

# DEALER POINT

Official Publication of the Wisconsin Automobile & Truck Dealers Association | 1928-2015 | Volume 43 Fall 2016



## KEITH KOCOUREK

WATDA 2017 Wisconsin Dealer of the Year

TIME Quality Dealer of the Year Nominee



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 Association focusing on the human side  
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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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**Editor**

Julie Farmer  
 jfarmer@watda.org

**Contributing Writers**

Gary Beier  
 Julie Farmer  
 Bob Hudson  
 Chryste Madsen  
 Susan Miller, CAE  
 Bill Sepic  
 Chris Snyder

**Art Director**

Kristin Mitchell  
 Kristin Mitchell Design, Inc.

**Advertising Sales**

Julie Farmer • 608.251.5577  
 jfarmer@watda.org

Dealer Point is a publication of the Wisconsin Auto & Truck Dealers Association, 150 East Gilman Street, Suite A, Madison, WI 53703-1493. Phone: 608.251.5577. It is published quarterly by WATDA. Printing by Inkworks, Inc., Stoughton, WI 53589. For advertising information, contact Julie Farmer at the WATDA.

Subscriptions included in WATDA membership dues.

Address corrections should be sent to WATDA, P.O. Box 5435 Madison, WI 53705-0354

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### KEITH KOCOUREK

WATDA 2017 Wisconsin Dealer of the Year

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# Wings to Fly

BY CHRYSTE MADSEN



**KEITH KOCOUREK**  
WATDA 2017 Wisconsin Dealer of the Year



Keith Kocourek, of Kocourek Automotive Group, Wausau, is the WATDA 2017 Wisconsin Dealer of the Year and your TIME Quality Dealer of the Year Nominee. While he has not had to follow in anyone else's footsteps to obtain the level of success he enjoys today, he has worked very hard and, as he will be the first to tell you, he has certainly not made this journey alone.

"I grew up in Manitowoc with four sisters and one brother," Keith said. "My parents operated a bar and restaurant in which I was expected to work and...we also had a small farm, where I learned the invaluable lessons that only throwing bales of hay can provide."

When he was 16, Keith's automotive career began by washing vehicles at the Pietroske dealership in Manitowoc; a dealership where his brother, Dale, is still employed. Within a span of nine years Keith worked his way up to Service Manager. He attended Northwood University, graduating with a degree in business.

In 1988, Keith met someone who would play a most important role in his life. Jim Carter, a former Green Bay Packer linebacker, was well on his way to becoming a respected member of the auto industry. Jim owned the Chevrolet dealership in Wausau. He would grow to become Keith's mentor, friend and confidant. "Jim," Keith said, "ran a business just as he played on the field...full out and hard. He was tough but fair. He taught me more about the business than I could have learned anywhere else and then rewarded me when I succeeded." Kocourek continued, "Jim is someone whose opinion means the most to me. When I need the truth, even now, I pick up the phone and call Jim."

For his part, Jim said of those early years, "Keith was a hard worker, bright...not just putting in his time. It was clear he was going to move up." Carter continued, "By the time he reached the position of Service Manager you could see his star shine. He grew and our business grew. We

## TIME Quality Dealer of the Year Nominee

were always looking to promote from within for our Chevrolet store and I decided it might be better for the dealership to have a GM with knowledge of the parts and service areas instead of sales and it proved to be the right decision."

Jim and Keith became partners and by 1999 Keith became the sole owner of what is now known as "Kocourek Chevrolet." They remain close.

In a dizzying and bold business expansion from 2006 through 2014, the Kocourek Group experienced phenomenal growth. In 2006 Keith purchased Wausau Imports, bringing in the VW, Nissan and Audi brand. A few years later he moved them to a new store in the campus area of the Chevrolet store. Ford entered the Kocourek lineup through the Rosemurgy-Ballweg merger. The nearby Saturn store was purchased from the Bergstrom organization and beautifully redesigned to house the Ford franchise. Less than a year later, Keith purchased the Hyundai and Kia franchises. Hyundai is now a part of Wausau Imports, while Nissan and Kia are housed in a new store nearby the Ford store and Subaru, which was acquired in 2012 is right next door to Nissan and Kia. J.D. Byrider joined the family in 2014 and ABRA Auto Body & Glass is also a member of the group.

Through some of the toughest times our industry has experienced, Kocourek Automotive became a very successful, thriving group, growing to provide employment for over 250 people.

It's not difficult to determine the catalyst of this success. Keith appears to be at the core according to his employees. Integrity, loyalty, high standards, role model, great teacher, consistent leader...all of these accolades are used over and over when employees talk about Keith. For the past several years his dealerships have repeatedly been named by *Automotive News* as the "Best Dealerships to Work For" in the country. A recent employee survey showed that 94% of Kocourek employees love their jobs.

These results may stem from the fact that Keith is adamant about providing the necessary tools to all of his employees to ensure success. In place is an extensive and in-depth training program which has resulted in continually high customer satisfaction and great employee retention.

Lori Kilness, Controller, has been with Keith for over 27 years. When asked why she's stayed for so long there was no hesitation, "Because of his integrity." Lori said. "He always wants to do the right thing and he has the employees' best interest at heart. It's not just the employees; it's their



Left to right: Charlie and Keith.



*Marcie Wicklund, Executive Assistant, Keith Kocourek, Ray Carver, General Manager, Kocourek Ford*

families, too. Keith realizes the long hours people put in when they're in sales and when they receive a reward, he's careful to make certain it's something the family can share."

Greg Jensen, who began working with the Kocourek group in 2010 as a General Manager and is now the Chief Operating Officer considers Keith to be both friend and employer, "Working with and for Keith has been gratifying." Greg said, "He grants me autonomy – he trusts my instincts and judgment when it comes to directing his organization, which is a significant accolade. He sets clear standards for us all and holds us accountable to exceeding the highest of expectations. He is an affirmative, ambitious and focused individual and we relate well to one another. Together we're dedicated to building a strong business by hiring the right team and investing limitlessly in their training."

The line between employer and friend for Keith can be quite blurred which explains the loyalty of so many of his employees. Ask Jeff Keller, General Sales Manager at the Chevrolet store for the past 14 years, and he will tell you he works for Keith because of Keith's morals. "Keith", says Jeff, "will always do what's right." Evidently that extends well beyond the workplace according to Jeff. After being struck down and hospital-

ized with a serious illness, he awoke to a ringing phone at his hospital bedside. It wasn't a doctor on the other end of the phone, it was Keith. Kocourek had found the best surgeon for the procedure and was assuring Jeff he would be well taken care of. You see, loyalty with Keith works both ways.

If you speak to Keith's Executive Assistant, Marcie Wicklund, she contends that her co-workers are an extension of her family...a part of her heart, as she put it. One of Marcie's most rewarding annual events occurs at Thanksgiving time when, a week before, 300 turkeys are gathered up and delivered to the employees at each dealership. No matter to Keith that his employee list has grown substantially through the years, his heart and generosity seem to have expanded right along with it.

