the Chevrolet and Buick franchises are in good hands. We wish continued success to the entire team and are especially grateful for our devoted and loyal customers."

Brickl's private investment office will be focused on diversifying into several industries powered by the launch of an all-new corporate brand and further expanding their specialization operating high-volume import and luxury dealerships in metropolitan areas.

Sean Baxter, President of Kayser Automotive Group stated, "the Ballweg acquisition represents an opportunity to strengthen our relationship with the Sauk Prairie community that has supported our company for more than 25 years. We are excited to welcome two great American brands; Chevrolet and Buick to our portfolio as well as welcoming the outstanding team of people at Ballweg to the Kayser family."

## DAHL HONDA BREAKS GROUND

Dahl Honda held a groundbreaking ceremony in Onalaska - the building site of the new state-of-the-art Honda Generation 3 dealership. Dahl acquired the Honda dealership in March and continues to operate at the same location in La Crosse; currently leasing that building. The anticipated completion date of the new dealership is Summer 2020.

"We are excited to expand the Honda brand in this new Generation 3 building on a five-acre site in Onalaska. The new larger location and building enable us to better execute on our vision of transforming the auto industry through exceptional guest experiences," states Jansen Dahl, VP of Dahl Automotive Holdings.

## BAIRD GM SOLD TO HOMAN AUTO GROUP

After 48 years of serving the Ripon community, Lee and Katie Baird have sold their Chevrolet, Buick, GMC dealership to the Homan Automotive Group. Lee Baird believes Homan is the right owner to continue his family's legacy. "I think they have the same community values and business philosophy that we've always had," said Baird. "They'll do a good, ethically correct job serving the area." Mark Homan explained, "I have a lot of respect for what the Bairds built in Ripon. I hope we can take what they've done and just build on it."

Lee and Katie are starting to make plans for their retirement, "There are some traveling places within the U.S. and even in Wisconsin that we still want to see and go do. We'll be around. We have volunteer plans where we've been involved that we'll now have more free time to offer." Finally, Lee offered, "Thank you, Thanks to so many of you for being our customers and believing in us and being friends."



Mark Homan, left of Homan Auto Group shakes hands with Lee Baird who sold his GM dealership to Homan.

## KEEPING THE LOCAL HOMETOWN FLAVOR...

Courtesy Auto and Truck Center is excited to announce a change in ownership. The Ford dealership recently transferred ownership from Allen Olejniczak to local new owners David Kluth, Dan Schultze, and Scott Eisold.

For the past 35 years the dealership has been owned by the Olejniczak family with the most current owner being Al Olejniczak. In 1984 Al's parents Roger and Charlotte Olejniczak, natives of Thorp, decided to return home to pursue their dream of owning and operating the Ford dealership they purchased from Fred Schulte. The goal of the dealership has always been to provide good service to the customers in Thorp and the surrounding areas giving a feeling of "The Local Hometown Flavor." In 1985 Al came back to Thorp as well and began working at the dealership. He was eventually joined by his brother, Dan and his sister, Karen. In 1999 ownership would change over to Al and Dan for ten years until Al took over sole ownership of the business in 2009.

Ford awarded Courtesy Auto and Truck Center the President's Award. What makes this award so significant is that the customers are the judges. Through a comprehensive survey, customers rate dealers based on their sales, service and overall experience. "Making sure our customers are happy is what everyone who works here strives for. It takes teamwork to make it happen, from the people who answer the phone, to our sales folks and technicians. Everyone plays a part," emphasizes Olejniczak. The Olejniczak family has given back to the community through donations to civic groups, Drive4URSchool, and countless community activities. Congratulations to Al and his family for their success and leadership over the past 35 years! The new owners plan to keep the feeling of "The Local Hometown Flavor" going. ●

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## MOVING FORWARD WITH PURPOSE

On September 12th, the Braeger Chevrolet dealership at South 27th Street in Milwaukee, owned by Todd Reardon, celebrated a special event. While retaining the same ownership, management and location, the dealership became known as the Lake Auto Group. Lake Chevrolet and Lake Ford are beginning a new chapter and had much to celebrate, but management, in their continuing commitment to community, took a sharp turn from throwing a party for themselves.

