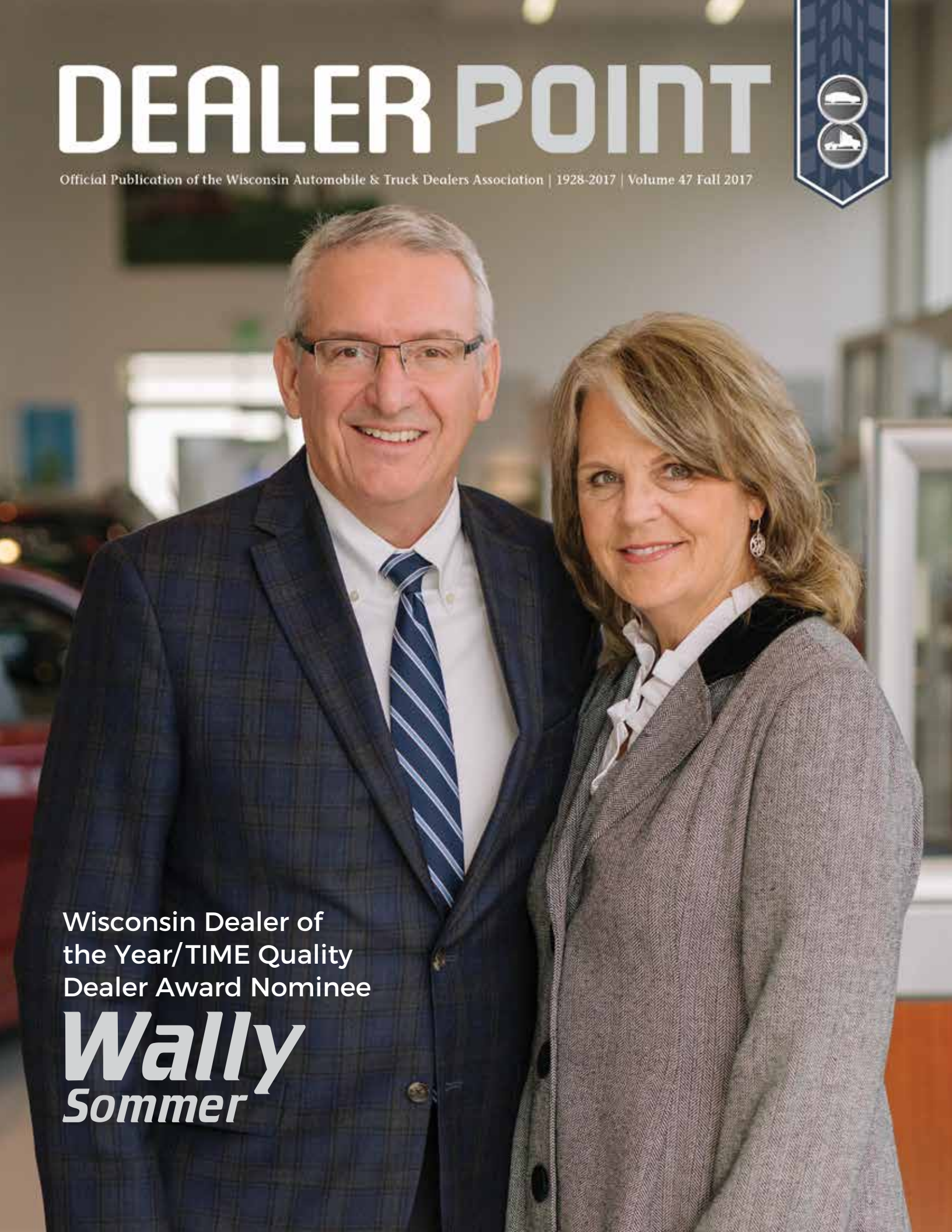
# DEALER POINT

Official Publication of the Wisconsin Automobile & Truck Dealers Association | 1928-2017 | Volume 47 Fall 2017



Wisconsin Dealer of the Year/TIME Quality Dealer Award Nominee

## Wally Sommer

*A publication of the Wisconsin Automobile & Truck Dealers Association focusing on the human side of the membership and trade.*

***Our Mission:***

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



## DEPARTMENTS

# LOOKING FORWARD

## THE SOMMER'S WAY

BY CHRYSTE MADSEN


In 1978, with the ink barely dry on his college diploma, Wally Sommer began working at his father's side in the family dealership, Sommer's Buick-Pontiac in Mequon. One of the early tasks handed to him by his dad was to call customers to check the status of outstanding accounts. Wally completed the job with one exception. The elder Mr. Sommer, Wally Sr., took the account back and said he would look into it himself. Later, Wally asked his father if he had reached a resolution regarding the customer. "Well, yes," his father replied, it turns out the family doesn't have any money to pay. In fact, they don't even have money to fill their tank with heating oil this winter." "What did you do?" asked his son. "Why I called the fuel company and ordered them to go to their home and fill the tank," replied Wally Sr. The answer was not at all what young Wally expected to hear. But it established for him, at that early date, the foundation of care and respect the elder Mr. Sommer expected regarding the people with whom they did business. It's a bar that Wally, his family and employees still hold as high today.

Customer care is but one of the reasons Wally Sommer of Sommer's Subaru Buick GMC has been chosen as your 2018 Wisconsin Dealer of the Year and the 2018 Time Quality Dealer of the Year nominee.

Sommer's Subaru, the store Wally is representing as your TIME Quality Dealer nominee, is operating at record levels. A beautiful new facility and a growing staff have allowed the dealer-

# "We may not all be blood, but we feel like family here."

ship to maintain their #1 Rank in the Minneapolis zone of 44 dealers and #2 ranking in the Central Region of Subaru consisting of 163 retailers. For four consecutive years the dealership has been recognized as a member of the Subaru Chairman's Roundtable consisting of the top 25 of 630 national dealers. The award is not based simply on sales volume but on facility requirements and customer satisfaction. In addition, the Buick-GMC franchises have earned GM's Mark of Excellence from 2013 to the present. Those, however, are only numbers. The real story lies in the atmosphere of the Sommers dealership.

Howard Gleason, Sommer's General Manager, expressed it well, "We may not all be blood, but we feel like family here." Longevity is rampant among the very loyal staff with Al Pintor being in the lead with 58 years. Gary Mortag, GM Service Manager, has been with the Sommers organization since 1981 and speaks of the honesty and values of the organization and its owners. "I know our customers will always be taken care of," Mortag said," even if it costs the dealership money."

Some exceptional insight comes from company Controller, Belinda Foster. She is a product of the Milwaukee Foster dealership family. Belinda stated, "I thought I would never have the 'family business' experience again, but thankfully I was wrong. Working at Sommers is as close to working with my family as I could ever get. Wally and Don complement each other, each having different strengths that they allow each other to maximize. Both embody honesty, integrity, and strong ethical values that I am very proud of and grateful for. They truly are as nice as they seem, and genuinely care about their employees and customers, doing everything they can to take care of all. I don't know where else I could work and have the same great experience that I have been given. They are great bosses!"

If you ask Wally or his brother and lifelong business partner Don, with whom he shares ownership and operation of the dealerships, to what they owe their success you're likely to hear the same answer; their father, Wally Sr. All who speak of Sr. mention his attention to the smallest detail, the importance he placed on customer satisfaction and how important it was to give back to their community.

When you look at the Sommer family history in the Mequon area it helps you understand their commitment to the people within the community. The Sommer family settled in Mequon to farm in 1848. In 1943 John Sommer, Wally G. Sommer's older brother and Wally's uncle, established a service station in the area. In the early '50's they acquired the Buick-Pontiac franchises. John, unfortunately, died very young and Wally Sr. with the help of his wife, Erna, stepped up to become the dealer principal.