Ray Carver, Keith's General Manager at the Ford location, gave us permission to share a very personal story. Ray was happy for the opportunity to come to work for Keith because of Keith's high standards and ethics; traits past employers did not always share, but were important to Ray. In the transition to Wausau, personal problems regarding Ray's marriage were exacerbated and Ray found himself fighting, as all of us would, to keep it together, both professionally and personally.

One day Ray was surprised when Keith picked him up for work and handed him a set of keys to a house with the suggestion to bring his wife to Wausau. Unfortunately, as hard as they tried, the marriage was beyond repair and Ray finally reached a breaking point. "Most employers," said Ray, "would have called me into their office to talk to me and everyone in the dealership would have known. Not Keith. He came to my office and suggested we take a ride together. I was at rock bottom. I was broken. We talked. Keith found help for me, encouraged me and had faith in me. He not only helped me to get to the other side of a terrible time in my life and come out as a better person, he showed me how to be a great leader. Now I try to lead as he does."

Keith's relationship with people, whether they are employees or simply people in need is quite remarkable. He recognizes those in need and where others might simply pass by with words of sympathy, Keith steps in and becomes involved, working to improve lives and situations. He does it quietly and steadily, with a great deal of heart.

Keith's life, believe it or not, does not completely take place inside the dealerships. Formerly introduced friend and mentor, Jim Carter, did a comparison of his management style compared to Keith's. "I was smart enough...and I worked hard, very hard, but I think the path that Keith has taken is better than mine because he takes time for life. His life is more balanced. He's much more well-rounded."

Keith's passions are varied and interesting and connect with his belief that one must help others – must give back.

Early in his career he was on a Service Manager's trip to Alaska. He took a float plane trip and the pilot put him in the right seat. A spark was ignited. Within two weeks he was taking flying lessons. He then combined his passion of flight with giving something back by flying Angel Flights for a number of years. Angel Flights help individuals receive critical medical transport. For this substantial contribution, both in personal time and financial donation, Keith was awarded the prestigious Salute to Dealers by Ford which is chosen by a committee headed by Edsel Ford. He was one of only four dealers, chosen from over 4,000, in North America in 2011 to receive this award based solely on humanitarian effort. "The Salute to Dealers Award," Keith said, "was the award most humbling to me because it was created to exhibit Ford's commitment to their dealers, based not on dealership statistics, but rather on what we were able to give back to our communities." Michael O'Brien, who was the Ford Motor Company regional sales manager at the time said, "Keith's substantial contributions, financial and personal, could not be further removed from traditional 'check book charity'." How aptly this describes our current TMQDA nominee.

When Keith became involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters he had no idea that not only would he change a life, but how his life would be changed also. Charlie Sann was six years old and things weren't going too well in his life. He needed a big brother. Fortunately, he and Keith were paired and the two met. If you ask both of them about that first meeting at Hardees, they will both laugh and recall, "Charlie (I) was the

slowest eater in the entire world!" Charlie must have picked up speed because the two of them went from seeing each other from an hour a week to a day a week and more. They quickly became part of each other's lives...as they still are today, over 27 years later. Charlie began washing cars at the dealership, attended Northwood University and has gone on to become Sales Manager at the Chevrolet store. Charlie married last year and soon he and his wife, Meganne, will welcome their first child. An event you can be certain Keith is happily anticipating. Keith has been quoted as saying, "Charlie is truly part of our family and has been an excellent example and brother to my daughter, Paige."



## “Keith will always do what’s right.”

*Jeff Keller, General Sales Manager,  
Kocourek Chevrolet*

Keith's daughter, Paige, is now 19 and attending college at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. When asked about growing up as a dealership kid and having Keith as a father, she said, "I've been so blessed!" She talked about going in to the dealerships with her dad, helping around the office, how she's known the dealership family all of her life and what a wonderful role model her father has been. No, she probably won't enter the dealership world, but her college major, unsurprisingly, is entrepreneurship. "I watched Dad take risks. He has always been an inspiration." Her father has, Paige continued, "made me want to own my own business." Charlie points out with pride that Paige has also inherited her father's work ethic.

Again, it's not all about business with her dad. Paige traveled with her father on many of the Angel Flights that Keith made. "His charity work has influenced my entire life," Paige said. It certainly has! Paige and Charlie head up a wonderful Kocourek philanthropic organization formed by Keith, the "Kocourek Kid's Foundation", which was established in 2011. A percentage of the profits from the Kocourek Group are donated to the Foundation each month. Keith, himself, matches all employee and other contributions. This donor advised kids fund benefits many charities in the Wausau area such as the Boys and Girls Club, Big Brothers-Big Sisters and the Boy Scouts to name a few. Over \$250,000 has already been put to work helping the community.

When asked what the TMQDA honor meant to him, Kocourek responded humbly, "I owe so many people who have helped me on my path, from team members to...guests, friends and mentors.

I will do my best to represent my Wisconsin peers as their nominee in New Orleans. The list of Wisconsin dealers who precede me in this honor is quite awe-inspiring and it is with humility and gratitude that I join their ranks."

Keith has often said the following statement impacts his life greatly, "Improving the lives of our neighbors is both a responsibility and a privilege." Time and again throughout his career, within the walls of his dealerships and within his community there is personal evidence that he lives these words every day.

WATDA's nominee for this year's TMQDA has demonstrated excellent business acumen, and has also revealed an immense heart to match; a winning combination! Congratulations, Keith, on an honor well-deserved. ●

# Hyundai Hope on Wheels Program

## FUNDS A SCHOLAR GRANT FOR UW KIDS CANCER FUND



Tom Zimbrick (Dealer Principal); Grant Oster (General Manager Zimbrick Hyundai Eastside); Paul Lamb (Hyundai Central Region General Manager); Robin Hellrood (General Manager Zimbrick Hyundai West); Dr. Christian Capitini (Grant Winner); Jeff Poltawsky (Senior Vice President American Family Children's Hospital).

Every time a Hyundai vehicle is purchased, Hyundai and its dealers fund a donation to Hope On Wheels (HHOW). Doctors and hospitals then apply for grants from HHOW for childhood cancer research. The Hyundai Hope On Wheels Medical Advisory Committee, comprised of ten leading hematologists/oncologists from the country's top pediatric cancer institutions, advises HHOW on all medical aspects of the organization's grant programs, providing counsel and important insight on the state of pediatric cancer. The Committee is tasked with reviewing all research and funding proposals from eligible institutions nationwide, and awarding the grants.

The presentation, made on September 8, by the Hyundai Central Region General Manager Paul Lamb follows.