In February of this year, Milwaukee Police Officer Matthew Rittner was murdered in the line of duty when a gunman opened fire on his unit as they attempted to serve a warrant. He left behind a wife and son. Shortly after his death, his wife, Caroline, learned she was pregnant with their second child. Because, as Todd Reardon stated, "Matthew was one of our own", the Lake Auto Group focused the entire event on helping Officer Rittner's family financially. Officer Rittner was a 17-year veteran of the Milwaukee Police Department and had been awarded several medals and awards during his tenure. He was also a US Marine who served three tours of duty in the Middle East. He would have been 36 years old.

With the help of the community, hundreds of people came together to attend the tailgate party and raise a great amount of money through the sales of food, drink and raffles for the Rittner family. The Bucks and Brewers mascots were present, along with the Greenfield High School marching band who opened the evening with the national anthem. There was a live band later in the evening, a bounce house, police horses and, essentially, something for everyone.

Greenfield School District Superintendent, Lisa Elliot announced a new annual scholarship in Matthew's name for students who show courage, commitment, leadership and service to others. Officer Rittner graduated from Greenfield High.

Rittner's commanding officer, Captain Derrick Harris, also spoke. "It's hard every day, looking at Matt's picture on my desk. Being a fellow Marine, we understand his sacrifice. Events like this brighten those days up, because we get to come together, and we keep Matt's legacy living on."

Mayor Tom Barrett addressed the crowd, "It's very, very important that we're here tonight to support (Caroline) as she brings new life into this world." and he praised the efforts of the Lake Auto Group for heading up such a worthy cause.

The Braeger choice to become the Lake Auto Group had significance that registered loudly that evening. The name, 'Lake' comes from the Town of Lake which existed in Milwaukee county for over 100 years. The town's residents were noted for their reputation of a great work ethic and community involvement. These are the same attributes the auto dealership has always espoused and were certainly on display while hosting this spectacular community event with a great purpose. ●



Todd Reardon, Lake Auto Group owner addresses the gathering as Mayor Barrett and others watch.



# WISCO, YOUR COMPANY

BY JOHN HACKMAN



**W**ISCO Cooperative Association was founded by a group of auto dealers in 1972 with the single purpose and goal of saving its members money on their purchases and adding to their bottom line. That purpose and goal is still the only reason we open our doors every day 47 years later. With that mission statement and goal WISCO has been

able to save its members millions of dollars on their purchases from what they otherwise would have spent.

WISCO being set up as a cooperative means WISCO members are the owners of the company. There are no other ownership interests. WISCO is in a unique position of having its customers as its owners. For that reason WISCO doesn't look to profit from you but to serve you. There is no reason to make large markups

WISCO offers the best names in the automotive equipment industry. We have Challenger Lifts, Hunter quick check drive units, alignment systems, wheel balancers, tire changers, and brake lathes. Garmat paint booths for your Body Shop are part of the WISCO program. We have Borroughs, Shure, and Equipto shelving, bins, and work benches. Altech LED lighting, Champion air compressors, Robinair refrigerant recyclers, and Harvey exhaust removal equipment are offered by your co-op. You can save money on this winter's high heating costs with an Energy Logic or a Firelake waste oil burner and a MacroAir airvolution fan from Black Gold. The list continues. WISCO can save you money on your equipment purchases and your year-end taxes. Call WISCO at 800-274-2319 to get started. ●

**WISCO members are the owners of the company.  
WISCO is in a unique position of having its customers as its owners.**

on the items sold to its membership. Any profits WISCO earns are paid back to its membership with the end of the year WISCO rebate anyway.

When our field rep, Bryan Montag, stops at our members' dealerships some managers, and even some owners, look at him like just another salesperson stopping in. They wonder what he is trying to sell me today. This is not the case at all. Bryan is at your dealership to continue our mission of adding to your bottom line. He is there to show your managers what WISCO offers to help increase the profit in their department. The list of products WISCO offers is extensive. It covers most everything your dealership uses from toilet paper in your restrooms to the most expensive equipment in your shop. Due to the fact WISCO is selling to its owners we make sure the products are high quality and at a savings. WHO ELSE DO YOU BUY FROM THAT IS ONLY IN BUSINESS TO ADD TO YOUR BOTTOM LINE?

Who do you buy your equipment, tools, accessories, shop supplies, reconditioning supplies, parts, batteries, rest room supplies, etc. from? It would be a money saving idea to check with your own company WISCO Co-op.

Also, for those of you looking to purchase end of the year equipment and take advantage of the tax savings on this year's taxes, now is the time to act. For this year's taxes equipment is supposed to be purchased and put in service by year-end.



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# Will the Real Howard Schlei Please Stand Up!