Wally, his brother Don and their three sisters have many memories of their mother at the kitchen table on Sundays with the adding machine tape flying as she did the week's payroll. There was no question the dealership was really a "family" business. Wally never considered another line of work and he and his younger brother, Don, looked forward to listening in to discussions about the business. Their father and mother did more than instill a strong work ethic in them. They created a love for the industry. Erna is always given credit as a positive, confident force in the relationship, urging her husband to expand.

When Wally talks about his dad he's quick to mention that his father always believed more could be accomplished and was constantly looking for methods to that end. This mindset would explain the environment Wally returned to when he took his place next to his dad in 1978. He returned to a brand new 27,000 sq. ft. facility that housed their Buick and Pontiac franchises. Wally Sr. so overbuilt the facility that GM, itself, had concerns. The family has always had a forward looking and positive approach to both life and business. This was evidenced in 1997 when the family saw a great opportunity to acquire the Subaru franchise and in the deep recession of 2010 decided to build a beautiful new Subaru dedicated facility.


Wally is now very involved with the Subaru National Advisory Board. In fact, Wally has a busy few years ahead as he will be moving up to the Chairman's position for a two-year stint from 2018-2020 and Past Chairman's position for the two years following. Quite an honor itself.

As it is with most dealership family history, the boys began working there from a very early age. On Sundays, when they were too young to drive, Wally Sr. would pull the cars in the shop for them to wash. They worked their way through service and gained background in fixed operations. All the Sommer children attended the local high school, Homestead High. Wally left for UW-Eau Claire in 1974 with Don two years behind him.

Soon after graduating from college, life changed in another way for Wally. Sweethearts since their Sophomore year at Homestead High, Wally and Debbie married and now, 38 years later, celebrate life with their three children, Grant, Emily, and Philip, their spouses and four grandchildren. As his father credited his mother, Wally credits Debbie for her part in the success of their business. "Debbie," said Wally, "is certainly the glue that has held the family together. Had it not been for her taking the reins at home I would not have had the opportunity to give the business the necessary focus. And she is an incredibly thoughtful person."

When Debbie was asked about her husband receiving this award, this was her response, "I know Wally is not only honored with such wonderful recognition by his peers but will be motivated to use this for an even greater positive impact on both business and personal levels. After receiving the Rotarian Paul Harris Award, the Ethical Business of the Year Award and others, the awards themselves did not just decorate the shelves and walls of our home and business. Rather, they became the motivating force behind real action. Rolling up his sleeves and going to Guatemala to work on the Rotary's Medical project, funding and supporting our High School for the newly renovated Sports Complex and building and repairing homes in Appalachia with our church service project, Wally is truly a man who puts action behind his suggestions and support on many levels. I know he views this award in a far greater scope of future accomplishments than just the award itself. If the past has been any indication of what can be expected, wonderful things will accompany future endeavors as a result of receiving this honor."

Son Grant graduated from the University of Minnesota and continued his education at the University of Chicago earning a degree in automotive internet marketing. He then spent 4 years in the Chicago area working in the area of automotive retail advertising. How did he find his way back home? Enter the Sommers' women again. Wally and Debbie were visiting Grant and his wife Laura and the four were out dining. Following a pleasant meeting Grant excused himself from the table allowing Laura a moment alone with her in-laws. According to reliable sources, her words were, "So what's it going to take to get Grant back to the dealership?" You can, of course, imagine Wally and Debbie's delight at hearing these words, and Wally says that working with Grant is more rewarding than he ever imagined. Today he, as the third generation Sommer, has completed NADA Dealer Academy, takes charge of the dealerships' marketing and is integral in sales management.

Grant and Laura, with two daughters of their own, Lizzy and Elyse, know well the dealership life. Grant said, "Now that I have seen how the car business dominates a personal life, it's pretty amazing how he (Dad) balanced running such a successful business while being a great father and husband to my Mom. My Mom was an integral part of where the business is today. Without her, he couldn't have focused on his passion as much as he did. He always had time for his family, no matter the situation. As a kid, my dad would come home for family dinner, and then head back to the dealership for hours more of work. That dinner was always very important to him and us. It was my time to talk cars with him, hear about the business and try to pick up what I could. My interest in the business developed by hearing his passion for the people, the successes, the failures and the desire to be the best. I know he learned from my grandfather the importance of detail in a retail business, which is apparent in our day to day interactions. Every detail is looked at, every customer's feedback, every web page is examined. It's how he has gotten us to where we are. It's why he still makes this his passion and is here almost every day. There is always something to improve. One of my greatest joys is the opportunity to work with my dad at the level we are today. It's a pleasure to problem solve and learn from someone with such talent and experience." "On a personal level," Grant continued, "it's pretty special having a dad like my Dad. I always knew how special he was just by listening to customers, employees and people in the community talk about him and his generosity, trustworthiness and reliability."

Wally's brother, Don, shares the passion instilled by their father for the business and he was proud to recently welcome

*L-R, Howard Gleason, Jeff Romeis, Don Sommer, Belinda Foster, Wally Sommer, Grant Sommer*

his daughter, Elizabeth, to the dealership as their new Human Resources Director. He and his wife of 29 years, Joan, have another daughter, Melissa. Don, aptly, points out the wonderful generational relationship that the dealership now shares both with both employees and customers.

There is one person who exemplifies the generational relationship in a unique way and bridges the generations in a way that no other individual can. Wally and Don both state they have been blessed with this person as a counselor. Bill Foshag, a cousin of their mother, Erna, became the company's independent accountant and financial advisor in the early 1970's. Today he is still a trusted consultant and member of their Board of Directors. Don states, "Bill's involvement in our business, with his perspective and experience, has been absolutely key to our success." In talking with Bill today, his stories of Wally Sr. & Erna and Don & Wally bounce back and forth as easily as if no time has passed.

The Sommer family has followed the lead of Wally Sr. and has given so much back to the community they live and do business in that the awards given them are too numerous to mention. They feel success comes from "making an impact locally" and they have certainly lived up to that ideal. They have been the lead sponsor for the Homestead High School athletic complex, obviously the school being near to the family's heart; many Mequon park improvements; Nature Center and Catholic School construction. We will let Wally tell you about the award that meant the most to him, "The Mequon Community Foundation," Wally said, "recognized the Sommer Family in 2012 with their first 'Pillars of the Community' award. The award recognized the many years and the wide range of community groups that the Sommer family has supported over the 50+ years in business in Mequon, going back to the contributions of Wally Sommer, Sr. The president of the Community Foundation called the Sommer Family 'the embodiment of the American dream' in coming to the area in 1848, farming until the 1940's and starting a business that has been successful through several generations. It was a great honor to accept that award on behalf of our parents and all the team members who have contributed to Sommer's success, and generated the resources for us to make a positive impact in our community."

In step with the "forward thinking" Sommer's philosophy, Wally is excited about future opportunities to enhance the community. "With Subaru," said Wally, "we have a unique relationship that fits our community involvement goals beautifully. In 2017 we have been able to raise over $100,000 for the Big Brothers-Big Sisters program and Portal, Inc. (an organization for developmentally disabled) through Subaru's 'Share the Love' program." The program, celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, allows a customer who purchases a new Subaru to choose a local charity to which Sommer's and Subaru donate…a perfect philanthropic partnership!

Each year it strikes us as we both reflect on the past winners and look forward to the excitement of announcing the current winner how very blessed we are to have the incredible caliber of people as our dealer members. This is proven by our nominees winning our region two out of three times since 2015. No other state has accomplished that feat! More than that, it's your generosity in helping your communities, your employees and your customers. It is the philosophy that our nominee for this year has lived by all his life and has taught to the next generation.