The UW Kids Cancer Fund at American Family Children's Hospital is one of 30 institutions to receive the Hyundai Young Investigators Grant for pediatric cancer research. This \$250,000 grant is designed to support the work of Dr. Christian Capitini focus on the research of allogeneic hematopoietic stem cell transplants (Allo-HSCT) with a combination of immunotherapies to improve the efficacy of Allo-HSCT for neuroblastoma. Allo-HSCT is a transfusion of stem cells from a healthy donor that will develop into a new immune system of a patient who has been treated with high doses of chemotherapy and/or radiation. Allo-HSCT is typically used for children with leukemia or lymphoma but has limited success so far in children with neuroblastoma. This impactful research will ultimately help kids who are fighting cancer in the Madison community.

Many of you may know that September is National Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. In an effort to celebrate pediatric cancer survivors, Hyundai Hope on Wheels has launched the latest advancement of its national public awareness campaign called "Every Handprint Tells A Story." We don't just look at the handprint logo as a cool colorful image—it is a symbol of how each handprint represents a story hope, courage, and perseverance. Since 1998, when a group of New England-area Hyundai dealers decided to support a local children's hospital, Hyundai Hope on Wheels has collected the handprints of child cancer survivors. Many have asked: "Why is a car company involved in pediatric cancer research?" At Hyundai, our commitment to giving back is something that the company and its dealer's value. We are also committed to solving society's

most pressing challenges and making a difference in the lives of children.

2016 marks the 18th year that Hyundai and its dealers have been involved in the fight against pediatric cancer. The once small, local effort has grown into a national non-profit organization that has now donated over 115 million dollars to pediatric cancer research in the U.S. This year alone, we will award an additional 13 million dollars in new grant funding. Did you know every 36 minutes a child is diagnosed with pediatric cancer in the U.S.? That's more than 44 kids per day and the equivalent of a classroom and a half of children every day. Yet, because of research, 80% of the most common forms of pediatric cancer can be cured. But 80% is just not good enough. That's why our mission at Hyundai Hope on Wheels is clear—we want to end childhood cancer.

Our approach for the last 18 years is to fund innovative research so that ultimately we find a cure. That's why grant making efforts like today's are so important. The Young Investigators Grant is designed to help kids in this community who are fighting pediatric cancer. Today, we are honored to announce that the UW Kids Cancer Fund at American Family Children's Hospital is a recipient of the \$250,000 grant.

**Representing area Hyundai dealers, Tom Zimbrick made the following remarks at the presentation:**

Good morning. My name is Tom Zimbrick of Zimbrick West and Zimbrick Eastside dealerships. On behalf of the Hyundai dealers in Madison, we are thrilled to be here. As a Hyundai dealer, Hope On Wheels is one of the best things we do. This is not about selling cars or promoting our businesses. This initiative is truly at the core of who we are to make the world a better place.

There are so many amazing children's hospitals that are doing incredible work to help kids fight cancer. This hospital is one of 30 nationwide to receive a Hyundai Scholar Hope Grant totaling a combined \$7.5 million dollars. It is a testament to your hard work and achievements.

We are proud to be a part of this community and even more proud to have an institution like this one serving children every day. Children are our future. They should have a chance to grow, play, and learn in a world that is cancer free. That is why we are so committed to this cause. It is for the kids. The impact that this grant will have on countless kids and families in the area is truly an inspiration. Kids, it is because of you, that we are so committed to this fight. You've got a friend in Hyundai—and we are on your side.

I want to congratulate the American Family Children's Hospital for all of your efforts and the work you are doing. We know that by working together, we can achieve our goal of a day without pediatric cancer. Thank you everyone for all that you do. ●



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# CenterStage

AWARDS, HONORS, MILESTONES

Congratulations to **Bushnell Ford of Lodi** voted the number one Best Place to Buy a Car as well as the Best Customer Service by area residents in a poll sponsored by the *Poynette Press* and the *Lodi Enterprise*.

**Pioneer Ford of Platteville**, Potosi Fine Arts Club and members of the local community raised \$6,000 for Potosi's school Auditorium project at a recent test drive event. Over 300 area residents participated in the Ford Motor Company's Drive 4 UR School event, where in addition the to test drive money, another \$2,000 was raised with a food stand and car wash.



Racine Case High School Booster Club partnered with **Palmen Dodge Chrysler Jeep** to raise \$1,640 at a recent test drive event held in conjunction with Performance of the Bands.

Drive for A Cure events were held in August at **Bergstrom Automotive** locations in **Appleton, Oshkosh and Madison** to support breast cancer research at the Medical College of Wisconsin Cancer Center and the UW Health Breast Center. The events raised \$50,468 from guest test drives, donations and social media initiatives. Bergstrom donated \$1 for each mile driven.

The drug-sniffing dog at the **Plover** Police Department has a new set of wheels. **Mark Toyota** donated a 2016 4Runner for the department's drug dog and his handlers to use as a patrol vehicle. The German Shepard named Ice is expected to start working on patrol in December.

**Rudig Jensen Chrysler Dodge Jeep** and the Hillsboro High School Booster Club co-hosted a FCA US test drive event in conjunction with the Hillsboro Booster Tailgate. FCA paid \$20 for each test drive taken, raising a total \$3,000.

Town and Village of Mukwonago police will be giving out 1,000 sets of 20 cards featuring Green Bay Packers during trick-or-treat times and at the Midnight Magic parade in December. The cards are sponsored by **Lynch of Mukwonago**.



The fourth annual Team Hidalgo/Warner Memorial golf outing, sponsored by **Wilde Automotive Group** raised \$43,000 or the benefit of the Fisher House Wisconsin, Daren M. Hidalgo Memorial Fund and the Richard D. Warner Memorial Fund. "It was a great success as we honored and celebrated the lives of Army 1st Lieutenant Daren Hidalgo and Marine Lance Corporal Richard Warner," said Jorge Hidalgo, GM and principal partner, Wilde East Towne Honda. "Our sons selflessly paid the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our nation in Iraq and Afghanistan. We honor them by supporting their fellow service members who have returned home. We could not have raised this amount without the support of the local community. The Fisher House provides a "home away from home" for Military and Veterans families to be close to a loved one during hospitalization at the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center in Milwaukee.

Ozaukee Economic Development has honored **Newman Chevrolet** as the Medium-sized Business of the Year. The **Cedarburg** dealership president Chad Curran said, "it's humbling to receive an award like this. But the accolades really belong to all of our employees. One of the things that I really like to do is pass on the compliments when I hear them - if someone had a great experience with our service department or were impressed with their experience purchasing a vehicle from us. It's important for me to accept those kudos and make sure they get passed on." Newman Chevrolet is a long-time supporter of community activities; during the past year donating \$60,000 to more than 100 charitable recipients, including \$25,000 to the new bandshell in Cedar Creek Park where Curran grew up and spent a lot of time. Another current priority is supporting the high school automotive program, which was recently in danger of extinction. Chad worked with the principal and superintendent as well as industry partners to give the program the support it needed.