BY CHRYSTE L. MADSEN

A conversation between neighbors over a back fence more than twenty years ago proved to be the beginning of a long and advantageous relationship between WATDA and Trans World Data. You might know Trans World Data better by their trade name, Vehicle Details. A majority of our WATDA members use their product and services. Most familiar is the online Wisconsin Buyer's Guide, developed with input from the DMV, WATDA and TWD. Some members make use of TWD's dealership-specific 4-color custom labels and/or daily website upload capabilities. Trans World Data and its creator and owner, Howard Schlei, have given WATDA exclusive rights to sell the program in Wisconsin. This non-dues revenue source and our members use of it is one of the reasons we have not had a dues increase in over eleven years. While that's a reason to celebrate, this story would rather focus on and celebrate the talented and surprising world of TWD's founder and our valued partner, Howard Schlei.

A Wisconsin native, Schlei grew up in Sussex, next door to his grandparents' farm. He began working on an uncle's farm at the age of ten and had driven just about every truck and tractor they owned by the time he reached 12. His body may have physically inhabited the farm until he reached 18 but his heart left the ground at a much earlier early age. As he says, "Aviation must have been an early interest; there's a photo of me holding my sixth birthday cake and it has an airplane on it."

Howard began taking flying lessons at 16 which "used up every penny I earned on the farm." His aviation career took off

(pun intended) when he soloed at the age of 16, received his private license by 17, and earned his commercial, instrument, multi-engine and flight instructor ratings at 18.

He became a flight instructor and flew air charter for several years and hoped to join an airline. Unfortunately, around that time the first oil embargo hit. "TWA went under, Braniff went under, Eastern went under, Pan Am went under. Thousands of pilots with far more hours and qualifications than I had were on the job market," Howard lamented.



One of his student pilots noticed Howard's creative tendencies and invited him to work with him at his advertising agency. After seven years Howard worked his way through artist, art director, copywriter and eventually assistant creative director. He wrote and produced print, radio and television ads. "I had a blast working with Leslie Nielsen around the time he did 'Airplane' and 'Police Squad.'"

Peter Lawford and Vincent Price were also a ton of fun," Schlei remembers with a laugh. After moving on to a second agency for a few years, he went freelance and sold his services to private companies, including a half dozen ad agencies in Wisconsin and New York.

Howard and a partner then developed what might have been the first Certified Used Car program/campaign in 1988 and spent eight years selling and supporting it nationally.

In 1991 Schlei developed the used vehicle database at the heart of TWD's present-day products. It was initially used in book form but quickly became a software program designed to print used vehicle window stickers.

After dissolving the partnership and reconfiguring the company

in 2000, the new company focused on software, data and window sticker production and marked the milestone year of partnering with WATDA.

Trans World Data sells nationally; to dealers, to lot service companies, to warranty companies who use the product as a merchandising tool, to city and state dealer associations and they private label the software for manufacturer certified programs. Schlei stated, "We sometimes have a customer 'drop' us because they are switching to someone else, which is also us, hence the company motto: If it ain't us, it's us."

TWD has always been and remains a small, close-knit operation; the entire staff works out of a house built in 1858 as a farmhouse. The walls are 18-inch-thick stone walls. Howard said, "If there's a tornado I plan to sit in my office and watch it go by." It should be noted the ceiling of Howard's office is painted as a bright blue sky laced with cottony cumulus clouds. In other words, a perfect sky for flight.

The data generated by TWD's software program is not purchased from an outside source. The TWD team collects and breaks down all their own vehicle data and VIN decoding. The data that imprints the custom sticker is literally hand edited by their staff to highlight the best features of the vehicle.

Howard has recently developed a line of new self-adhesive EXTERIOR window stickers that can be easily applied and removed without entering the vehicle. They don't affect tinted glass and stand up to all weather conditions. Nationwide they've proven extremely successful. He is always working on something new.

Something new? His project in 2005 certainly proved that statement to be true. Over the span of the next five years, in

his own garage and with an unbelievably patient wife, Howard built a Rotorway A-600 helicopter. In August of 2010 he took it on its first flight. He has now logged nearly 400 hours of flight time in the ship. He's flown to meet us at some of our member's dealerships on Vehicle Details calls. And we have directed traffic as he's rolled the helicopter up to a Mobil station gas pump to fuel up for the trip home. Talk about some puzzled looks! The helicopter received the Bronze Lindy (as in Lindberg) award at the first Oshkosh EAA show it attended. Have there been close calls in his flying career? We'll let Howard tell you. "Yes, I have had emergencies: lost in a snow storm with no electrical power (airplane); forced landing (airplane) in a hay field; engine failure and forced landing in the helicopter; engine mount failure and forced landing in the helicopter; engine failure and forced landing (again) in the helicopter. No, I do not plan to stop."

