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MEYER DISTRIBUTING ACQUIRES CROFT SUPPLY & DISTRIBUTION

Meyer Distributing has bought **Croft Supply & Distribution**, a subsidiary of **Ranch Hand Truck Accessories**. Croft supplies more than 80 product lines to customers throughout Texas, Louisiana and Colorado. This transaction helps Jasper, IN-based Meyer provide service to the region and means distribution of Ranch Hand products on a national level.

Greg Chumchal, the chief operations officer of Croft, said that the acquisition of his company by Meyer will be beneficial to its customers. *[Continued on Page 2]*

AVENUE MOTOR WORKS REALIGNS

With a fifth store in the offing, **Avenue Motor Works** (Woodbridge, ON) has ended its affiliation with the **Uni-Select** network and has joined the **Bestbuy Distributors** group. "With our expansion into a fifth store, we decided to make the move with a group that we feel better fits our growth and profit plans," said President **John Bosschaert** in a prepared statement. Avenue has done business with Bestbuy as an outside warehouse account. Avenue has locations in Woodbridge, Barrie, Newmarket and Bradford. The fifth location will open in Orangeville this month.

O'REILLY IS ABOUT TO CLEAR MAJOR HURDLE IN ONGOING CSK INTEGRATION PROGRAM

O'Reilly Automotive is just days away from completing the final leg of its CSK distribution and system conversions. This weekend, the Springfield, MO-based company will convert its Phoenix distribution center to the O'Reilly system along with the 151 stores in the surrounding area. Not only will this round out the company's enhanced West Coast distribution model, it also will complete the computer system changeover process for all of the acquired CSK stores.

After this weekend, all of O'Reilly's stores and distribution centers will be operating on the same systems and the company will be able to retire the legacy CSK systems that are currently being used in the unconverted stores. "We will be able to focus more of our efforts on the execution of our business strategy in all the converted stores, which will lead to continued success in gaining back the DIY auto parts market share [the CSK stores] have sacrificed over the years," said **Greg Henslee**, O'Reilly's co-president and CEO, on a recent conference call.

Following completion of the system conversions, O'Reilly will then finish the last leg of the integration by completing the remaining store resets, *[Continued on Page 2]*

TECHNOLOGY PROVIDERS TOUTING LINKS TO EBAY MOTORS

Activant Solutions (Livermore, CA) has introduced a service, **Activant ListingExpert**, that allows parts distributors and jobbers to list items for sale through **eBay Motors**. ListingExpert lets distributors and jobbers create and post comprehensive product listings for the sale of parts on eBay Motors, including part description, application references and photos, as well as quantity, pricing and shipping information. ListingExpert is designed to populate each listing with the required information along with pricing and shipping charges established by the seller. Each resulting order is transmitted to the seller's business management system. Payment is processed via **PayPal**. *[Continued on Page 4]*

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HAVOLINE TO MOVE UNDER THE CHEVRON BRAND IN NORTH AMERICA

Beginning in mid-2011, the **Chevron Products Co.** (San Ramon, CA) will rebrand its **Texaco Havoline** lubricant product line in North America under the Chevron brand. "Moving the Havoline product line under the Chevron family is the natural next step in consolidating our North America lubricants, coolants, additives and chemicals products under one master brand," explained **Doug Hinzle**, vice president – Americas for **Chevron Lubricants**. In 2008, the company began this process by bringing its commercial and industrial product lines under the Chevron master brand.

The company says that the only visible change to the Havoline product line will be the inclusion of the Chevron logo.

As a result of the move, the premium Havoline brand will experience increased distribution through **Chevron Lubrication Marketers** and Chevron retail locations. Texaco retail fuel stations also will offer the Chevron-branded Havoline product line. And, as part of this effort, Chevron will grow its **Havoline Xpress Lubes** with the Chevron master brand endorsement as well.

MEYER ACQUIRES CROFT SUPPLY & DISTRIBUTION . . . [Continued from Page 1]

"Meyer can provide the customers more product options while maintaining the experienced personnel of Croft," Chumchal explained. "This change will allow Ranch Hand to focus our energies on the manufacturing of Ranch Hand products in order to meet the consumer demands."

Ranch Hand Sales Manager **Scott McClaugherty** added: "With the expanded delivery territory of Meyer Distributing, Ranch Hand products will be more readily available to our valued dealers."

Meyer expects the integration of the Croft operation and addition of a San Antonio call center and cross-dock to be fully complete by the end of November. "The acquisition of Croft Supply & Distribution brings deep customer relationships and new talent to the Meyer Distributing sales team," said **Nick Gramelspacher**, Meyer's national sales manager. "The addition of Croft will take our high-performing Dallas and Houston operations to the next level and further cement Meyer's position as the leading supplier in the region."

O'REILLY TO CLEAR BIG HURDLE IN CSK INTEGRATION . . . [Continued from Page 1]

renovation work and re-branding. "We are on schedule with our plan and are very satisfied with the performance of our converted stores and new distribution centers," Henslee told analysts. "A lot has changed in a relatively short period of time for our team members in the acquired stores, and we are very proud of the jobs our teams — in both converted and unconverted stores — have done adapting our culture, values and our dual-market strategy."

All computer systems and nightly replenishment are projected to be completed by year's end. All inventory hard parts upgrades are finished. All out-front planograms should be finished by January. Store resets are expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2011, along with O'Reilly sign change-outs. The interior décor and exterior work should be completed in the second quarter.

"We are very enthused about what the future holds for our company. We very simply have a huge opportunity to expand our ability to execute our dual-market strategy in many new markets, and we now have ourselves in a position to do that," Henslee said. "At the same time, we have several initiatives underway to improve our operations, profitability and market penetration in all markets: things like the implementation of retail price optimization software, enhanced e-commerce capabilities, incremental improvements to our inventory management systems, and enhancements to our point-of-sale system content just to name a few of the initiatives that we currently have underway.