Allen Cash has joined **New Glarus Motors LLC**, a privately owned and operated Chrysler, Dodge Jeep, RAM dealership in **New Glarus**. He will be responsible for managing the entire branch. Cash previously worked at Wisconsin Kenworth and Badger Truck Center and has owned several automotive related businesses. ●

Please submit your awards, honors and milestones to: [jfarmer@watda.org](mailto:jfarmer@watda.org)

# #impactachange

**For over 50 years**, Rawhide Boys Ranch has changed the lives of thousands of at-risk and troubled youth thanks to the Wisconsin Automobile and Truck Dealers Association. Our unique, family-focused programs, and cherished partnerships with auto dealers across Wisconsin, are a big reason we're able to impact a change in so many lives.

We will continue to grow, to help at-risk and troubled youth in surrounding Wisconsin communities, with your help. Buying from and donating to Rawhide helps fund programs and can be done quickly and easily.

## Numerous Vehicle Drop-off Locations Throughout Wisconsin

With the support of WATDA, Rawhide has 220 Donor Service Centers (DSCs) across Wisconsin, offering convenient locations for Rawhide donors to drop off their vehicle. Each DSC plays a large part in impacting a change for at-risk youth and families.



## About Face: Rawhide's Community Service Corps

Rawhide's About Face program includes WATDA Boys Home and impacts a change through evidence-based community service programs. Through About Face, guys participate in:

- » Community service work
- » Disaster recovery
- » Physical training
- » Counseling
- » Academics

## Rawhide Certifies Vehicles at Dealer Auction Sites

Rawhide has three types of certifications for vehicles at dealer-only auctions, guaranteeing dealers can buy from Rawhide with confidence.

### Blue Ribbon

Vehicles certified "Blue Ribbon," passed our complete 46-point inspection and don't require repairs.

### Yellow Ribbon

Vehicles certified "Yellow Ribbon," require repairs, but we explain, in detail, all maintenance the vehicle may need.

### Red Ribbon

Vehicles with a "Red Ribbon" are sold without any mechanical guarantees.

**All vehicles** purchased from Rawhide come with the title and a **seven day bumper-to-bumper buy-back guarantee**.

## Giving Tuesday is November 29<sup>th</sup>

Giving Tuesday kicks off the charitable season and shifts the focus from holiday shopping to end-of-year giving. It is one of the best ways to #ImpactAChange in the lives of at-risk and troubled youth.



## Rawhide's Outpatient Counseling Provides Services Across Wisconsin

Rawhide offers outpatient counseling and mental health services to individuals and families. Licensed therapists offer expertise in a variety of areas, including marriage counseling, anger management, parenting issues, and much more. Outpatient counseling locations are located in Appleton, New London, Green Bay, Milwaukee, West Bend, and Glendale.



## 85% of Donations Fund Programs to Help At-Risk Youth and Communities

Rawhide has one of the highest percentages of donations funneled directly to programs. 85% of revenue from donations impacts the lives of at-risk and troubled youth.

Through donations or buying our vehicles, you can impact a change in the lives of at-risk youth and families.



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Rawhide.org



# NADA Director's Report

BY BOB HUDSON



Random thoughts...

Well thankfully this election cycle is over. Now we can hopefully get away from the constant barrage of negative campaign messages.

Frankly, I have become a bit more interested in politics than I used to be. I had to in order to do the job all of you have asked me to do as your director. I would not have guessed that outcome giving all we were told prior to the election eve.

It's interesting to note that in Wisconsin, 47.9% of the vote was cast for Trump and 46.9% went for Hillary. President-Elect Trump garnered 1,409,467 votes.

**But** did you know that Senator Ron Johnson had 1,479,262 votes cast for him in his race against Russ Feingold. That represents close to 70,000 more votes than Trump got! Kind of interesting... I guess.

That just goes to show you how every effort and every vote counts and turnout does indeed make a difference.

Now it's time to get on to other things:

At the most recent NADA Board meeting, the directors had a robust discussion stemming from the **Cadillac Pinnacle** program.

Dealers generally agreed that OEM stair-step and other multi-tiered incentive programs continue to be extremely corrosive to our respective brands;

And they are harmful to dealers' integrity and to our efforts to be transparent with the customer.

However, there are significant obstacles in the way of legally challenging these kinds of programs:

1. **The law has generally been interpreted in favor of them;**
2. **NADA may lack the standing to sue and challenge them; and**
3. **Even if NADA did have standing, the legal process is a long one that will not result in a fast resolution.**

The Executive Committee of NADA has been charged with performing a comprehensive review of this issue.

We're hoping to develop a strategy soon and it starts with the NADA Team:

**Public Affairs:** Public Affairs continues taking messaging to new levels with greater reach. You will see a brand new video marketing launch that focuses on the dynamics of TODAY'S DEALERSHIPS.

**Regulatory Affairs:** Regulatory Affairs continues to monitor and engage with the **CFPB, FTC, EPA, NHTSA, and other federal agencies**. New topics include the Military Lending Act... and our participation in the lawsuit filed by the U. S. Chamber of Commerce to challenge the recently adopted "White Collar" overtime regulations.

**Legislative Affairs:** We had a very successful Washington Conference with over 300 Hill visits. We discussed the importance of **Senate Bill #2663** (which would roll back the CFPB's 2013 indirect auto lending guidance);

**Recalls** (where we oppose any proposal to ground all recalled vehicles); and

**Tax Reform** (which may very well come up early next year.)

**Sadly NADA PAC** Contributions are off-pace as we enter the 4th quarter of 2016. We need to keep our high profile on Capitol Hill and our ability to support pro-business legislators intact. Please donate! The challenges have never been more serious.

**Finances:** I'm proud to report that NADA is financially strong and we will remain strong for our membership. We always are providing the resources, advocacy, and education needed to build our businesses.

And speaking of education, I want to make you aware of a new program under the women directors and NADA staff. We have launched a new financial literacy program in conjunction with Junior Achievement.

The program is designed to help young people gain the financial literacy they need to stay sharp and hopefully be someday successful.

The relationship with Auto Trade Association Executive's (ATAE) has never been stronger. ATAEE's like Bill & Chris are the tip of the spear—the point of contact at the state level to many of the issues that continue to percolate up.

And, of course, let's keep a close eye on the truck side of things this coming year with ATD! It has historically been a leading indicator of market trends for the light-duty sector. Truck dealers are facing another round of Green House Gas & Fuel Economy regulations, and we are keeping a close eye on this.

In fact, there will be a special panel that will discuss this issue at the NADA/ATD Convention in January.

Finally, AT THE CONVENTION NADA WILL BE releasing the results of a new study called the **Mercer Report**: the title of this report is "The Future of Automobile Retailing."