When asked what the award means to him, Wally said this, "Receiving the Wisconsin Dealer of the Year award and being your TIME Quality Dealer Award nominee is certainly an honor for me personally, and for my family and our entire dealership team. The recognition of my peers in this exciting business is a highlight of my career, and a reflection of what we have worked to accomplish in our business and community. I am humbled and honored to be included with the many accomplished dealers who have received this award!"

And for all the lives you have touched and made better, Wally, we thank you. ●

# 80 YEARS of Building with Heart

BY CHRYSTE MADSEN


*L-R: John Riley, President; Jill Riley, VP Business Development and Jim Triatik, VP, Architect*

In 1937, as Madison's downtown square bustled with retail activity, Kenneth F. Sullivan saw an opportunity in remodeling those busy business storefronts. He was right. From those humble construction company beginnings grew the complete package we know today as Sullivan Design Build. The well-respected local company takes all types of customer projects from dreams to plans to reality.

In the 1960's Ken Sullivan became a mentor to new employee, engineer Robert Riley, who would become a partner and later company President. Also during that decade, the face of the business started to change when the company began to take responsibility of their customer's projects from concept to completion. They pioneered designbuild in the area during the 70's and saw an opportunity for their clients to have everything done under one roof. As well-stated on their website: "…K.F. Sullivan pioneered the design build concept in Madison. Through their new one source approach of taking full responsibility from concept (planning and design) to completion (construction and occupancy), they provided increased value, efficiency and coordination; and a better result for the time and money their clients were investing." With the addition of architect Tom Knoop in 1973 the firm became a true design build company.

The business has now become generational with John Riley joining the business in the late 1980's, working his way up from laborer to following his father as President in 2011. John's wife, Jill, is the Vice President of Business Development. While the firm accomplishes many different types of projects, they are especially respected in the automotive arena by our Wisconsin members.

In 1969 they had their first dealership experience with John Zimbrick at Zimbrick's flagship Buick store in Madison. It certainly was the start of something good as they have completed multiple new facilities and image upgrades for the Zimbrick's across their many facilities and are well into the next generation of family—on both sides of the operation!

Since establishing that relationship with the Zimbrick organization, Sullivan Design Build immediately began creating a niche in the dealer community. As evidenced, they entered the playing field long before the manufacturers began forcing dealers to comply with factory requirements. This experience

> "The most **honest** and **professional** company I have ever worked with. They are about doing what is right for the customer." – Frank Hallada

has certainly given them an edge in that arena. In the past five years they have accomplished 40 dealer projects in Wisconsin alone.

Jim Triatik, VP and architect at Sullivan, explains this advantage, "Manufacturers have requirements. If a dealer hasn't been through the process before, those requirements may sound like a foreign language. What we can do, because of our experience with others, is offer advice regarding what's worked and what hasn't. We can also make design suggestions that could increase revenue while still working within the parameters of the manufacturers demands." Jim continued, "Programs can change over time and we're on top of it. We help interpret those needs to the dealer and we have the right contacts when we need to reach out. Collaboration and communication are key."

Another portion of their success is most certainly tied to the trust they build and keep with customers. Jill Riley, Vice President of Business Development, stated, "We really commit to the dealers and at the end of the day our finished product is on us. So, we spend a lot of time on the communication and thought process in the beginning. As we like to say, 'We build customers for life, one project at a time.' We want to work with people again and again." Frank Hallada of Hallada Auto Group, Dodgeville, appeared to echo that wish from the customer view, *"We have used Sullivan Design Build for three building projects. They are so great to work with that I hope we can do a fourth. The most honest and professional company I have ever worked with. They are about doing what is right for the customer."*

"Think about it," John Riley, company president said, "You have to have trust on both sides. You're tearing someone's dealership apart! They sit there and watch you and every minute counts as they do business around you. That's quite a challenge. How do we do a good job and keep them operational at the same time? You'd better have your act together and have a plan in place!" Here's what J.R. Smart said concerning Sullivan's ability to follow through on the build of his beautiful facility, *"…of all the challenges we faced during our project, the greatest was to maintain a high level of service to our customers while construction was all around us. Sullivan was sensitive to this need, and devised a schedule to minimize the disturbance to our customers while delivering a superior on-time product. They started this project with a customer and completed it with a friend."* J.R. Smart, President, Smart Motors, Madison

Sometimes being a friend can be a little tricky. Through the years Jim has developed an uncanny ability to "see" a dealership with eyes that measure flow and function quite often better than the dealer. Occasionally an owner needs to be reminded to look at a process differently because the dealer has never had a chance to be a customer in his or her own store. "These buildings have a lot going on," Jim said, "Dealerships have multiple points of entry and they all have to meet in the center of a pinwheel, as I call it. Sometimes, if the flow is not correct, a dealer may lose money just because of inefficiency. While it's difficult to point out some of these things to an owner, most are appreciative and accepting of the advice." Bob Hudson, President of Middleton Ford offered this validation, *"Thanks again for putting Jim 'T' with us on this project. I just marvel at the depth of his understanding from a consumer/customer/employer point of view as he helps us with this addition and remodeling. I am at times just amazed. Thanks."*

This year, 2017, sees our friends at Sullivan Design Build celebrating 80 years in business, a mark seldom attained in business today. How did these 80 years pass by with such success? It's quite easy to understand when you step back and look at the relationships these people have carved out with their customers. Unlike other competitors, John and Jim do not disappear when the customer's signature appears. The people to whom you have handed your dreams are the same ones who will plan and build those dreams into reality. Kara Nania, whose name you may recognize as our new WATDA Foundation Vice President, worked with the group on her family's dealership build in Janesville. *"I was the Project Manager and worked with John to build our Rock County Honda dealership in Janesville and can tell you one thing, John is rare. He is someone you just don't often find in business these days. It's more than doing good work. It's his character that makes Sullivan the company you choose. I am not just proud of the dealership we built, I am proud to say we built it with Sullivan."*

A remarkable company with remarkable people. Here's to the next 80 years!

# CenterStage

AWARDS, HONORS, MILESTONES

## Philanthropy in Waupaca

Tim and Joy Neuville of Neuville Motors in Waupaca, WI have been active members of the Waupaca Area Community Foundation for many years. The Foundation raises funds for grants and community organizations, causes and scholarships. Within the Foundation, the Neuville's established the Tim and Joy Neuville Family Fund in 2004. In June, Tim and Joy presented a $50,000 Forward Together Grant to Catalpa Health. The Catalpa Health Clinic provides mental health services to children and teens. This grant will enable a clinic to be built in Waupaca. Tim stated that he and Joy "also hope that by making this donation it helps create more discussion about mental illness and in some way, lowers the stigma attached with those words" and that "no one should ever be embarrassed or afraid to seek professional help or to share their condition with their friends".


## James C. Hubbard Windy Award

Thelma Sadoff Center for the Arts announced that Mike and Rita Shannon are the 2017 recipients of the James C. Hubbard Windy Award. The award goes to an individual or group of individuals who have made a positive impact on THELMA and the Fond du Lac community. Mike and Rita are remarkable supporters of the arts and the community. As owners of Holiday Automotive, they have their annual holiday party for their employees at THELMA, and they were one of the first companies to provide a naming rights donation after THELMA opened in 2013. The Hubbard Windy Award was presented to the Shannon's at the 17th Annual Windy Dinner THELMA Style in early October. This is the largest fundraiser for the organization.