"We also feel that the industry tailwind we have had for some time now could be long-lasting as consumers permanently change their behavior and gain comfort with driving well-maintained vehicles at higher mileages."

O'Reilly opened 48 new stores during the third quarter, putting it on track to open the 150 new stores management had projected for the year. These openings were spread across 15 states, with Wisconsin and Ohio leading the way with seven stores each. Texas and Indiana followed with six stores each. Michigan and North Carolina each had four openings. The remaining store openings were primarily in the South and Southeastern states. For 2011, the goal is to open roughly 170 new stores. — *Marc Vincent*

O'REILLY COMPARABLE-STORE SALES UP 11.1 PERCENT IN Q3

Third-quarter comparable-store sales rose a surprising 11.1 percent at **O'Reilly Automotive**, exceeding the expectations of management and analysts alike. This is on top of a 5.3-percent comparable-store sales increase in the third quarter of 2009. Revenue increased 13 percent to a record \$1.43 billion for the three months ended Sept. 30, 2010, as business remained strong coming out of the second quarter and held steady throughout the quarter.

Management indicated on a recent call with members of the financial community that these solid trends existed in pretty much all of O'Reilly's markets across the United States, and that ticket average and ticket count contributed equally to the sales increase. **Greg Henslee**, O'Reilly's co-president and CEO, told analysts: "We are very pleased with our comparable-store sales performance on both sides of our business, DIY and commercial. As has been the case for some time now, our commercial sales continued to grow faster than our DIY sales, as we've enhanced our capabilities in the historic **CSK** markets."

Gross profit for the 2010 third quarter came in at \$693.42 million (or 48.6 percent of sales) — up 14 percent from the \$610.56 million (or 48.5 percent of sales) that the Springfield, MO-based company recorded a year ago. Net income rose 34 percent to a record \$116.54 million, while diluted earnings per share increased 30 percent to \$0.82. Analysts had been expecting O'Reilly to come in with only \$0.74 in EPS for the quarter.

Tony Cristello and **Allen Hatzimanolis** of **BB&T Capital Markets** wrote in a report dated Oct. 28 that expectations for O'Reilly were set high heading into the quarter with comps seen as likely to increase 8 percent. "But **Q3 same-store sales growth of 11.1 percent simply implies that the cycle for the automotive aftermarket is not close to being over yet, in our opinion,**" the analysts wrote. "While unseasonably warm weather has elevated overall demand levels, we believe the two largest drivers of O'Reilly's outsized same-store sales growth have been the very favorable aftermarket operating environment and the ramp of productivity at CSK as new parts, distribution and culture have been implemented."

As for the close of the year, Henslee expressed pleasure with the company's sales performance thus far in the quarter. "However, the fourth quarter is always difficult to forecast comparable-store sales. As winter rolls in, sales can be lumpy from week to week, and, with unemployment still over 9 percent, I think it's reasonable to anticipate some slowdown in our business over the holiday season as consumers use their limited discretionary income for holiday activities," he explained. "With this in mind, **we are going to leave our comparable-store sales forecast at 4 percent to 6 percent for the quarter, which would lead us to completing the full year with comps in the range of 7 percent to 8 percent.**" Additionally, management is calling for fourth-quarter EPS to come in between \$0.56 and \$0.60. BB&T predicts EPS will run north of \$0.65. — *Marc Vincent*

O'REILLY READIES FOR \$20.9-MILLION DOJ PENALTY RELATED TO CSK

O'Reilly Automotive took an additional charge of \$5.90 million in the third quarter — that's on top of a \$15-million charge taken in the previous quarter — in preparation for a yet-to-be-imposed penalty from the U.S. Department of Justice. This relates to accounting fraud at **CSK Auto Corp.** and will be assessed against O'Reilly despite the fact that O'Reilly didn't own CSK until years after the alleged wrongdoings took place.

O'Reilly Co-President and **CEO Greg Henslee** told analysts on a recent conference call that O'Reilly and the DOJ have reached an agreement in principle that calls for O'Reilly and CSK to enter into a non-prosecution agreement and for O'Reilly to pay a one-time penalty of \$20.90 million. **Revelation of this pending penalty led one analyst to ask Henslee how the DOJ justified fining O'Reilly shareholders \$20.90 million for the actions of CSK's management? "[The DOJ's] perception is that crimes were committed, and there should be a penalty applied for that," he replied.** Henslee added: "The fine is applied to CSK, but I can tell you I defended our shareholders' position as aggressively as I felt that could be defended."

Looking back to the due diligence process prior to the acquisition of CSK, Henslee told analysts that, after extensive work, O'Reilly reached the conclusion that the actions of the DOJ and the SEC would most likely stop short of penalizing or charging CSK "based on the level of cooperation with the SEC and the DOJ, the merits of our acquisition, prior actions by the SEC and the DOJ, our track record of solid management, [Sarbanes-Oxley] compliance, along with many other factors."

Initially, it looked like this scenario would play out. **In 2009, the SEC determined to close the matter with respect to CSK without a fine or penalty.** Yet, despite O'Reilly's cooperation with the DOJ's investigation, a penalty is forthcoming from the DOJ.

TECH PROVIDERS TOUTING LINKS TO EBAY MOTORS . . . [Continued from Page 1]

ListingExpert also can automatically update a seller's inventory records following each sale. Additionally, users of ListingExpert have access to business intelligence from Activant's data warehouse technology to help determine which parts to sell via eBay Motors and at what price.