The good news, according to this study that Mercer concluded is this: **The dealership model will remain dominant; with direct-sales efforts more focused on high-end vehicles and representing just a small fraction of U.S. vehicle sales.**

Other things to note:

- The number of U.S. dealerships is predicted to shrink slightly to around 16,500 stores in 2025.
- Steady but slow consolidation of store ownership will continue. Mercer forecasted a pool of 6,500 owners by 2025, down from 8,000 today. However, private ownership will continue to dominate.
- Vehicle profit margins will be lower, but asset returns such as return on equity may be more stable. The gap between strong and weak stores will widen, Mercer predicted.
- **Purely online sales will become common but will not dominate the market place.**
- Satellite service outlets run by dealers will multiply.

**I urge you to check out the full report when it's released because frankly I believe this predicted future is... already here.**

Finally, the big **NADA "1-0-0"** is right around the corner and I hope you all booked your flights! Expo space is sold out and thousands of vendors, suppliers, and our OEMs will be there. This will be the chance to celebrate our *past* 100 years while looking forward to the *next*.

Just like the Presidential election, NADA will have a new "administration" come January, at the 100th Convention. Jeff Carlson, our current 2016 NADA Chairman, will pass the torch onto Mark Scarpelli.

Finally, I want to thank all of you, the greatest team I *know* and have had the privilege of working with for another year:

THANK YOU! And thank WATDA for all their hard work... for sticking it out through the regulatory choke-hold these past few years... and I look toward great, new beginnings with you!

Thank you and God Bless all of you during this upcoming Holiday Season! ●



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# From Around the State

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

The Van Horn Automotive Group headquartered in Plymouth, has acquired their tenth location in Wisconsin with the purchase of Jack Safro Ford in **Oconomowoc**, and will operate as **Van Horn Ford**. The Safro Group continues to operate three stores in the greater Milwaukee area.

.....  
**Francois Ford of Belleville** recently celebrated the grand opening of their new 21,000 square foot dealership that includes a drive-in service write-up area; a new car delivery bay, repair facility and showroom. A ribbon-cutting ceremony included Francois family, chamber of Commerce and Keller Inc. the design/build general contractor.

.....  
**West Bend** will be home to a new **Russ Darrow Nissan** dealership, anticipated to open late in 2017. The 24,000 square foot facility will emphasize technology both in the showroom and customer lounge. It will include two express lube lanes and ten service bays with electric vehicle charging stations and a kids lounge.

.....  
**CSM Companies, Inc.** has purchased Dearth Buick GMC and Dearth Motors in **Monroe**. CSM is a prominent heavy-duty truck provider in the Midwest; these are their first automobile dealerships.

.....  
**Home Run Auto Group** broke ground for their new **Racine Hyundai** dealership on six acres of land just east of I 94, near their recently opened **Racine Toyota** location. The Hyundai store will be approximately 22,000 square feet and the Toyota store, located on nine acres is 32,000 square feet. The new locations will give more accessibility to the dealerships, and attract people from outside of the area.

.....  
**Janesville's Lakeside International Trucks** is relocating their business within eyesight of Interstate 90/39. The new site will combine parts sales and service department workers in one area, as well as offering upgrades in parts warehousing. The service department workers will have a step up in technology and overall work environment compared with the current location.

The **Van Horn Automotive Group** has announced that they are handing a 30% stake of their business to about 600 employees through an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP). The Plymouth-based business was founded by Joe Van Horn fifty years ago; Co-owner Chuck Van Horn said the idea occurred to him while considering a long-term succession plan for the business. He hopes that the ESOP will help with recruiting and retaining good employees

.....  
**Fagan Automotive in Janesville** has been sold to long-time business partner Bob Clapper, who has worked for the organization since 1985. Jim Fagan has retired from the business. Clapper will keep the Fagan name out of respect for founder Jack Fagan and all the family has done for the Janesville community. ●



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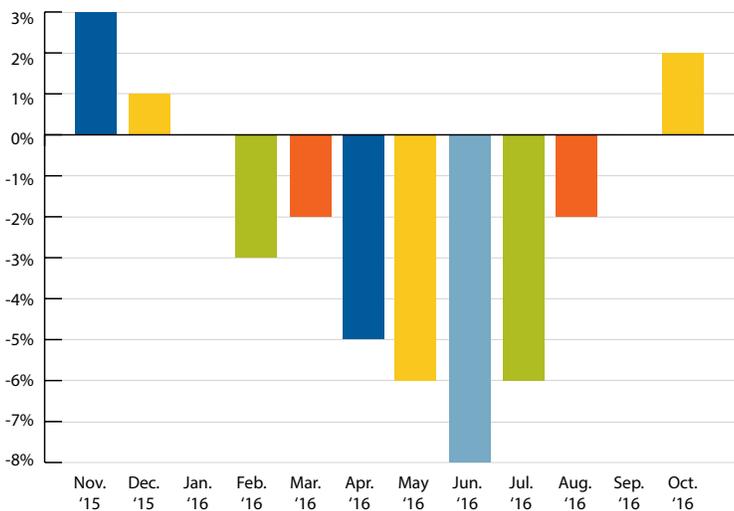


# New Vehicle Sales Trends

## Wisconsin New Vehicle Trends: October 2016

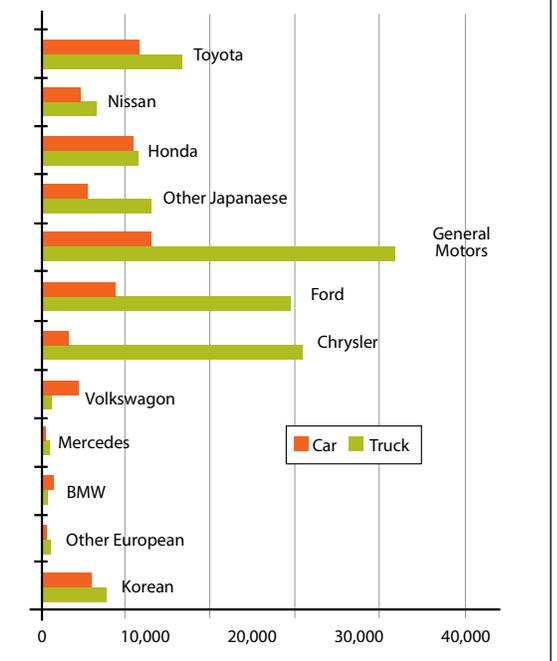
	Previous Two Months			Year to Date			Year to Date Market Share		
	9/15	9/16	% change	'15 YTD	'16 YTD	% change	'15 YTD	'16 YTD	change
<b>Industry Total</b>	<b>41,038</b>	<b>40,229</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>192,353</b>	<b>186,299</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>99.9%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>
<b>Car</b>	<b>13,250</b>	<b>11,330</b>	<b>14.5%</b>	<b>66,286</b>	<b>56,541</b>	<b>14.7%</b>	<b>34.5%</b>	<b>30.3%</b>	<b>4.2%</b>
<b>Truck</b>	<b>27,788</b>	<b>28,899</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>126,067</b>	<b>129,758</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>65.5%</b>	<b>69.6%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>
<b>Japanese</b>	<b>14,020</b>	<b>13,591</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>64,939</b>	<b>64,326</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>33.7%</b>	<b>34.5%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>
<b>Toyota</b>	<b>4,759</b>	<b>4,757</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>22,570</b>	<b>22,600</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>12.1%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>
<b>Honda</b>	<b>3,866</b>	<b>3,702</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>18,294</b>	<b>17,919</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>9.5%</b>	<b>9.6%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>
<b>Nissan</b>	<b>2,092</b>	<b>1,895</b>	<b>9.4%</b>	<b>9,447</b>	<b>8,956</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>3,303</b>	<b>3,237</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>14,628</b>	<b>14,851</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>
<b>Domestic</b>	<b>22,420</b>	<b>22,145</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>105,859</b>	<b>102,000</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>55.0%</b>	<b>54.7%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>
<b>General Motors</b>	<b>9,403</b>	<b>9,469</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>45,934</b>	<b>43,961</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>23.9%</b>	<b>23.6%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>
<b>Ford</b>	<b>6,878</b>	<b>6,658</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>31,443</b>	<b>30,631</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>16.3%</b>	<b>16.4%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>
<b>Chrysler</b>	<b>6,139</b>	<b>6,018</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>28,482</b>	<b>27,408</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>14.8%</b>	<b>14.7%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>
<b>European</b>	<b>1,986</b>	<b>1,965</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>9,144</b>	<b>9,068</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>
<b>Volkswagen</b>	<b>1,056</b>	<b>985</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>4,924</b>	<b>4,541</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>
<b>BMW</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>1,692</b>	<b>1,752</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Mercedes</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>1,254</b>	<b>1,284</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>9.9%</b>	<b>1,274</b>	<b>1,491</b>	<b>17.0%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>
<b>Korean</b>	<b>2,612</b>	<b>2,528</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>12,411</b>	<b>10,905</b>	<b>12.1%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>2,612</b>	<b>2,528</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>12,411</b>	<b>10,905</b>	<b>12.1%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>