## Wauwatosa Crime Stoppers

Griffin Chevrolet is partnering with the Wauwatosa Police Department. The Milwaukee dealership has joined forces with the city's Crime Stoppers by providing the use of a New 2018 Chevrolet Equinox to the group. Wrapped in a colorful design, the vehicle is intended to create awareness for Crime Stoppers and their efforts in the community. Supporting the police force in fighting crime is Griffin Chevrolet's way of saying thank you. General Manager, Dave Landrith (whose dad is a Police Chief) lives in the city and brought the Wauwatosa Crime Stoppers to the attention of Jim Griffin, President of Griffin Chevrolet. They are proud to lend some help to a program that brings so much to Wauwatosa citizens. "Encouraging people to volunteer vital information to help law enforcement fight crime is essential," said Officer Brad Beckman of Wauwatosa Crime Stoppers. "This program is not supported by taxes, yet is a crucial entity that allows citizens to anonymously provide tips to the Police Department. The visibility of the Griffin vehicle translates the visibility of the Crime Stoppers program, and without a doubt, it will help us continue our expansion in Wauwatosa," said Beckman.


## Badger Truck Center wins Deloitte 75 Award 13 years running

Badger Truck Center a second generation, family-owned commercial truck dealership is once again a recipient of the Deloitte Wisconsin 75 award for 2017. The Wisconsin 75 is an annual award that ranks privately held companies headquartered in Wisconsin by sales revenue. Each year, Deloitte recognizes the 75 largest and most successful privately held companies for the impact they make on Wisconsin's economic growth and for their involvement in our community.


## Schmit Bros. Fundraising

The Schmit Bros. auto dealerships in Saukville raised $2,974.66 – 2% of every dollar customers spent on repairs through the firm – for the Saukville Food Pantry's annual school supply drive. (From left) Mike Schmit, Alicia Wade of Schmit Bros. and (far right) Jim Schmit presented the funds to Mark Gierach of the Saukville Food Pantry, which purchased everything from pencils to gym shoes for area students in need. The school supplies were distributed to families at the end of August.

## Wilde Toyota received accolades

Wilde Toyota has received several honors recently, including the 2017 Best of West Allis Award in the auto dealer's category by the West Allis Award Program, which recognizes local businesses that enhance and impact the community through outstanding service and involvement. In addition, Wilde Toyota won the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel's 2017 Top Choice Award for best automotive dealership to purchase a new vehicle in the greater Milwaukee area. It is the first time Wilde has received these two awards.

For the 15th time, Wilde Toyota has received Toyota's highest accolade – the President's Award – honoring Toyota dealerships that excel in all facets of operations and go above and beyond to represent the best of the best. Wilde Toyota's Service Department has accepted Toyota's Customer First Advisory Board Award for the fifth time. It recognizes the top 50 parts, service, and customer satisfaction dealerships across the nation.

## Bergstrom's Drive for Dreams

During the month of September, Bergstrom Automotive team members, guests and business partners joined together for another successful Drive For Dreams to help make wishes come true for Wisconsin children like Lydia (pictured with John and Tim Bergstrom).

Through test drives, social media support and individual fundraisers at each location around the state, this year's Drive For Dreams raised $182,500 for Make-A-Wish Wisconsin to help grant more wishes for local kids!

## Clintonville Ford Celebrates 75th Anniversary

Ivan Boykin, Ford Motor Company presenting to Ryon Kautz, President/Owner; Mary Kautz, accepting on behalf of her husband Ron Kautz who passed away June 2017; and Gary Kautz, Parts Manager-Owner

## Zimbrick Hyundai Receiving a 25 Year Award

Zimbrick Hyundai receiving a 25 year award from Larry Smolinski, Hyundai Senior Manager Regional Sales Operations; James Mahoney, Hyundai District Sales Manager; owner Tom Zimbrick and John Larson, Zimbrick Hyundai General Manager.

### Sleepy Hollow Auto of Viroqua Receives 2017 Wisconsin Rural Business Partner Award

Sleepy Hollow Auto was honored by the Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance (WiRSA), a non-profit organization that is dedicated to helping address challenges faced by rural school districts, at the annual Rural Schools Conference on October 30, 2017.

Sleepy Hollow owners LaVon and Michelle Felton are very generous to their community and extremely humble about it. They are known for giving back to the local schools. This is evident in answering the call when two local districts, Westby and Viroqua, needed new scoreboards. Instead of choosing one over the other, they chose both.

School groups always know they can count on the Feltons for donations to support their cause. It is almost a given that if you ask Spanky or Michelle for help they will say yes. Many times, you don't have to ask, they will call to offer help. Viroqua and Kickapoo FFA Chapters and the Vernon County 4H are often the recipient of Felton's generosity. Gunderson Health also receives assistance for stroke victims.

Local graduates annually receive scholarships from the Feltons. Recently, the Feltons offered more scholarships than applicants. LaVon called the school and asked if there were any other deserving students. A name was offered, and a scholarship granted.

The generosity listed above is certainly admirable but is not what sets LaVon and Michelle apart from the others. Where others think locally, LaVon and Michelle think and act regionally. They opened their doors to become a regional training site for students who are interested in a career in automotive repair. ●

Please submit your awards, honors and milestones to: jfarmer@watda.org

# NADA Director's Report

BY BOB HUDSON

# The Truth About Stair-Step Programs

Over the past century, the NADA directors and staff have worked very hard to mitigate the consequences of badly implemented regulations and rules upon our dealer business. Much of this conversation has been directed at our leaders in Washington, D.C., and this year, we are also advocating for the dealer body in the face of manufacturer programs.

Every so often, we in the retail auto industry would see various policy proposals and ideas crop up that might have actually been well-intentioned, but that would have unintended negative consequences to our business of selling and servicing vehicles to our customers. And these consequences would hit the car-buying public right in the pocket. Time and again, NADA set out to explain these unintended consequences in the hopes that we could find a better way forward—a way that accomplished a policy objective, but protected our customers in the process.

It is critical for all dealers to be working with their manufacturer partners arm-in-arm to figure out how to best provide our customers with the vehicles they want at prices they can afford. It is fundamentally important that we do this in a way that instills confidence in the sales and service process. Therefore, the ongoing proliferation of market strategies—such as **"indiscriminate price coupons"** and **"unfair stair-step incentive programs"**—are bad for our business.

Buyers who identified their dealer as promoting transparent pricing, reported higher satisfaction scores—71 percent vs. 53 percent. When there are huge discrepancies in price, customers stop trusting their dealers. In a world where customers rightfully expect and demand fairness and transparency, manufacturers that still deploy unfair marketing strategies that produce huge price discrepancies between various customers—and that aren't transparent or that can't be explained rationally—are running afoul of everything we stand for!

Wisconsin dealers who have had to deal with these programs know that these are "trust killers" and "brand loyalty killers."

Over the summer, NADA brought the question to a respected economic research firm—**The Analysis Group**—for an independent examination of what the use of stair-step incentive programs accomplishes in the marketplace. These programs have severe unintended consequences for consumers, that are leading to **severe unintended consequences for manufacturers**. While prices come down for some consumers, they certainly don't come down for **all** consumers. And what that does is create huge discrepancies in prices for *every* consumer.