San Francisco-based **DriverSide**, which runs a website for car owners, has announced a new storefront with eBay Motors for automotive parts. Through deals with **General Motors** and the **Ford Motor Co.**, DriverSide is offering a selection of **ACDelco**, **Motorcraft** and **Genuine Ford** parts via eBay Motors and Driverside.com. The technology, dubbed the **OE Parts Depot (OPD)**, includes parts catalogs, images and product attributes.

DriverSide is working with dealers and distributors to put together a national network of businesses that would operate as a single eBay Motors store for both ACDelco (<http://stores.ebay.com/acdelco-parts-depot>) and Ford (<http://stores.ebay.com/ford-parts-depot>). The program integrates with existing systems and processes. OPD is available exclusively in conjunction with eBay Motors.

Rye Brook, NY-based **WHI Solutions** is providing its more than 8,000 **Nexpart**-enabled parts selling locations the ability to list items, along with fitment and product attribute information, on the eBay Motors website. WHI's Nexpart e-commerce technology will power the listings, which then feed directly on to eBay Motors. The ordering process is integrated to the seller's ERP system.

OPITCAT WORKING TOWARD GLOBAL VEHICLE DATA EXCHANGE

OptiCat says it is working with select manufacturers, **AAIA** and **TecDoc** to begin developing a **Global Vehicle Data Exchange (GVDE)** to eliminate barriers between North American and European vehicle data tables. **Steve Handschuh**, president and chief operating officer of **AASA** — which manages **MEMA's** equity interest in OptiCat — emphasized that this effort is not usurping or altering **ACES**, its **VCDB** or **TecDoc** standards. Rather, he said, it's creating a logical connection or a bridge between them. "The GVDE initiative will eliminate redundant efforts suppliers now have to undergo to prepare data for makes and models in various areas of the world," Handschuh said. "I want to emphasize that, while early efforts are very promising, this is a long-term project."

MITCHELL 1 AND AASA HAVE REACHED AN OE PARTS DATA DEAL

AASA has announced a partnership with **Mitchell 1**, a **Snap-on** company, to provide the association's aftermarket supplier members with a comprehensive OE parts and application data program. Through this exclusive program, AASA members can receive OE part application data for major vehicle makes and models sold in North America at a 20-percent discount. The **Mitchell 1 OE Parts** database is delivered through the **Mitchell 1 Data Extraction Kit (MDEK)** and is designed to work as a stand-alone information set or as information integrated with members' third-party applications. **Mitchell 1 OE Parts Supersede Data** is included in the program.

A NEW WAREHOUSE AND A NEW LOOK FOR CURT MANUFACTURING

Curt Manufacturing, a maker of towing products, has begun construction on a new warehouse at its facility in Eau Claire, WI. Curt's existing plant will benefit from transferring inventory to the new warehouse, freeing up roughly 65,000 square feet of space, allowing the company to expand its fabrication, welding and two-coat finishing process areas. The project is expected to be completed by June. **This comes at a time when Curt has launched a new logo and new slogan: "the first name in towing products."** The new look debuted at the **SEMA Show** this week. Website and e-commerce rebranding will be completed by year-end, with packaging and graphics transitioning in 2011.



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BB&T SAYS F-M MUST REBALANCE FOR AFTERMARKET GROWTH

On the surface, **Federal-Mogul Corp.** had a strong third quarter. Net income increased five-fold to \$10 million. Net sales rose 12 percent to \$1.54 billion, and, excluding the negative impact of foreign currency, net sales would have been up 16 percent.

The Southfield, MI-based company even thinks it had a strong quarter. It used the word “strong” in the headline of its third-quarter report press release. In fact, the word “strong” can be found in the press release seven times, including “strong financial performance” and “strong customer demand.”

The word you won’t find is “aftermarket” — with the lone exception of Federal-Mogul’s description of itself. Why is that? While Federal-Mogul’s OE business segments generated market share gains in all regions and posted stronger-than-expected top-line results, the global aftermarket unit did not.

Federal-Mogul’s global aftermarket sales decreased 3 percent to \$573 million in the quarter. Sales volume accounted for \$4 million of the \$20-million year-over-year decrease, with customer price decreases accounting for \$9 million and foreign currency movements accounting for \$7 million. Global aftermarket gross margin decreased 16 percent to \$100 million (or 17.5 percent of sales) for the third quarter of 2010 compared to \$119 million (or 20.1 percent of sales) a year ago.

Tony Cristello and Allen Hatzimanolis of BB&T Capital Markets wrote in a report dated Oct. 29 that the “underwhelming” performance of Federal-Mogul’s global aftermarket segment was the biggest disappointment of the company’s third-quarter report. It was particularly noteworthy against “such a strong industry backdrop that is providing robust results for Federal-Mogul’s customers and competitors alike.”

The analysts wrote that, while Federal-Mogul’s OE business units continue to outperform top-line expectations, they were surprised by the continued sluggishness of sales volumes in its global aftermarket business. “Against an easy comparison from Q3’09, total aftermarket sales declined 2 percent on a constant-currency basis as price/mix drag more than offset a modest volume increase. Global aftermarket earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization was also below expectations,” Cristello and Hatzimanolis wrote. **“Essentially, Federal-Mogul has long been focused on the more premium lines of the North American aftermarket. With the onset of the recession, this specific segment came under significant pressure as consumers traded down to more mid-line and entry-line replacement parts.**

“Ultimately, we do expect to see motorists eventually trade back up the quality spectrum. In the meantime, Federal-Mogul is rolling out a series of more value and mid-level replacement part lines, with most expected to launch early in 2011. **We expect the company’s North American aftermarket business to gradually strengthen, but would expect H1’11 results to still be somewhat soft.**”

TENNECO’S NORTH AMERICAN AFTERMARKET REVENUE UP 15% IN Q3

Lake Forest, IL-based **Tenneco** was able to turn away from an \$8.00-million net loss a year ago to report \$10.00 million in net income for the third quarter of 2010. This came as net sales increased 23 percent to \$1.54 billion. (Excluding substrate sales and the impact of \$22 million in negative currency, revenue would have risen 20 percent to \$1.20 billion). “Our results reflect our ability to take advantage of higher OE production volumes, which, together with an increase in global aftermarket sales, drove strong revenue growth and higher earnings,” said **Gregg Sherrill**, chairman and CEO.