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



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**YTD Registrations by Vehicle Type.**



October Trend Report from Scott Quimby



# Legal & Legislative Update

BY CHRIS SNYDER

## Trump and Republicans Take Control



**T**he more things change the more they stay the same. For as surprising or traumatic the recent election results may seem, a closer look reveals that, aside from having a different president (which we were going to have regardless) most things moving forward will be dealt with by familiar characters. Nationally the Republicans still control the House and the Senate. In

Wisconsin the Republicans have increased their majority. And, as a country and a state, we still have lots of work to do. This column is being written the morning after the election, so by the time you read it some things may have been announced that were not anticipated, but for the sake of making predictions as to where we go from here, let's pretend that some constants can be predicted.

On the national front, Donald J. Trump will be sworn in as the 45th President of the United States of America. Kind of weird to write it, read and say it. Back on June 16, 2015 WATDA staff was in Washington DC attending an American Truck Dealer (ATD) fly-in. We (staff and Wisconsin truck dealers) were congregating at the NADA office when the Trump press conference announcing his candidacy for president was broadcast. The announcement was met with snickers and comments about how entertaining the race just got. However, to a person, no one, NO ONE, felt that his run would last much longer than a few months. The consensus from the dealers, lobbyists, political pundits and the media was that, while somewhat entertaining (if you like the brash, unabated, politically incorrect and downright rude oratory style) the political party "establishment" would eat him alive on the issues.

However, Trump defied the odds and pundits by weathering storm after storm (most self-induced). If you look at the campaign though you will see that he was learning and growing as time went on. Let's hope that trend continues. Between now and the January 20 inauguration Mr. Trump will be assembling his cabinet and agenda.

We are not going to comment or speculate on any of Mr. Trump's campaign hot topics, but instead look at the issues that will surely be addressed by the 115th Congress. The key numbers for any federal legislation are 218, 60 and 1. It takes 218 votes in the house, 60 votes in the senate and the president's signature to pass any legislative action. The republicans have 238 house members, 51 senators and the presidency. Therefore, the senate will pose problems or create opportunity for meaningful compromise in passing any legislation. The only change in the Wisconsin delegation is republican Michael Gallagher will be replacing republican Reid Ribble. As for the work in the first session of the 115th Congress, look for some movement on reforms to the CFPB, ObamaCare and the tax code.



## Wisconsin Republicans Increase Their Majority

In Wisconsin, the republicans control the assembly, senate and governor's office. The republicans hold a majority in the assembly 64-35 and the senate 20-12. Under Wisconsin legislative rules, a simple majority vote passes. It is anticipated that party leadership will remain relatively unchanged and the legislature will hit the ground running come January.

WATDA has a full slate of legislative issues that will probably be addressed in the next year including, amendments to the motor vehicle franchise law, motor vehicle recalls, insurance claim procedures, transportation funding (the state's biannual budget), issues with the Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection and motor vehicle electronic titling and registration system. As always, dealer participation and communications with their legislators will be a key factor in any legislative success.

## Warranty Reimbursement Lawsuit

In October, WATDA assisted 11 General Motors (GM) dealers in coordinating the filing of a lawsuit against GM, to prevent the imposition of a surcharge. This issue has roots dating back to 2010. That's when WATDA first started negotiating amend-

ments to the franchise law with the manufacturers' lobbyists and lawyers. Over the course of approximately 15 months, WATDA shared and worked with the various manufacturer representatives to hash out a bill that was 95% agreed to, leading to a bill that Governor Walker signed into law in December of 2011.

One of the provisions that was agreed to early on was the warranty reimbursement formulas for parts and labor. In late October of 2015, WATDA staff was approached by GM about issues they were having with the warranty labor reimbursement formula. After several attempts at coming to some sort of fair and meaningful compromise that would facilitate expedited legislation, both parties assured key legislators that we would continue negotiations while the legislature was out of session.

In September, GM sent out a letter to the approximately 20 Wisconsin GM dealers who were currently on Option A warranty program informing them that on or after October 15, GM would be assessing a surcharge of \$219 for those receiving retail parts reimbursement and \$389 for those receiving retail parts and labor. The charge will be assessed and shown on the invoice. WATDA engaged the Boardman Law firm to coordinate interested dealers in a lawsuit to contest the surcharge. There are currently 11 dealers signed on to the lawsuit and it is expected that 2 more will be added.

The lawsuit is filed in the Eastern District Federal Court in Milwaukee before Judge Pepper. GM is being represented by a law firm out of Boston. GM has agreed to stay the surcharge pending the outcome of mediation or January 6, whichever comes first. Mediation before a federal magistrate will take place on December 20 deadline. Extending the stay is entirely up to GM.