**The Analysis Group's** data showed that, over time, if consumers lacked commitment to a brand—and they do not trust a brand due to suspicious or unexplained differences in prices, then they would not be as loyal in future purchases. The report quotes:

> ***"Stair-step programs can increase sales volume in the SHORT RUN while simultaneously decreasing demand…OEMs who use stair-steps aggressively risk damaging their brands in the LONG RUN…"***

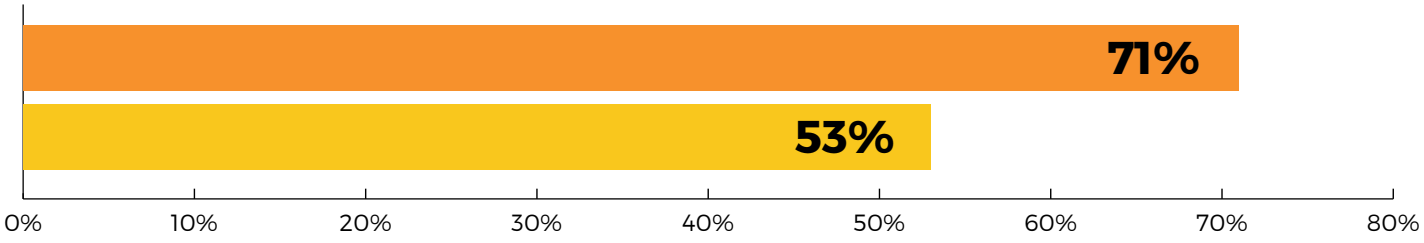
The way to rectify this problem is to open lines of communication with our OEMs as often as possible. The NADA directors and the staff are in the process of meeting with all manufacturers for the latest rounds of the Dealer Attitude Survey presentations. We will discuss a number of other issues with our OEMs including residual values, used vehicle prices and customer satisfaction among brands.

Most of all, we will urge our manufacturers to work on incentives that are *fair*, *transparent* and build *long-term trust* in the brand and in the dealers.

NADA and WATDA will continue advocating for dealers across the nation and here in Wisconsin, so that we can do what is best for our business and for our customers. And that we may continue the industry's legacy for another century and beyond.

On behalf of WATDA, I wish your families and employees a joyous upcoming holiday season!

Buyers who identified their dealer as promoting transparent pricing, reported higher satisfaction scores—71 percent vs. 53 percent.

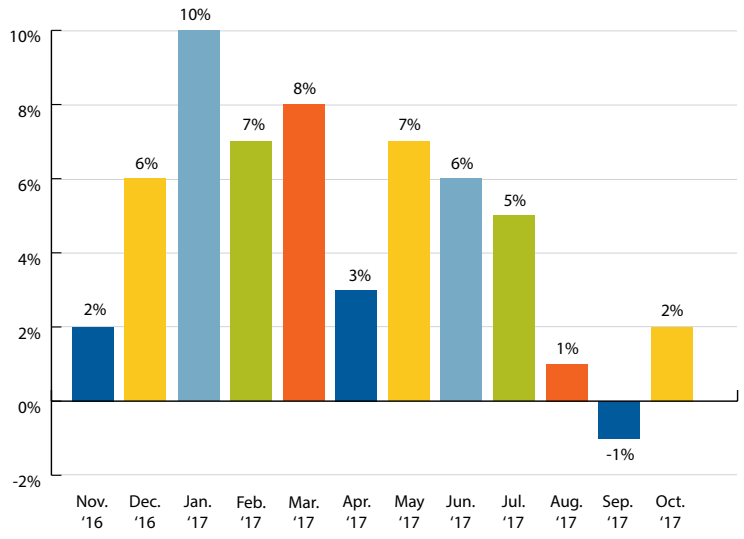


# New Vehicle Sales Trends

## Wisconsin New Vehicle Trends: October 2017

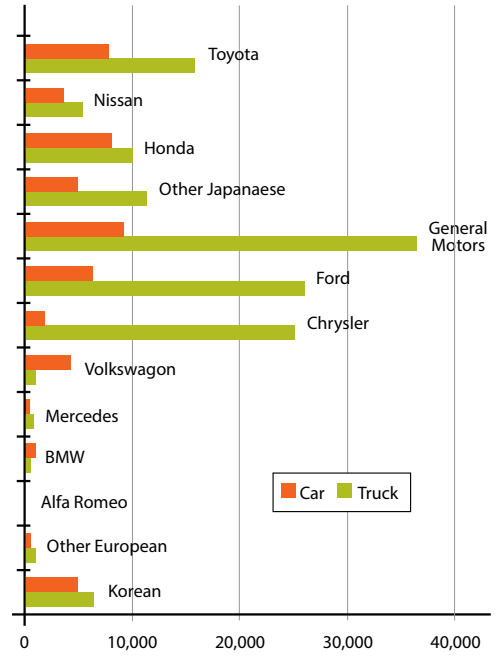
| | Previous Two Months 9/16 -10/16 | 9/17 -10/17 | % change | Year to Date '16 YTD | '17 YTD | % change | Year to Date Market Share '16 YTD | '17 YTD | change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Industry Total** | 40,229 | 41,294 | 2.6% | 186,299 | 194,230 | 4.3% | 99.9% | 99.9% | 0.0% |
| **Car** | 11,330 | 10,327 | -8.9% | 56,541 | 53,506 | -5.4% | 30.3% | 27.5% | -2.8% |
| **Truck** | 28,899 | 30,967 | 7.2% | 129,758 | 140,724 | 8.5% | 69.6% | 72.4% | 2.8% |
| **Japanese** | 13,591 | 14,042 | 3.3% | 64,326 | 67,591 | 5.1% | 34.5% | 34.8% | 0.3% |
| **Toyota** | 4,757 | 5,340 | 12.3% | 22,600 | 23,815 | 5.4% | 12.1% | 12.3% | 0.2% |
| **Honda** | 3,702 | 3,616 | -2.3% | 17,919 | 18,295 | 2.1% | 9.6% | 9.4% | -0.2% |
| **Nissan** | 1,895 | 1,793 | -5.4% | 8,956 | 9,165 | 2.3% | 4.8% | 4.7% | -0.1% |
| **Other** | 3,237 | 3,293 | 1.7% | 14,851 | 16,316 | 9.9% | 8.0% | 8.4% | 0.4% |
| **Domestic** | 22,145 | 23,072 | 4.2% | 102,000 | 105,221 | 3.2% | 54.7% | 54.1% | -0.6% |
| **General Motors** | 9,469 | 10,531 | 11.2% | 43,961 | 45,879 | 4.4% | 23.6% | 23.6% | 0.0% |
| **Ford** | 6,658 | 6,955 | 4.5% | 30,631 | 32,339 | 5.6% | 16.4% | 16.6% | 0.2% |
| **Chrysler** | 6,018 | 5,586 | -7.2% | 27,408 | 27,003 | -1.5% | 14.7% | 13.9% | -0.8% |
| **European** | 1,965 | 2,036 | 3.6% | 9,068 | 10,095 | 11.3% | 4.8% | 5.2% | 0.4% |
| **Volkswagen** | 985 | 1,084 | 10.1% | 4,541 | 5,391 | 18.7% | 2.4% | 2.8% | 0.4% |
| **BMW** | 353 | 310 | -12.2% | 1,752 | 1,597 | -8.8% | 0.9% | 0.8% | -0.1% |
| **Mercedes** | 282 | 292 | 3.5% | 1,284 | 1,407 | 9.6% | 0.7% | 0.7% | 0.0% |
| **Other** | 345 | 350 | 1.4% | 1,491 | 1,700 | 14.0% | 0.8% | 0.9% | 0.1% |
| **Korean** | 2,528 | 2,144 | -15.2% | 10,905 | 11,323 | 3.8% | 5.9% | 5.8% | -0.1% |
| **Other** | 2,528 | 2,144 | -15.2% | 10,905 | 11,323 | 3.8% | 5.9% | 5.8% | -0.1% |

### *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.*




*October Trend Report from Scott Quimby*

# From Around the State

*Please send your news From Around the State to jfarmer@watda.org*


## Truck Country Grand Opening

Truck Country, the largest Freightliner dealership in the country, officially opened its new facility in Deforest on September 27. The facility combines the Madison dealership with a corporate parts warehouse.