Taking a closer look at Tenneco’s North American business, we note that total aftermarket revenue in the region rose 15 percent to \$172 million. This breaks down as North American aftermarket ride control up 13 percent to \$125 million and North American aftermarket emission control up 20 percent to \$47 million.

TENNECO LAUNCHES RIDE CONTROL LINE FOR FOREIGN NAMEPLATES

Tenneco has introduced a line of replacement shock absorbers and struts engineered specifically for foreign-nameplate vehicles. The **Monroe OESpectrum** shocks and struts will be available through Monroe distributors and service providers in early 2011. This the first time Tenneco has developed a line of branded replacement shocks and struts specifically for imports. Its import coverage previously was part of the **Sensa-Trac** product line.

ACQUISITIONS CONTINUE FOR CHICAGO-BASED LKQ

Collision parts market consolidator **LKQ Corp.** of Chicago is showing no signs of curtailing its growth strategy — one that has been in place since the company's inception in 1998. It has two thrusts: organic growth and growth through acquisitions. Its focus when it comes to acquisitions has been on the kind of companies that will expand LKQ's geographic presence and its ability to provide a wider range of alternative vehicle replacement products and services.

In 2009, LKQ acquired eight businesses: five in the wholesale parts field and three in the recycled heavy-duty truck parts business. The 2009 acquisitions included **Greenleaf Auto Recyclers**, which LKQ purchased from **Schnitzer Steel Industries** in October. At the time of the acquisition, Greenleaf operated wholesale recycling businesses from 17 locations.

LKQ is merging certain locations with its own existing wholesale recycling operations, which will result in the elimination — or conversion to alternate uses — of 11 operating locations.

Through the first nine months of 2010, LKQ has made 12 acquisitions: 10 in the wholesale parts business, one in the area of recycled heavy-duty truck parts and one tire recycling business. According to the management of LKQ, these acquisitions have allowed the company to expand its geographic presence in the wholesale parts business and its network of recycled heavy-duty truck parts facilities, as well as expand its product offerings.

The tire recycling business, it points out, will support all of LKQ's operating segments.

Focusing strictly on the third quarter, the acquired businesses have provided additional wholesale aftermarket and recycled parts distribution in a number of markets, including Philadelphia and Cincinnati; increased production capacity for LKQ's wheel refinishing business; and expanded paint distribution in the Boston metropolitan area.

During the quarter, the company also opened a heavy-duty truck operation in Wilson, NC, at a former Greenleaf location.

"It was a very busy quarter for acquisitions, and we are on pace to close a number of additional transactions by the end of 2010," said President and CEO **Joe Holsten**. "Acquisitions will continue to play an important part of our plans to build out our footprint in the U.S. and Canada and expand our product offerings."

Since the start of the fourth quarter, LKQ has already completed a number of transactions. The acquired businesses, according to the company, facilitate the geographic expansion of LKQ's operations across Canada, provide an entry into the engine remanufacturing industry, expand its wholesale collision product lines, and add new wholesale recycling and self-service retail locations. On a combined basis, the acquired businesses have annual revenue of roughly \$100 million. They include:

- **Cross Canada:** An aftermarket parts distributor to the collision industry with operations in the Canadian provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and Saskatchewan;
- **Proformance Powertrain,** an engine remanufacturer with production facilities in Springfield, MO;
- **SPI Distribution,** an aftermarket heating and cooling system parts distributor that specializes in radiators, air coolers and related parts;
- **Best Bumper,** a bumper remanufacturing facility in the Dallas area;
- A wholesale automotive recycling business serving the Norfolk and Virginia Beach, VA markets; and
- A self-service retail recycling operation in Denver.

Tony Cristello and **Allen Hatzimanolis** of **BB&T Capital Markets** remarked in an Oct. 29 report that LKQ has resumed a more aggressive acquisition strategy, noting that acquisitions are likely a top priority for the company.

"LKQ was able to complete seven acquisitions with \$115 million in annualized revenue during Q3," the analysts wrote. "With its total debt/cap hovering just over 30 percent, nearly \$170 million in cash on its balance sheet, and an estimated \$125 million in free cash flow in 2011, we think the recent pace of acquisition activity should continue."

LKQ bills itself as the largest nationwide provider of aftermarket collision replacement products, recycled products and refurbished collision replacement products, such as wheels, bumper covers and lights. LKQ operates more than 300 facilities.

LKQ REPORTS THIRD-QUARTER NET INCOME UP 23.1%, SALES UP 22.8%

Chicago-based **LKQ Corp.** saw its net income increase 23.1 percent to \$35.90 million in the third quarter of 2010 as net sales rose 22.8 percent to a record \$607.62 million. While acquisitions did boost LKQ's sales in the quarter, the company's total organic growth rate was 11.6 percent. "As insurers and consumers focus on containing repair costs, demand for quality alternative parts continues to expand," said **Joe Holsten**, president and CEO of LKQ. "Parts and services revenue was up 18.8 percent in the third quarter with organic revenue growth of 8.3 percent and acquisition growth of 10.2 percent. We were particularly pleased to see recycled parts and services organic revenue growth of 8.0 percent. As we move into the busy winter season, our inventories continue to be in very good shape."