Howard's incredibly patient, kind and talented-in-her-own-right wife is Robin. A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Cornell University, fluent in several languages, she's the mother of two sons and one daughter and she enjoys two beautiful grandchildren. She is the glue that binds and the sanity that reigns. She has served as President of the Wisconsin Association for Gifted and Talented children and has given her services to 50 classes of children as an educator extraordinaire. She and Howard recently celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary with an intimate family gathering on Mackinaw Island, which is, of course, one of Howard's favorite places to fly. "You land," he says, "tie down the airplane and call a taxi. Forty-five minutes later a horse-drawn 'taxi' pulls up. It's the perfect way to begin a vacation."



As if Howard doesn't lead an interesting and busy enough life as it is, imagine our surprise when, several months ago, it was revealed that our friend and partner was a published author writing under the pen name, Howard Seaborne! At first, with apologies to Howard, our reaction was, "Oh, that's nice, he's written a book. It's probably about flying." Well, it's about flying, all right, but not the kind of flying we had anticipated! He's written not one book, but this Thanksgiving will be introducing his fifth novel in the *DIVISIBLE MAN* series. The reviews? Here's a sample, "Seaborne, a former flight instructor and charter pilot, proves he's a natural storyteller, serving up an exciting, well-written thriller." – Kirkus Reviews. His novels (and more of the excellent reviews) are available on Amazon, Apple iBooks or at [www.HowardSeaborne.com](http://www.HowardSeaborne.com) by the way.

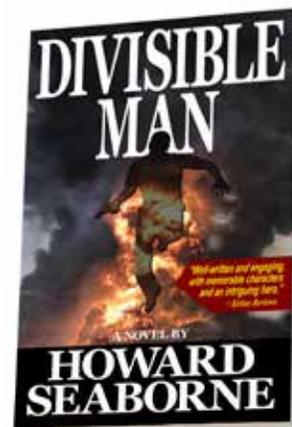
What we thought was a surprising turn in his career turned out to be a lifelong dream. "I began writing 'novels' in spiral notebooks when I was ten; I used a cartridge type fountain pen and wrote in cursive. I continued...throughout my school years and it became a valuable skill in my years in advertising," Howard said. As he married and built his career and raised a family, writing took a back seat until 2017 when he published the first and second *DIVISIBLE MAN* novels. "I love writing these books and would do it all day long if I could." Perhaps that day isn't too far away.

When asked about the use of the pen name he reports that "Seaborne" is a family name. It was the name of the uncle

who homesteaded the farm he worked on as a young man. He chose the pen name because no one who does not know him can pronounce the name Schlei. Regardless of the name, the books are selling well!

You've seen the many sides of Howard Schlei; farm boy, pilot, flight instructor, creative advertising guru, pilot, helicopter builder, husband, father, grandfather, author and our WATDA partner. Above all, he's a man who never takes anything, especially himself, too seriously.

What we have found to be so unique about him in our twenty plus year relationship are his values and his ethics. His regard for our members and his care in making certain his products follow Wisconsin regulations are refreshing in today's business community. The timeliness with which changes are accomplished and rare issues are addressed by both he and his staff are exemplary. You now know a bit more about our partnership with Trans World Data, the man behind it and why this has become such a great partnership. We look forward to many more rewarding years of partnership with Howard! ●



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# OHS Auto Revival

BY DAN KLECKER, STATE EDUCATION DIRECTOR



Almost twenty years ago Oconomowoc High School (OHS) closed their automotive program to provide space for a new engineering program. During 2015 the Oconomowoc Area School District formed a "Building Our Future" Committee in anticipation of a future needs referendum.

The district had many needs to address, but the main need at the high school was to update the tech ed facilities which included Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction. Local resident, Brian Ewald, of Ewald Automotive Group, realized this was an opportunity to start a new automotive program at OHS. Brian was instrumental in convincing the district to include automotive as part of the tech ed needs list recommended by the committee.

A facilities survey was completed by district residents in 2016 to determine the support for the recommended improvements. The total referendum cost was not supported by most of the district residents, so the school board prioritized and made significant reductions to the original plan. The automotive program survived the cutdown and was on the final recommendations to the board of education which was approved and used to create the facilities referendum.