The current legal arguments are that:

1. the surcharge deprives the dealers of their right to be reimbursed for warranty work at a rate called for under the law.
2. The surcharge is a violation of the Robinson-Patman Act, which prohibits suppliers from pricing discrimination to their vendors.
3. Dealer day in Court Act, which prohibits a manufacturer from forcing dealers to forego any right or protection they may have under the law. ●

# 2016 ELECTION UPDATE

BY AJ WILSON, HUBBARD WILSON & ZELENKOVA, LLC

**E**lection Day 2016 has finally come and gone. In Wisconsin, Republicans had an astounding night leveraging unforeseen Donald Trump coattails to some surprising legislative victories.

In statewide races, while pollsters of both partisan persuasions expected approximately a five point win for Hillary Clinton in Wisconsin and a closer win for Russ Feingold; Donald Trump won Wisconsin with 48% of the vote to Clinton's 47% and incumbent U.S. Senator Ron Johnson beat back Feingold's challenge 50% to 47%. This marked the first time since 1984 a republican presidential candidate carried the state.

In the state legislature, Republicans actually gained on significant majorities in both houses. In the State Senate, the open 18th Senate District saw the bulk of spending by both parties and was the top target for a democratic pickup. However, republican Dan Feyen defeated Mark Harris handily 56% to 44%. In the 14th Senate District, incumbent republican Senator Luther Olsen also faced his toughest challenge in recent years and likewise won decisively, 57% to 43%. In the upset of the night, democrat Julie Lassa of Stevens Point was upset by Portage County Republican Chair Patrick Testin by nearly 4,000 votes. To cap it all off, as I write this article, republican Dan Kapanke's challenge to sitting Senate Democratic Leader Jennifer Shilling in the La Crosse area appears to be heading to recount. After the official vote count was certified by the four counties comprising the 32nd Senate District, Shilling led Kapanke by only 56 votes. The Senate will start the 2016-17 legislative session with at least a 20-13 majority.

In the State Assembly, Republicans were hard pressed to expand upon an already inflated 63-36 majority – yet they did. On top of winning numerous races targeted by democrats, the Assembly GOP increased its majority by one with challenger Treig Pronschinske's upset victory over incumbent democrat Chris Danou in Trempeleau County. Assembly Republicans will have a 64-35 seat majority when legislative session commences in January.

Elections didn't end there as three of the four legislative caucuses chose their leadership teams. Senate Democrats will likely wait until the aforementioned 32nd Senate District race is sorted out. While the respective caucus heads remained the same, some new legislators joined the ranks of leadership:

## ASSEMBLY REPUBLICANS:

Speaker: Robin Vos  
Majority Leader: Jim Steineke  
Asst. Majority Leader: Rob Brooks  
Caucus Chair: Don Knoll  
Caucus Vice Chair: Romaine Quinn  
Caucus Secretary: Jessie Rodriguez  
Caucus Sgt. at Arms: Samantha Kerkman

## SENATE REPUBLICANS:

Majority Leader: Scott Fitzgerald  
Senate President: Roger Roth  
Assistant Majority Leader: Leah Vukmir  
Caucus Chair: Sheila Harsdorf  
Caucus Vice Chair: Van Wanggaard

## ASSEMBLY DEMOCRATS

Minority Leader: Peter Barca  
Assistant Minority Leader: Dianne Hesselbein  
Caucus Chair: Mark Spreitzer  
Caucus Vice Chair: Steve Doyle  
Caucus Secretary: Beth Meyers  
Caucus Sgt. at Arms: Chris Sinicki



# Tax Savings Available for Dealers

BY JOHN HACKMAN

Just a reminder for WISCO members who may be looking for equipment before year-end to upgrade your shop and possibly save on your taxes. NOW is a good time to review your dealership's equipment needs. The PATH (Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes) Act of 2015 made permanent the \$500,000 Section 179 deduction. Both the dollar limitation (still \$500,000 for 2016) and the asset addition phase-out (was \$2,000,000 for 2015, now \$2,010,000 for 2016) are now indexed annually for inflation. Section 179 could allow you to completely depreciate new equipment purchased in 2016 within limits. Additionally, the PATH Act also extended bonus depreciation through 2019. For 2016 and 2017, 50% of the cost of new equipment can be immediately deducted. For 2018, bonus depreciation is 40%. For 2019, 30%. For 2020, 0%. Equipment purchases from WISCO that are bought and placed in service by year-end would qualify for Section 179 and/or bonus depreciation. So check with your tax advisor before the year is gone.

If you are in need of equipment for your shop what better place to look than your own co-op? WISCO's equipment lineup

includes the top names known industry-wide and WISCO saves you money on them. We have Challenger Lifts, Hunter alignment systems, wheel balancers, tire changers, quick check units, and brake lathes. We have Borroughs, Shure, and Equipto shelving, bins, and work benches. Altech Electronics LED lighting for your lot, 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 waste oil furnace or a MacroAir airvolution fan from Black Gold. The list continues. Check us out at [wisco.com](http://wisco.com) to view our entire product offering.



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# Broske Assumes New Marketing Position

**S**arah Broske has a lot of energy and enthusiasm, and WATDA is the new beneficiary of her talents. Sarah is our new Marketing and Communication Manager. You may have noticed an increase in WATDA's social media activity over the last few months—this is all thanks to Sarah's efforts.

A Wisconsin native, Sarah grew up in Stoughton; her parents and younger sister still live there, while Sarah migrated a few miles north to McFarland. Sarah retains strong ties to Stoughton, as she serves as the Director of the High School Dance Program and Spirit Squad Coordinator. Her fifteen years of dance lessons proved to be a good investment into her avocation; and her leadership and organizational skills are a perfect fit for the program.

Sarah initially began her higher education at UW Milwaukee, pursuing a career in Physical Therapy, where she was also a member of the school dance team. She discovered that her career choice was not focusing on her creative skillset, and she knew she needed to seek another path. After completing her Liberal Arts Associate degree at Madison College, Sarah went

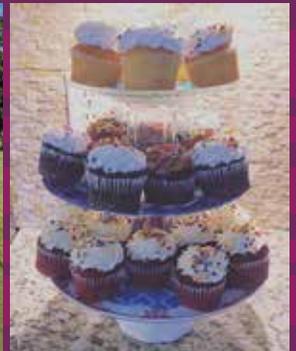
on to earn a BS in Business Marketing from Edgewood College in Madison.

WADA staff has learned that Sarah loves decorating cupcakes (lucky us). She began watching Internet videos and decided that she could "do that." She is frequently called upon by family and friends to provide her beautiful cupcakes for birthdays, showers and other celebrations. Sarah said that she is no longer interested in eating cupcakes as a result!

Thanks to her boyfriend, Sarah has developed an interest in golf, and has become pretty good at the sport. She has not yet invested in her own set of clubs, but it seems a good bet that they will be part of her future.

In addition to responsibilities for WATDA social media and website, Sarah will also assume duties as Editor for Dealer Point. Please share your stories and photos; sbroske@watda.org.