## Van Horns Excited for New Venture in Lomira

The Ford dealership in Lomira is now officially under new ownership. The Von Schledorn dealership will now be under the direction of the Van Horn Automotive Group. The sale was made final at the beginning of September. Teresa Van Horn and her family have been in the car business since 1966 when their family purchased their first Chevrolet dealership in Plymouth. With the addition of Lomira, the family now has 12 locations as part of their automotive group. They added a location in Oconomowoc last year and just closed another location in Iowa in the last three months. Van Horn has found a niche in mid-sized locations and is committed to staying active in the community while they are in business in Lomira. The Van Horns are in the process of adding inventory to the lot, at a minimum, they will be able to have a 100-car store.

## Wheeler Chevrolet Expands

A new family name is now on display the sign outside of Abbotsford's Chevrolet dealership. On September 18th, the Wheeler family finalized the purchase of Sebold Chevrolet, which had been operating under the Sebold family name for 91 years. The building has been there since 1949, and this is the first time it has changed hands. Discussions between new owners, Mary Jo Wheeler-Schueller and Dan Wheeler, eventually led to the Wheelers agreeing to buy the Abbotsford dealership from Joe Sebold.

The Wheeler family has owned dealerships for over 50 years, starting with the opening of Wheelers Chevrolet in Marshfield in 1964. Others include Wheelers Chevrolet of Medford, Wheelers Chevrolet of Wisconsin Rapids, Wheelers Buick GMC in Wisconsin Rapids and Wheelers Auto Repair and Tire Center in Marshfield. A new Wheelers sign is up, marking the new beginning.



## State-of-the-Art Dealership in La Crosse

Solar panels and other green technologies, high-speed doors in service area, a fenced-in dog park with artificial grass and a children's play room with iPad bar and coloring center are some of the features of the new Dahl Subaru facility in downtown La Crosse. Dahl Subaru, part of the Dahl Automotive family of dealerships, opened its state-of-the-art 23,000-square-foot sales and service facility. Every facet of the building was designed with the guest experience in mind and responses have been extraordinary. The building has recycling centers, and a clean-burning waste-oil system provides some of the building's heat. The 351 solar panels on the roof generate roughly 30% of the building's electricity needs, which is equivalent to powering 12 homes for an entire year. The building's green technologies qualify the dealership as a Certified Subaru Eco-Friendly Retailer.

## Ford Dealer Changes Ownership

On August 24th, Andy Lamb closed the deal to sell his River Valley Ford Dealership in Baldwin to John Buelow who has renamed it "Flagship Ford". Lamb has owned the dealership for the last 12 years after purchasing it from the Anderson family, who had Baldwin Ford for many years. Flagship Ford's new owner/General Manager is John Buelow was born and raised in Bloomington, Minnesota. He has a long history in the car business having worked for a Minnesota dealer group for many years. John and Andy have worked together in the past. Flagship Ford has retained all the great staff from River Valley Ford. There will be facility improvements in the future as they are in Baldwin for the long-term.

# Tribute

## Jerome J. Holz

On Friday October 27, 2017 Jerome J. Holz "Jerry" rejoined his darling Dorothy whom he missed so much since her passing in 2009. Throughout their lives they were dedicated to their family, their community, their work, and Holz Motors. Jerry always attributed his success to Dorothy. Every day he would say "She was my pal". Jerry's positive attitude and forward thinking made him always believe "The best is yet to come". He delighted in sharing his favorite toast with friends, "Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift, which is why it's called the present." His family will hold those words close to their hearts and honor him by making every day precious—just as he did. He was the 5th and youngest child of Rudolph and Gertrude Holz. Rudolph and Gertrude founded Holz Motors, which marked its 100th anniversary in 2014. Jerry loved the car business. As he put it, "Where else could I meet so many people and look forward to going to work each day?" A dealership is a team, and Holz Motors' success through the years is the result of the hard work, talent, and dedication of its employees. Jerry was so proud that Holz Motors has celebrated 31 consecutive years as Wisconsin's largest Chevrolet dealer. Jerry's trusted business partner and closely held friend Doug has carried out Jerry's corporate duties and will continue to lead as Vice President of Holz Motors.

Jerry proudly served in the Army Air Corp during WWII. Jerry's active duty consisted of driving all kinds of military trucks in France, Belgium and occupied Germany, delivering gasoline and other materials to American troops.

Jerry was very active in the Masonic Fraternity throughout his life, holding many important offices and having many of the highest honors of the Fraternity conferred upon him. Despite these accolades, his favorite moments as a Mason included a spirited game of gin rummy, sharing fraternal camaraderie, and mentoring new Masonic Brothers. The banking business was also an important part of Jerry's life.

He served as Chairman and President of State Bank Hales Corners. He was proud to be a part of the growth from SBHC to SFB, and then SFSC. He felt privileged to work with the talented and dedicated employees, officers, and directors. Whether it was at the bank or Holz Motors, he wanted every customer to know that he appreciated their business.

Jerry made a difference in many lives, and even touched thousands of people he never met through his and Dorothy's philanthropic work. Jerry was often the life of the party. He loved summer days at the lake, fishing and hunting trips, travel, golfing, playing cards, polka music, and a fine glass of vodka with enough blue cheese stuffed olives to share. He made delicious pancakes and chili. He loved to see people having a good time, whether it was attending a Holz Motors celebration, hosting his annual Harvest Fest, or enjoying a Cousins' Party where everyone knew him as "Grandpa". He loved going out to eat. The family would like to thank all the people who served him at his favorite places. Please remember his smile. He appreciated you. He will live on forever in the memories of his daughters, Judy Holz (Dr. William) Stathas, and Barb (Dave) Weis, as well as the apples of his eyes, grandchildren J.J. and Traci Weis. Dad, we will miss Family Sundays with you. We would like to thank his friends and partners in his success, Doug and Kathy, Don and Gwen, and Mike and Sheila. We are grateful for the people that were instrumental in helping him these last few years including Gerry and Micaela, Susie, Nancy, Janis, Maryann, Sharon, and Debbie. There are no words to express our loving thanks to the people who granted him his last wish of staying in his home, Grace, Rosita, Dana, Aida, Marcia, and Kathe.

Jerry served the automotive community as well, serving as Chairman of Wisconsin Auto & Truck Dealers Association in 1974. Holz also served on the Foundation of WATDA board of directors. Jerry is the only three time recipient of the Wisconsin Dealer of the Year award/TIME Quality Dealer Award nominee for Wisconsin in 1979, 2004 and 2013.

"Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery.
Today is a gift, which is why it's called the present."

# Don Hansen

Don Hansen was the longest-serving president of ADAMM, holding that title from 1989 to 2009. On September 3rd, 2017, Don passed away peacefully. Under his tenure, the Automobile Dealers Association of Mega Milwaukee resurrected the Greater Milwaukee Auto show after a hiatus and helped it grow to one of the best small-market auto shows in the nation. Started an education and training program for sales and service personnel at new car dealerships in the area, with a focus on professionalism. Initiated the UWM Advertising Standards Program that ensures television, radio and newspaper ads are accurate and understandable. He also helped build a new headquarters for ADAMM, with more meeting space for professional instruction as well as local and regional auto-related gatherings.

While still in high school, Don started his career in the auto business as a car lot attendant at Heider Ford where his dad was the service manager and his brother was a mechanic. He attended UW-Milwaukee for two years and graduated from UW-Madison. He then served in the military during the Korean Conflict. After returning to the U.S., he returned to Heiser Ford in sales, working his way up to new car manager and eventually part owner of Heiser Lincoln Mercury and later Heiser Toyota.