In November 2016 voters in the Oconomowoc Area School District resoundingly approved the facilities referendum as presented and facility planning started. The district had a manufacturing, construction, and engineering teacher to champion those facility designs. The planning for the automotive facility had to proceed along without a designated teacher or anyone familiar with the latest curriculum needs causing that planning to lag.

In the summer of 2017, Brian Ewald heard some of the school board members felt adding an automotive program was not in the best interest in the district. There was talk of making a change to add a robotics program instead of automotive in the OHS curriculum. At this point Brian Ewald reached out to the Foundation for assistance. He was going to be attending the Oconomowoc school district board meeting and was looking for data to support his plan to have a new automotive program started. "We may have to educate them on the dire need for technicians in our city, county and the state. They need to understand the (outstanding) benefits and pay for many of these techs, that are trained in high schools and get referred to tech schools, to earn degrees and start a career path that could last a lifetime," said Ewald.

This is when I was introduced to Brian Ewald. After a few phone conversations Brian invited me to attend the school board meeting with him and his father, Emil. My purpose was to answer questions the reluctant school board members would have as they challenged the legitimacy of adding an automotive program. After Brian explained the need for technicians, I talked about the importance of accrediting the new automotive program to keep it up to date. I was questioned as to how an auto program can keep up to date with new vehicles that will soon be electric and automated.

I explained that the ASE accreditation ensures the program is teaching industry standards and those standards are updated every three years. When the vehicle technology changes the curriculum tasks will also change to match what is being seen in industry automotive service centers. Regardless of the



teacher or administration the new automotive program at OHS will be on a continuous improvement path. ASE and the Foundation of WATDA would work with the district, inform them of updates to the auto program and ways to teach those updates. Apparently, this satisfied the unsure school board members as the auto program planning continued.

That fall I started working with the school district and became the de facto champion for the automotive program. I met with the Career and Technical Education coordinator, school curriculum director and a school board member to talk more specifically about the automotive curriculum that the Foundation would provide. We reviewed the preliminary floor plans for the automotive classroom/lab, and my recommendations were noted. While sharing my input I also encouraged the administration to hold an auto advisory meeting for other local businesses who had an interest in the new automotive program. I expressed the importance of hearing from the local auto industry to allow them to help guide the plan as it is developed. The first advisory meeting was held in April 2018.

The Advisory Board meeting was well received by several transportation related businesses, and they were enthusiastic to hear about the automotive plans and timeline from OHS administration. A tour of the space for the auto program was taken and input from the businesses was recorded. The district decided to delay the rollout of the automotive program for one year and concentrate on starting the updated manufacturing/construction program. I shared the process of ASE accreditation with the advisory board to ensure the industry standards would be taught. Recommendations from the businesses on location and type of lifts to install in the auto lab were also recorded.

The district hired a new Career and Technical Education Coordinator over the summer, and I met with the new person in the fall. I shared course recommendations and descriptions to be used for the course enrollment materials. Later that fall the district posted the new automotive instructor position, conducted interviews and finally hired an experienced automotive instructor, Eric Varrelmann, to become the face of the new automotive program at OHS. Mr. Varrelmann personally thanked me and the Foundation for our work in guiding the development of

the automotive program at OHS. He was very appreciative of the preliminary work done prior to his hiring.

Thanks to Ewald’s vision and Oconomowoc school district’s willingness to listen to their business partners the new auto program celebrated their grand opening in August of 2019. Said Brett Ewald, “The Ewald family and employees are thankful to the Foundation for all the work they did to assist with the opening of the automotive program at Oconomowoc High School. The new automotive program is a dream come true not only for the automotive businesses, but for the kids and families in Oconomowoc.”

Varrelmann is already teaching a full load of automotive courses during the first semester in the new OHS auto facilities and preparing students to reach out to the auto/truck industry. Students will be looking to experience automotive job shadows and ultimately working as interns with a master tech mentor to who will show them the path to a great career opportunity in the automotive/truck industry. ●



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# Tribute

## Richard J. "Dick" Cornell

Dick Cornell, age 87 passed away peacefully at Cedar Bay Assisted Living in Elkhart Lake, surrounded by family. He was born in Green Bay on January 28, 1932 to Nameison and Lillian (Daul) Cornell. He attended Central Catholic High School, Marquette University and St. Norbert College.