It's also worth noting that aftermarket and refurbished revenue increased 13.2 percent in the quarter with an organic growth rate of 8.5 percent. This was the fifth quarter in a row of organic revenue growth for aftermarket and refurbished parts of 8 percent or better.

During the first quarter of this year, LKQ lowered purchases of salvage vehicles because of higher acquisition prices at salvage auctions. This — coupled with the legal restrictions that prevented the company selling engines from "Cash for Clunkers" vehicles — lowered the amount of salvage parts LKQ had available for sale. However, LKQ increased its purchases of salvage inventory during the second and third quarters, which created a greater volume of parts available for sale, including engines and higher-value parts, contributing to higher organic revenue growth for parts and services. LKQ also has worked through the "Cash for Clunkers" vehicles it had in inventory earlier in the year. Management contends that its salvage inventory levels going into the fourth quarter will support continued organic revenue growth for parts and services.

Analysts from BB&T Capital Markets would seem to concur, noting in an Oct. 29 report that it "appears the company has fixed its issues with the recycled segment," having put sluggish organic growth and "Cash for Clunkers" behind it. "The environment is not the same as it was prior to the recession and it will likely take several years for the overall collision backdrop to improve. However, we think LKQ has reduced its exposure to scrap (and thus volatility swings), successfully integrated [Keystone Automotive Industries], improved its organic growth rate, built a sizable cash position for acquisitions, and enhanced its overall product offerings, evident by the success of its AQR program," analysts **Tony Cristello** and **Allen Hatzimanolis** wrote. "Underlying all this is greater acceptance of alternative parts and perhaps greater willingness by insurers to require that written claims include alternative parts."



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OBITUARY: JIM HUNTER, NASCAR VP OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

Jim Hunter, NASCAR vice president of corporate communications — whose career in motorsports spanned portions of six decades as both a journalist and public relations professional — died Oct. 22 following a 12-month battle with cancer. He was 71. As a member of the media, Hunter was sports editor of the *Columbia Record* newspaper and had an award-winning stint at the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. He was a columnist for *Stock Car Racing* magazine, and he authored a number of books. On the public relations side, Hunter broke into that business in the 1960s with **Dodge's** motorsports operation. He handled public relations for a number of top **IndyCar** drivers before going on to become the PR director at **Darlington Raceway** and **Talladega Superspeedway**.

In 1983, Hunter was named to his first executive position in his first NASCAR stint, becoming NASCAR's vice president of administration. In 1993, he was named president of Darlington Raceway and corporate vice president of **International Speedway Corp.** He remained at Darlington until 2001 when he accepted an offer from then-NASCAR chairman and CEO **Bill France Jr.** to return to Daytona Beach to lead an expanded public relations effort aimed at responding to the needs of burgeoning media coverage.

"Jim Hunter was one of NASCAR's giants," said NASCAR Chairman and CEO **Brian France**. "For more than 40 years, Jim was part of NASCAR and its history. He loved the sport, but loved the people even more. It seems as if everyone in the sport called him a friend. Jim will forever be missed by the NASCAR community. Our sympathies go out to his entire family."

Hunter is survived by his wife of 48 years, **Ann**; his children, **Scott Hunter** and **Amy McKernan**; and his grandchildren, **Dakota Hunter** and **Hunter** and **Luke McKernan**.

ASAAA LAUNCHES AWARENESS PROGRAM AIMED AT STATE LEGISLATURES

This week, the **Alliance of State Automotive Aftermarket Associations (ASAAA)** unveiled an education and awareness program aimed at promoting to state legislators, staff members and policymakers across the country the benefits of aftermarket replacement parts and services. This campaign, the **ASAAA Legislator Education & Awareness Program**, is designed to create a blueprint whereby state associations can implement industry education tools, messages and resources in their states to increase awareness among policymakers about the benefits of a vibrant and robust aftermarket industry.

"In state capitols nationwide industry advocates are faced with the challenge of educating legislative bodies about the value and importance that aftermarket replacement parts and service contribute to the nation's economy and the motoring public," explained **Skip Potter**, president ASAAA. "However, when describing aftermarket replacement parts and service, words like 'imitation,' 'inferior' and 'not of like kind and quality' are used by our opposition to confuse policymakers and discredit our industry. ASAAA's campaign will arm our industry advocates with information to promote and protect the industry's interests in the legislative and regulatory processes with a consistent and unified voice."

The ASAAA program will officially launch in January. To date, it has received financial support from ASAAA, **AAIA**, **AWDA**, **AutoZone**, **LKQ**, **General Parts Inc./Carquest**, the **Genuine Parts Co./NAPA**, **Advance Auto Parts** and **Remy Power Products**.

EXIDE ANNOUNCES PLANS FOR ALLIANCE WITH NORTHSTAR BATTERY

Milton, GA-based **Exide Technologies** has announced plans to collaborate with the **Northstar Battery Co.** of Springfield, MO, on a line of aftermarket batteries for sports and luxury cars, large SUV and trucks, commercial fleets, emergency responders, and marine vessels. Plans call for Exide to work with NorthStar to provide sales, marketing and distribution expertise beginning in 2011. Under the planned collaboration, a line of premium NorthStar-branded and -produced absorbed glass mat (AGM) products will be incorporated into Exide's portfolio of battery offerings.

MIDTRONICS ANNOUNCES RFID PATENT/TECHNOLOGY LICENSE PACT

Willowbrook, IL-based **Midtronics** has announced a license agreement with the **Battery Dynamics Group** for RFID patents and technology related to battery and electrical component management. Midtronics plans to add these new capabilities to its existing RFID portfolio. The core technology in the license relates to using RFID technology on electrical components where test information is stored on the component along every service step within its life cycle. In addition, core information about the component also can be combined with the test history. Midtronics says this historical RFID stored information can be used by diagnostic equipment to better understand component performance and to remove the need for manual user input of component information.