We welcome Sarah and look forward to her contributions to WATDA. ●



## Nationwide Block on Changes to DOL "White Collar" Overtime Rule

**A** U.S. District Court in Texas has granted a nationwide preliminary injunction against implementation and enforcement of the revised "white collar" overtime rules formally scheduled to take effect December 1. This means that, until further notice, the existing "white collar" salary thresholds remain in effect and that dealers should not make employee compensation adjustments based on the revised "white collar" rule's higher compensation thresholds!

The lawsuit challenging the rule was filed by 21 states and a variety of business groups, including NADA. A motion for summary judgement will be ruled on next week. Questions can be directed to NADA Regulatory Affairs, regulatoryaffairs@nada.org or 703.821.7040. ●



FREEDOM TO MOVE FORWARD

# 4 Reasons to Consider a Worksite Benefits Program

BY KATIE OTT, M3'S DIRECTOR OF WORKSITE PRACTICE

With an ever-evolving insurance landscape, it's important for you as an employer to understand options and consider strategies that could help you adapt better. A great place to start is with worksite benefits. Sometimes called supplemental health or voluntary benefits, these are plans that employees pay for typically via payroll deduction. They can help create a more appealing benefits package for employees because they go beyond typical healthcare insurance.

In the last several years, the worksite market has expanded significantly. And that's actually great news for employers. In fact, if you're an employer who hasn't given serious consideration to offering worksite benefits before, there's never been a better time. Here are four reasons why.



to evolve—and rise. Gone are the days of nit-picky reimbursement plans that required insureds to validate every claim dollar; most plans today are indemnity-based.

### 3. Go beyond traditional term life

Including permanent life insurance plans as a worksite benefit not only buoys a traditional term life plan, but can also give employees access to long-term care benefits, which are scarce in today's benefits landscape. Many permanent life policies offer riders that allow insureds to draw on the value of the policy as a way to fund their long-term care needs.

### 1. Harness the power of choice

Once considered niche products, worksite plans have gone mainstream in recent years, with most major medical and ancillary carriers offering their own suite of similar products. That means you aren't locked in to offering just one kind of benefits plan to your employees. Rather, you can mix and match to find the carrier with the best product and process solutions to meet your needs. Also, you can gain billing and rate advantages on non-worksite products: some carriers offer rate and renewal considerations for your core benefits when you partner with them for worksite offerings.

### 4. Create more satisfied employees

Research shows that employees who are offered voluntary benefits report greater satisfaction with their overall benefits package, and this translates into nearly identical levels of employee satisfaction with their employer. Closely related, employees who rate their benefits education highly also have a more positive perception of their employer as a whole.

### 2. High-deductible health insurance + worksite plans = fuller coverage

In the past, worksite plans were typically intended to help employees protect their wallets from unforeseen medical expenses. Today, worksite benefits like accident, critical illness, and hospital gap pair especially well with high-deductible health plans. Consider that two-thirds of Americans have reported that an unforeseen \$1,000 expense would cause significant financial hardship. In light of statistics like that, worksite benefits can play an important role in protecting employees from the risks imposed on them as healthcare costs continue

### Getting a worksite benefits campaign to soar

If you do indeed decide to launch a voluntary worksite benefits campaign, make sure you communicate the details effectively right from the start. Most carriers offer multiple methods for communicating about—and enrolling in—these types of plans. Why is that relevant? Because your workforce likely has Millennials, Gen-Xers, and Boomers. They differ widely on how they prefer receiving and interacting with information; you'll want to maximize your options so you can reach everyone.

Finally, don't forget that you can leverage a new worksite benefits roll-out to implement a bold education campaign on your overall benefits, all at little to no direct cost. By having the right carrier, a reliable broker partner and a smart enrollment process in place, you can create a strong benefits education plan, one that will better meet the needs of your business.

For more information, contact Katie Ott, M3's Director of Worksite Practice, at [katie.ott@m3ins.com](mailto:katie.ott@m3ins.com) or 800-272-2443. ●

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# Classroom Demographics are Changing

BY MARGARET HANTKE, WEAU



“I’m excited to see more and more females getting in the industry.”

*Instructor Margie Stewart*

erally different advantages, first of all their hands are a lot smaller, so they’re able to get into a lot tighter spaces.”

Out of the 35 students enrolled in the program, 9 of them are women, a huge increase when compared to last year’s female automotive students of zero.

“It’s really tough to be in this industry,” Knight added. “I know people will give you a hard time, but when there’s more women it has a good support system right here.”

“If you want to do it and you have the passion, do it,” Hubbard added.

Last year, 78 percent of students who graduated from the program, landed a job in an automotive related field.

Overall, Stewart says she wants all of her students, male and female to succeed, but she’s looking forward to the opportunity to inspire these women in this career. ●

**M**ore women are getting their hands dirty at Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) in a predominantly male field.

CVTC says a record number of women are enrolled in their Automotive Technician program.

“I thought I was going to be the only girl, I was thrilled,” said first-year student Mikayla Hill; echoed by classmate Angel Hubbard.

The 2016 school year for CVTC is seeing a huge jump in female students enrolled in the program.

“My first car got me into it,” said first-year student April Knight. “Gave me the passion the first day I bought it and the next day, my starter died and it forced me to change it.”

In a predominantly male program, instructor Margie Stewart, who has been in the industry for more than 20 years, says she’s excited to help these women succeed.

“I will tell you that it’s a lot harder for a female in the industry, but I was able to get several different opportunities today that I wouldn’t necessarily get,” Stewart said. “I’m excited to see more and more females getting in the industry. They have sev-

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# Lawmakers Meet to Address Skills Gap

BY DAN KLECKER, AYES MANAGER, WISCONSIN

On September 1st I had the opportunity to sit down with Senators Baldwin and Franken at VistaTek in Stillwater, Minnesota to discuss the “Skills Gap” and strategies to solve the problem using youth workforce. The Senators were interested in understanding the skills gap problem and what is being done to address the situation. Since the meeting was held at a Minnesota manufacturing facility the discussion was centered on manufacturing jobs.

Local manufacturers discussed their needs and how they have been hosting open houses and visiting middle and high schools to encourage students to pursue a career in manufacturing. Local technical colleges talked about their technical programs and their high placement rates after graduation.

The Stillwater High School Technical Education teacher brought a student and discussed the challenges faced in high school to provide students with an exposure to technical careers.

Wisconsin high school representatives spoke of the success of the Youth Apprenticeship Program (YAP). YAP assists industries in

employing high school students and guide them to the appropriate postsecondary education to continue their employment.

I spoke highly of the automotive industry’s AYES program, which uses YAP to hire high school interns and mentor them into the automotive industry. Wisconsin’s technical colleges also have a high placement rate of graduates so the more important issue is directing more high school graduates into the technical college programs. The AYES program teaches industry recognized standards (NATEF) and places students in businesses where they are mentored by master technicians. These mentors not only teach technical skills to the students, but more importantly they mentor the students into the automotive industry. ●



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Official Publication of the Wisconsin Automobile & Truck Dealers Association | 1928-2015 | Volume 43 Fall 2016

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