Don retired in 1987, having served as volunteer chairman of ADAMM's Board while at Heiser. It was a short retirement, because he was asked to serve as ADAMM president. When Don was ADAMM president, his goal was customer-focused, to instruct the sales staff to figure out what was best for the customer and to find a way to work together to achieve that.

Don graced this earth with love, laughter and an incredible gift of connecting with people from every walk of life for 87 energetic years. ●

# WISCO Your Company

BY JOHN HACKMAN

WISCO 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 45 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 mark-ups 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 new 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 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. WISCO offers the best names in the automotive equipment industry. Companies like Hunter, Challenger Lifts, Black Gold waste oil furnaces, Garmat paint booths, Altech LED lighting, and the list goes on. WISCO can save you money on your equipment purchases. Call WISCO at 800-274-2319 to get started.

# **Dealers:** Are You Doing Enough to Protect Your Wealth?

BY KATHY STINSON, PRIVATE CLIENT RISK EXECUTIVE, M3 INSURANCE

As a dealer, you've likely put tremendous effort into your professional life—effort that's also helped grow your personal net worth. But are you putting enough effort into *protecting* that net worth? If you're not sure how to answer that, you don't necessarily need to worry. But you do want to act, and here's a great first step: get a personal risk review from a personal risk manager.

In the review, you'll confront various scenarios related to the security of not only your wealth but also your reputation—and even your loved ones. You'll need to imagine potential events ranging from the disruptive, embarrassing and scandalous to the tragic, harrowing and catastrophic. Sounds like fun a conversation, right? Okay, maybe not. But a head-in-the-sand attitude only puts you and your family at greater risk.

The following should give you a glimpse of just how thorough—and valuable—such a review can be.

## Who's got your back? Five areas where you could be vulnerable.

### 1 Facing your exposure: do you have the right personal liability protection?

Let's say you or a family member are involved in a car accident in which another person is killed or seriously injured. Not only could the resulting lawsuit drag on for years; the damages against your estate could threaten your net worth. Your auto liability insurance simply won't be enough to match the damages from such a lawsuit. Thankfully, umbrella policies can supplement your risk exposure—but then you want to be certain you have enough coverage.

### 2 If your home isn't standard, your homeowner's insurance policy shouldn't be either.

Should your home suffer damage from a fire, tornado, or plumbing disaster, the last thing you want to discover is that your coverage was inadequate. Yet that definitely can happen—especially with higher-end homes. You want a policy with *fully guaranteed replacement costs*. You also want a carrier that specializes in the high net worth market. That way your claim will be handled by an adjustor who understands the value of, for example, rare art and furnishings, custom-made items and the professional design services that may be required in the event of a loss. (On a related note, think also of yachts, classic cars, or similar high-value items. Your current policies could be woefully inadequate.)

### 3 If the unthinkable should happen: kidnapping

The experience of a family vacation, mission trip or exotic excursion can be priceless. But if these situations put you in higher-risk areas of the world, you may want to think about personal kidnapping/ransom insurance. Companies that specialize in this type of exposure can also provide negotiation services, act as a liaison with law enforcement and offer access to risk forecasting services.

### 4 Financial risk is only one facet of identity theft: make sure you can get it all back

Financial identity safeguards may indeed be getting more sophisticated. But so are the thieves. In the aftermath of identity theft or fraud, at least your banking and credit card accounts will be insured. But your identity—and the long and complicated process it'll take to restore it—will be the real challenge. You'll want to use the services of an identity restoration company as early in the process as possible.

### 5 Protecting your most priceless asset: your reputation

If you (or a family member) are somehow connected to an accident, crime, or scandal, media outlets will be first looking to learn more about you. And how will they establish that? By the existing information that's "out there." A good PR consultant can make sure the positive work you've been doing for your dealership and community are the first things people encounter when they Google you. Along with that, having a PR crisis plan in place can be crucial to minimizing the damage to your reputation.

## It's Your Move

Remember, you're not an average household. The way you manage your risks should reflect that fact. Talk to a personal risk manager and set up a risk review. The results could put you in a much better position to prevent—or at least control—potential losses and exposures.

For more information, visit http://www.m3ins.com/for-individuals/property-home, or contact Kathy Stinson, WATDA's M3 partner for personal lines insurance: kathy.stinson@m3ins.com(715) 849-5532

# Legal & Legislative Update

BY CHRIS SNYDER

The race to the finish of the 2017-18 legislative session is upon us. Due to the delayed winding up of the budget process, committee calendars are filling up. Word around the Capitol is the legislature will wrap up the legislative session by the end of March, if not sooner.

WATDA is currently monitoring a lawsuit (WATDA dealers vs. GM), pursuing an amendment to the franchise law and trying to prevent two unwanted amendments to the franchise law among other bills.

## Lawsuit

In late October 2015, GM informed WATDA that they did not like the Wisconsin franchise law's formula for warranty labor reimbursement. This is language that they had helped craft and agreed to when negotiating amendments to the law in 2010-11. Nevertheless, they wanted it repealed immediately. As time was winding down in the 2015-16 legislative session, legislative leadership asked both parties to try and work out the issues and if a change in the law was necessary, it could be handled in the 2017-18 session.

WATDA engaged in an ongoing but futile dialogue with GM that continued into the summer of 2016. Then, in September of 2016, GM informed the dealers that they were going to begin assessing a surcharge of $389 beginning in October of 2016. In response, 13 General Motors (GM) dealers have banded together to sue GM to prevent GM from assessing the penalty. To date, to the best of our knowledge, no GM dealer has been surcharged.

The dealers are still awaiting the court's decision, which could come at any time. The court will be deciding whether GM can assess a surcharge on targeted individual dealers as opposed to assessing the whole GM dealer body. Either way, some or all GM dealers may be surcharged.

## Surcharge Legislation

In an attempt to thwart the GM surcharge and end the Nissan surcharge, WATDA has worked to get a bill introduced that would prohibit manufacturers from assessing surcharges. The bill also creates a specific list of repairs that are NOT to be included when calculating a dealer's warranty reimbursement rate.

The bill was introduced October 26, and we expect to have a hearing before the Senate Transportation Committee late November, early December. Then we will be off and running. We have our work cut out for us, as we have opposition from the manufacturers and their army of "high power" lobbyists and a sizable coalition of "free market" republican legislators.

WATDA is going to need active dealer participation to get this one over the finish line, but it very well could be the most important piece of legislation we have worked on in a long time. If the manufacturers are allowed to surcharge dealers at will, it sets the stage for them to cull sales and service profits in the dealership.

## Direct Sales

Speaking of dealers getting involved. A bill has rolled out that would allow manufacturers of electric vehicles to sell direct. Out of the blocks, it has 15 representatives and 6 senators signed on in support. These are our legislative "friends" the free marketers.

We perceive a huge problem with this bill, because the way it reads, it could allow manufacturers to peel off their electric vehicles (and future models currently in R&D) and designate them as a new franchise and sell direct. This could be a death blow if electric vehicles become the overwhelming choice of consumers either due to their performance or government mandates banning internal combustion engines.