SOCIETY OF IMPORT PARTS SPECIALISTS REFLECTS ON FIRST DECADE

Among the more than 100,000 people expected at **Industry Week**, the small but tight-knit **Society of Import Parts Specialists** is marking a decade of pulling together in ways even its members once doubted was possible. “When I wrote the initial round of letters inviting all of them to the first meeting,” recalled coordinator **Gary Garberg**, “I think it was more of a curiosity. I think it was more just intrigue that brought people together for the first time.”

It was the year 2000, less than a year after **Jose Meyer**, owner of **Meyer’s Auto Parts** in Las Vegas, asked Garberg, who worked for the chain, to look into the possibility of establishing a buyers’ group for import parts. Garberg was amazed to find that no such organization existed, at least until he started getting to know some of the players in the arena. “Because they were unique in the industry, they had been so fiercely independent that they had never considered turning to one another for anything,” he said. “They all had different criteria, and they really couldn’t get together on when and what they should do at the same time.”

Still, a dozen charter members came together to form the society and quickly learned that their collective value wasn’t so much a matter of purchasing power, but of sharing knowledge. “From the discussion of trying to become a buying group ... they talked about how they operated their businesses, and how they run their delivery systems, and how they compete,” Garberg said. “It became about the camaraderie between the members.”

Not that buying hasn’t come into play: In 2003, it struck a deal with **Automotive Parts Associates Inc./Professionals’ Choice**, getting the society’s members some lower costs and, in turn, supporting some of APA’s import-oriented lines.

Membership — currently at 28 and representing more than 100 stores — has fluctuated slightly over the years, but it’s never exceeded 30. And, 20 of the current members have been on the roster since the first year of its existence.

“If you’re struggling or if you’ve found something that’s fantastic, because we don’t cross lines, we can share it amongst each other,” said **Jana Vermeer**, third-generation family member of Ohio-based **Vermeer Auto Parts** and a first-year society board member. “A couple times in the past ... my dad was involved in buying groups that were trying to import things together, and it didn’t work because the import mindset is so independent. We’re more about the sharing of ideas.”

Garberg doesn’t see much changing over the next decade, at least in terms of the way the society goes rather quietly about its business. Members joke that “people refer to it as a secret group.”

— *John Booth*

OTC CELEBRATES THE 85TH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS FOUNDING

Owatonna, MN-based **OTC** is celebrating its 85th anniversary. The company began as the **Owatonna Tool Co.**, a small machine shop operated by **Reuben Kaplan**, who saw a need for special-purpose tools to service the automobiles of the day. One of his first innovations was the **Grip-O-Matic** universal gear puller, for which he received his first patent. The tool remains virtually unchanged to this day. By 1985, OTC had an extensive line of tools and systems for both OEM and aftermarket customers. That led to its acquisition by **Sealed Power Corp.** (now **SPX Corp.**).

NEWS BRIEFS . . . The 2010 **Vipar Heavy Duty** annual business conference will be held Nov. 14-19 in Marco Island, FL. The event will feature a keynote presentation by motivational speaker **Jim Craig**, the goalie for the 1980 gold medal winning U.S. hockey team. Conference events include a tradeshow, one-on-one meetings, general sessions and a stockholders meeting. . . . Rye Brook, NY-based **WHI Solutions** reports that its **Nexpart** e-commerce technology has surpassed the 200,000-user mark. Additionally, Nexpart’s seller network has reportedly doubled to more than 8,000 in the past 12 months. . . . **Mobil Delvac** extended-life coolant and antifreeze have been selected as the featured coolants for all **TravelCenters of America** and **Petro** truck stops. These coolants, as well as Mobil Delvac heavy-duty diesel engine oils (which have been the featured lubricants at Petro since 1999 and TA since 2004), will be sold at all of TA and Petro’s more than 200 locations nationwide. . . . **Activant Solutions** (Livermore, CA) says it set company records for aftermarket parts-data timeliness and volume over the past year with a 50-percent increase in the volume of manufacturer data delivered to end users in 45 days or less from receipt, as well as 40 percent more parts and application information added in 2010 than the previous year. . . . Ignition products company **Enerpulse** (Albuquerque, NM) has announced that its **Pulstar** pulse plugs will be manufactured by the **Autolite** business of the **Honeywell Consumer Products Group**. Manufacturing is scheduled to begin in January. . . . **Fox’s Speed** channel has renewed **Brenton Productions’s TruckU** and **Two Guys Garage** programs for the 2011 season. . . . **Pro-Tech Automotive Products** (Saddle Brook, NJ) has a new web address: www.protechautoparts.com.

DOUG MEEKINS HAS BEEN ELECTED CABA BOARD PRESIDENT

Doug Meekins, general manager of **Brooks Huff Tire & Auto** in Baltimore, has been elected president of the **Chesapeake Automotive Business Association (CABA)** board of directors. Meekins will begin his two-year term as president on Nov. 13. Other CABA officers for 2011-'12 include:

- Immediate Past President – **Bill Cropper**, president of **Salisbury Automotive** in Salisbury;
- First Vice President – **Vernon Lyon**, general manager of **Mainline Automotive Parts Corp.** in Baltimore;
- Second Vice President – **Rob Wilson**, vice president of **Admiral Tire** in Bowie; and
- Secretary/Treasurer – **Bob Wilson**, president of **Edgewater Tire Centers** in Annapolis.