When Dick joined his father at Cornell Motors in 1956, he was one of only eight employees. When he sold the business in 1991, there were 35 'good folks.' He was the Ford dealer in Plymouth for over 35 years. Dick was often heard saying, "these good, well-trained people made me look good. They made Cornell Motors a great place to work." Dick served his fellow dealers as Chairman of the WI Ford Dealer Ad Committee and as a director on the Wisconsin Auto & Truck Dealers Association Board.

Dick spent over twenty years in the active Army and Wisconsin Army National Guard, retiring as a Major. A big part of Dick's life was being an active member of AA; he gave many talks at Plymouth High School and started an AA group in Sun City Vistoso, AZ. He volunteered for many organizations including Meals on Wheels, his Church council, Sheboygan Red Cross, the Plymouth Library fund project and the Salvation Army.

Dick is survived by his wife Joan of San Diego, CA; his first wife Mary of Tuscon, AZ; and six children: Cathy (Paul Knitter) Cornell, Madison; Michael (Brenda) of Hartland; Peter (Wonda), Zumbrota, MN; Ann Marshall (Mark Kirby), Three Lakes; Susan (Douglas) DeVries, Two Rivers; and Jon of Savage, MN; a brother, Tom, fifteen grandchildren and five great-grand-children. He was preceded in death by his parents and two sister, Judy Dodson and Patricia Syverud. ●

## James P. (J. P.) Van Horn

Van Horn Automotive Group lost a proud owner, supporter, and friend on October 6, 2019. Son of founder Joe Van Horn, J.P. entered the family automotive business in 1997 after a successful career as a commodities broker in Chicago, IL and owning a seat on the Chicago Board of Trade. Over the years, J.P. grew to love the automotive business, but what he really enjoyed was the family business; working alongside his brother Chuck and sister Teresa.

In the business world J.P. was thoughtful and deliberative; in his personal life, he was gentle, engaging and possessed a great sense of humor. He was admired by everyone who worked with him, and he truly loved what he did. Unfortunately, J.P.'s career was abbreviated when he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2013. He remained as active as he could, until the disease took its toll. Although Alzheimer's did all it could to take J.P.'s light, it did not take away the impact he made on the lives of those who knew and loved him.



J.P. is survived by his wife, Elizabeth, his two sons, Everett and Joe and his brothers and sisters Chuck, Teresa, Joann, and Suzy along with many nieces and nephews. On behalf of all Van Horn employee owners, our heartfelt condolences are extended to the Van Horn family. ●

## Jeffrey L. Dowd

Jeffrey L. Dowd, age 79, passed away peacefully at home October 29, surrounded with the love of his family, following a 10-week battle with pancreatic cancer.



Jeff was born in Muncie, IN on August 14, 1940 to the late William J. and Rowena M. (nee: Mays) Dowd. A graduate of Muncie Central High School, he earned bachelor and master's degrees in education from Ball State University. On December 20, 1969, Jeff was united in marriage with the love of his life, Corinne K. (nee: Ray). They proudly acknowledged their 50th Anniversary with a celebratory vacation this past June.

With a great passion for educating, Jeff was a technology education teacher and coordinator with Racine Unified School District for over 35 years, retiring in 1999. In retirement, Jeff continued to mentor new teachers and students by sharing his knowledge and experiences. He was a dedicated member, officer, mentor & coordinator of the WTEA (Wisconsin Technology Educational Systems). Jeff also joined the Foundation of the Wisconsin Auto & Truck Dealers Association serving as the ASE (Automotive Service Excellence) Field manager for AYES (Automotive Youth Educational Systems). It was in this roll that Jeff raised the level of excellence for high school automotive programs around the state by encouraging national accreditation. The Foundation, under Jeff's guidance, also created teacher training for automotive instructors during the WTEA conference and Summer Institute. He also supported attendance at the national conference to bring new ideas and innovation back to WI.

Jeff enjoyed deer & turkey hunting, maintaining his yard, chopping wood, and spending time with family at their retreat home in Poy Sippi, WI. Jeff was a true friend to many and has helped countless lives find their way.

Surviving are his loving wife of 50 years, Corinne; their children, Bryce (Dineo) Dowd & Jason (Zeena) Dowd; grandchildren, Moira, Brendan & Armani; brothers, Ronald (Pat), Michael (Susan) and Randy Dowd; sisters-in-law, nieces, nephews, former students & friends – too numerous to mention all by name. In addition to his parents, Jeff was preceded in death by his grandmother, Hazy McKibben; and brother-in-law, Jerry Ray.

Memorials to the "Jeff Dowd Technology Education Scholarship Fund" are suggested. ●



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