To illustrate the wave of future electric vehicles, reports have shown the following manufacturer goals in developing all-electric vehicles.

| Auto Maker | Plan | Target Date |
|---|---|---|
| Volvo | Total Electrification | 2019 |
| GM | Total Electrification - Near Term Goal of 20 All-Electric Vehicles | 2023 |
| Ford | Partial (13 Models) | 2023 |
| Toyota (With Mazda) | Partial | 2021 |
| Mazda (With Toyota) | Partial | 2021 |
| Daimler (Mercedes-Benz) | Electrify Entire Portfolio | 2023 |
| Renault, Nissan and Mitsubishi Alliance | Partial (12 Models) | 2022 |
| Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) | Electrify Entire Portfolio | 2020 |
| VW Group (Audi, Bentley, Bugatti, Lamborghini, Porsche, SEAT, Škoda and Volkswagen) | 300 Hybrid Models | 2030 |

## Consignment Sales Bill(s)

There is a race going on inside the capitol to see who can come up with a bill that looks like they are doing something about the Standard Pre-owned debacle. Over the course of the last 18 months a Buy-Here-Pay-Here dealer owning stores in Suamico and Kaukauna, allegedly ripped off approximately 50 consignment customers by not transferring titles, paying off loans and not providing consignors with payment. The personal economic losses to the people trying to sell their vehicles through this company are devastating and the legislators in Northeastern Wisconsin are desperately trying to do something to show their constituents that there is something that can be done to prevent this from happening again.

One of the bills would create a requirement that Consignment Dealers (those whose inventory is comprised of 90% consignments), carry a $500,000 bond and follow a number of sales procedures that are literally impossible to do. Another bill (one that may have a chance to get passed) would give DMV the right to suspend/revoke a dealer license prior to any hearing—on the spot, if certain acts are suspected.

WATDA staff has met with DOT and legislator's staff to express concerns about specific provisions within the respective proposed bills. While well intended, some of the unintended consequences could greatly hamper the motor vehicle retail industry. To that end, WATDA is grateful to be included in the drafting process.

## Sales Tax

Representative Cody Horlacher (R-Mukwonago) has introduced a bill that would exempt all private motor vehicle sales from sales and use tax. We can only hope that this bill goes nowhere. Private sales of used motor vehicles per year consistently outpace retail sales of used vehicles 58%-42%. Using rudimentary, conservative estimates (that the average sale price of each private sale used vehicle is $10,000), this bill would blow about $1 billion hole in the biennium budget. ●

# Snap-on Equipment Used in Rescue Efforts

Going "above and beyond" in the service of our industry and our customers is the mark of WATDA professionals.

But how many of us can say that our best efforts put us in the position to contribute to real life heroism that saved lives in the face of a natural disaster?

On Tuesday, September 19th, a powerful earthquake shook Mexico City and surrounding states, killing scores and leaving many trapped under collapsed buildings. At least 216 people died in Mexico City—the country's capital—and in surrounding states.

In Mexico City, thousands of soldiers, first-responders, and civilians worked side-by-side to dig through tall piles of rubble from dozens of crumbled buildings.

Snap-on Mexico Associates Edgar Olvera and Enrique Gomez were right there among them. Watching the rescue efforts unfold on television and social media, Edgar and Enriqaue rushed Snap-on thermal imagers and videoscopes to the scene of some of the quake's worst damage.

The tools were put into the hands of first responders who used them in search and rescue operations that freed people from the rubble—and saved lives!

The Mexican Navy rescuers credited these pieces of Snap-on equipment with making their rescue efforts more effective.

We salute you Edgar Olvera and Enrique Gomez of Snap-on Mexico!

Yours was truly professional commitment of the highest order! ●

# Honoring the Past By Giving for the Future

BY KARA S. NANIA, VICE PRESIDENT – FOUNDATION OF WATDA

Fourteen years ago Gary Beier joined the WATDA family and has given so much every day since. Including six years in leadership, Gary's good work has continued to keep The Foundation as a leader in our industry with an outstanding track record in education, career building and community service.

He believes that education should be taken beyond the traditional classroom and that skill-building curriculum should be delivered so that everyone who wants it can have access and afford it. Which in turn translates to growth in the skilled labor pool for our members. Gary also worked to increase the Community Challenge Grant program. This program builds so much good will for everybody involved and helps to establish partnerships as we go forward in the future. Now as he is retiring from WATDA the positive effects of what he has put in place for all of us will be felt for many years to come.

We want to make sure that his efforts and his name will remain part of the Foundation of WATDA throughout its existence. In that spirit, we have created the *Gary Beier Innovation Fund*. The purpose is to provide the Foundation with annual operational support on a permanent basis.

I invite you to make a pledge or a direct gift to the *Gary Beier Innovation Fund* in honor of his contributions and invest in helping it to continue into the future.

Pledge cards were mailed after our November Foundation board meeting, but if you didn't receive yours or have any questions, feel free to contact me at (608) 251-3603 or email: knania@watda.org. This is a wonderful way to celebrate Gary's many accomplishments!

Thank you for your consideration.

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# Summer Institute 2017

BY DAN KLECKER, ASE EDUCATION MANAGER

The Foundation presented their annual Summer Institute at Western Technical College in La Crosse July 10th–13th. Over forty automotive instructors from both secondary and post-secondary schools around Wisconsin attended the free training. Several instructors attended the institute for the first time since it was held on the western side of the state closer to their home schools. Based on the following comments we expect to see these new attendees at future Summer Institutes as it moves around the state to other state technical colleges.

"Most relevant class I've ever taken. I really enjoyed being here! See you next year – GREAT JOB!"

## "Will make this a regular event!"

"It was great! I will definitely attend next year."

Training was provided by AC Delco, Pomp's Tire Service, VW of America, CDX, and Test Products Intl. Additional training was provided by Carl Hader, Grafton HS, on Snap On Simulation Boards, Jay Abitz, Freedom HS, on Teaching an Auto Body Unit, Andy Olson, WCTC, on Digital Storage Scopes, and Dan Klecker, Foundation of WATDA, on NATEF Accreditation.

The conferenced was opened by Bill Sepic, president of WATDA, who introduced Kara Nania as the new VP of The Foundation of WATDA. Kara was well received by the attendees with her commitment to education. She also recognized the Foundation's staff of Julie Olson, Dan Wooster and Dan Klecker for their work in planning the Summer Institute along with Western Technical College.

Matthew Kirchner, of LAB Midwest, provided a fascinating and entertaining keynote presentation on the "Exponential Economy" and Chris Schneider, of Honda MOTORWëRKS, provided a personal history on the evolution of Hybrids. Brent Kindred, from WI DPI, gave an insightful glimpse at what is coming down the road for educators.

In addition to the training, a reception was held at the Dahl Auto Museum where a scavenger hunt was held amongst the numerous restored vehicles. Jeff Dowd received the "Extra Mile" award for his many contributions to Automotive Education in the state. Following are a few other comments from instructors who attended the institute in 2017.

"Loved the museum! Amazing collection and a really nice awards presentation."

## "Building new connections is PRICELESS!"

"Friendly environment, great to network with other auto instructors."

The Summer Institute continues to be a valuable training program for WI automotive teachers. A sincere thanks to the Foundation for their continued support of a quality training program that WI automotive instructors depend on every year. The state technical college automotive programs have also been a vital partner for hosting the Summer Institute around the state.

# Fall 2017 Donors

The FOUNDATION
OF THE WISCONSIN AUTOMOBILE & TRUCK DEALERS ASSOCIATION

Automobile Dealers Assn. of Mega Milwaukee - ADAMM
Badger Truck Center Inc.
Bell Ford
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Bergstrom Cadillac Buick GMC
Bergstrom Chev Cad Buick GMC Trk Inc.
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Pischke Motors Inc
Pischke Motors of La Crosse Inc.
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Sondalle Ford Lincoln
Toycen of Ladysmith Inc.
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WATEA
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WI Auto Collision Technicians Assn. Ltd
Wilde East Towne Honda
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