Other members of the board include: **John Obradovic**, an industry consultant from Severna Park; **Ralph Schissler**, owner of **Atlantic Tire** in Baltimore; **Paul Warner**, sales manager for **Uni-Select** in Crofton; **Bryan Smith**, a representative for **Standard Motor Products** in Reisterstown; and **Chris Lilly**, sales manager of **Admiral Tire Wholesale** in Annapolis.

JOHN PASSANTE TAKES OVER DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS AT BRENTON

Swansea, MA-based **Brenton Productions**, producer of such automotive TV programs as *TruckU* and *Two Guys Garage*, has appointed **John Passante** president. Passante joined Brenton in 2009 as executive vice president. He replaces Brenton's founder, **Frank McGonagle**, who will continue as chairman of the company. Passante has spent nearly 40 years in the aftermarket as an executive, trainer and speaker. This includes time as a senior vice president at **Carquest** and at **Moog Automotive**, as well as a senior director with **Delphi Products & Service Solutions**. Passante will continue in his role as president of **The Organizational Development Group** as he leads Brenton. As president of The Organizational Development Group, he assists aftermarket companies in recruiting, coaching, change management and culture enhancement. Passante also is a motivational speaker, trainer and an adjunct professor at **Northwood University**.

JKS RECRUITS MARK HINKLEY AS INSIDE SALES, SUPPORT MANAGER

JKS Manufacturing of Alliance, NE, a Jeep performance products specialist, has hired industry veteran **Mark Hinkley** as its new inside sales and support manager. Before joining the JKS team, Hinkley was employed by **Tenneco** as a regional sales manager for such brands as **Rancho Suspension** and **Dynomax Performance Exhaust**. Before that, he was the founder and former owner of the **Off Road General Store** and **ORGS Manufacturing**.

WILSON IS NEW NATIONAL SALES MANAGER FOR AAEQ'S ENGINEQUEST

David Wilson is the new national sales manager for **AAEQ Manufacturers & Recyclers' EngineQuest (EQ)** division. Wilson comes to EQ with more than 20 years of sales and management experience, including 10-plus years in engine management products with **Standard Motor Products**, **Dana** and **Echlin**. Most recently, he was a regional sales manager for **John Deere Power Systems**.

A NEW SALES ENGINEER FOR UNITED ENGINE & MACHINE COMPANY

Eric Simone has joined the sales and engineering team at the Carson City, NV-based **United Engine & Machine Co.** Simone brings more than 15 years of racing and motorsports experience, specializing in race engine construction, development and dyno testing. His responsibilities include performance sales and design, OE accounts, and special markets. Simone works out of the Detroit area.

PEOPLE WATCHING . . . Jan Akerberg has retired as the president of Wentzville, MO-based **ATD Tools** — a position he has held since 1998. In a career spanning 38 years, Akerberg has worked for **OTC**, **Lincoln Tools**, **SP Tools**, **KD** and more. . . **Connersville, IN-based Stant Corp.** has hired **Curt Howell**, formerly of **American Axle & Manufacturing (AAM)**, as its new CEO. Howell has spent his last 16 years with AAM, most recently as the P&L leader for the Americas, a \$1.9-billion business unit. . . **Detroit-based American Axle & Manufacturing** has appointed **Michael Flynn** as its general manager for aftermarket and specialty projects. Flynn previously served as executive director of quality. . . **Erin Dempsey** is the new director of marketing at Winter Haven, FL-based **DocuLex**. Dempsey has more than 20 years of experience in marketing communications, strategic planning, and the creation of educational programs for hardware and software developers, distributors, and dealers in the document management market. . . **Jim Sweetnam** has resigned as the president and CEO of Maumee, OH-based **Dana Holding Corp.** “by mutual agreement with Dana's board of directors,” according to a statement dated Nov. 4. **John Devine**, executive chairman and a former chief executive of Dana, will serve as interim CEO while the board conducts a search for a permanent successor.

2010 AAPEX Report . . . *notes from this year's AAPEX show*

'KNOW YOUR PARTS' REDUX

Taking its "Know Your Parts" fight against low-quality aftermarket repair products to another level, **AASA** has added a new tool, the **Supplier Evaluation Standards**, in an effort to "provide all channel partners with standardized criteria for supplier selection."

"By using this form to query suppliers before making a final buying decision, aftermarket channel partners and resellers can 'know their parts,' and protect their business' good name as well as the good reputation of the entire aftermarket," said **Steve Handschuh**, president and chief operating officer of AASA at the announcement made prior to **AAPEX**. The standards focus on specific question categories such as: Product specifications and quality; line content and completeness; application research and catalogs; product availability and distribution; sales representation and manpower; marketing programs and support; technical support and training; product liability and warranty; intellectual property protection; and terms and conditions.

At the same time, AASA released a supporting report titled "Aftermarket Industry Image: Why Premium Aftermarket Products Deliver the Best Value." Information about the report, the standard and other aspects of the "Know Your Parts" campaign are available at <http://www.aftermarketsuppliers.org/knowyourparts>.

MEMA LAUNCHES REMAN AFFILIATE ASSOCIATION

In an attempt to respond to the needs of a large number of its member companies and to help those members be more profitable, innovative and competitive in the global market, **MEMA** has developed a new affiliated association: the **Motor & Equipment Remanufacturers Association** (MERA).

"MERA will concentrate on five areas of strategic focus: Representation of remanufacturers; legislative and regulatory advocacy; market research and analysis; technology and data leadership; and member engagement through collaboration, networking and education," said **Bob McKenna**, president and CEO of MEMA.

McKenna said development of the new group took place over the last year or so, and discussions included leaders of other existing organizations representing other reman groups. That collaboration is to continue.

The association's immediate goals include appointment of a board of governors representing leading remanufacturing companies and selection of a staff executive to direct day-to-day operations. Future association activities include the launch of a website and publication of a remanufacturing environmental and economic market research and analysis report.

THE OVERALL BUZZ . . . Though final buyer numbers have yet to be compiled, it was obvious to almost all exhibitors at AAPEX that aisle traffic was brisk and smiles were on most attendees faces. According to informal reports, there were 2,060 exhibitors at this year's show — the largest number since 2006. And, though totals will be forthcoming, we were assured that buyer numbers also were up. Looking at keystone events like the **AWDA Manufacturers Reception**; the **AAIA/AASA Chairmen's Reception**; and the two primary breakfast events, the **AASA Executive Breakfast** and the **AAIA Town Hall**, show week started with a bang with little elbow room at cocktail events, and large and excited crowds at breakfast events.

At the AASA Executive Breakfast, e-tailing was the subject of the morning and a generally-positive overview was given by the panelists despite the challenges of engaging in online sales. There was an uncomfortable moment when one panelist alluded to delays in posting catalog data with one catalog provider — of course, though, without acknowledging any responsibility for the delay on the part of those manufacturers supplying data that is not ready to be transformed into useful cataloging. The audience laughed at the remark and there was a smattering of applause from a rather biased crowd. I'm sure the panelist did not mean it to be a cheap shot, but it was not a kind comment about a service provider that works hard at providing good service.

The AAIA Town Hall was the usual fount of good information and well-thought-out opinion, with the usual masterful moderation of AAIA chief **Kathleen Schmatz**. She probably summarized the mood of this year's show as eloquently as anyone. Noting that executives in this industry never seem to admit that they are having a good year, she noted that the current mood must be an exceptional one. "**Business is good, and executives are admitting it!**" **Schmatz said.**

2010 AAPEX Report . . . notes from this year's AAPEX show [continued]

INDUSTRY RECOGNITION

- We were extremely pleased to see **Pete Kornafel**, vice chairman of **Carquest** and chairman of the **Global Automotive Aftermarket Symposium Scholarship** committee, presented the **MEMA Triangle Award** during the AASA Executive Breakfast. For more than 30 years, the award has been given periodically in recognition of those who give selflessly to the industry, and Kornafel's work with the GAAS Scholarship program has been overwhelmingly laudable. In presenting the award, **Bob McKenna**, president and CEO of MEMA, said: "Pete devotes countless hours to this strictly voluntary position. He personally reviews every scholarship application, not just for the most outstanding students, but for those who need a boost out of bad situations," demonstrating the level of commitment Kornafel has shown to bringing young people into the aftermarket.
- A veteran of nearly 40 years in the aftermarket, **Rollie Olson**, CEO of **Parts Depot Inc.** in Roanoke, VA, was named the 2010 recipient of the **AWDA Leader of the Year Award**. AWDA bestows this prestigious award on an aftermarket professional who has contributed to the industry in a unique and significant way. Olson's career followed a path through many aftermarket companies, including Honeywell, Bendix, Fram and Raybestos. In 1986, he acquired Parts Depot and, over the next 25 years, grew the business to a company covering 13 states with more than \$350 million in revenue. He later served as chairman of **All Pro/Bumper-to-Bumper** and was co-chair with **Fred Bunting** when the **Alliance** was formed. Olson also committed himself to considerable industry volunteer work, including eight years on the AWDA Board of Governors, including a term as AWDA chairman in the 1990s.
- **Robert Susor**, president of **NAPA** and executive vice president of the **Genuine Parts Co.**, was presented with the **AWDA Martin Fromm Lifetime Achievement Award**. Recipients of this award are considered to be the "backbones" of the industry. A native of Ohio and lifelong participant in the auto parts business, Susor joined NAPA in 1968, and his responsibilities have included sales, marketing and general management with GPC's U.S., Canadian and Mexican operations. Susor was named president of NAPA and executive vice president of Genuine Parts in 2003 and serves in that capacity today. When presenting the award, AWDA Chairman **Willi Alexander** of **Uni-Select U.S.A.** said: "Robert J. Susor defines the term 'gentleman.' What has always struck me — and many others — about Bob is his quiet thoughtfulness, his humility and his dignity. This despite the tremendous corporate responsibilities he has always shouldered. Bob Susor is an industry treasure and well deserving of this prestigious award."
- **Brian Cruickshank**, director of the **University of the Aftermarket**, and **David Caracci**, executive director of the **University of the Aftermarket Foundation**, were honored with the **AWDA 2010 Pursuit of Excellence Award**. Established in 1983, the award is given annually in recognition of excellence in business performance, as well as support for the association and its ideals. In presenting the award, **Bill Maggs**, AWDA's incoming vice chairman and president of the **National Pronto Association**, said of the pair: "Largely due to David's and Brian's efforts, the University of the Aftermarket is once again included in any discussion of industry education — either as a sponsor, a purveyor, a participant or an accrediting body. The continued vitality of these two organizations is of immense value to the aftermarket industry."
- One of the more touching moments of the AWDA awards program was the presentation of the **Art Fisher Memorial Scholarship Award** posthumously to **John Castle** in recognition of his work creating and building the automotive aftermarket department at **Northwood University**. Castle passed away this summer at the age of 85, and the award was presented to Castle's daughter and accepted by **Jim John**, former head of the Northwood aftermarket program and Castle's successor. As noted here previously, Castle was a gentleman with passions for education and this industry, as well as a commitment to young people.
- **Katie Noga**, manager of marketing and motorsports for **SKF** and president for the **Automotive Communications Council**, was named the **Car Care Council Women's Board** seventh annual "Aftermarket Woman of the Year" at the organization's reception on Nov. 2. The award recognizes the career accomplishments and leadership capabilities of women in our industry.

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