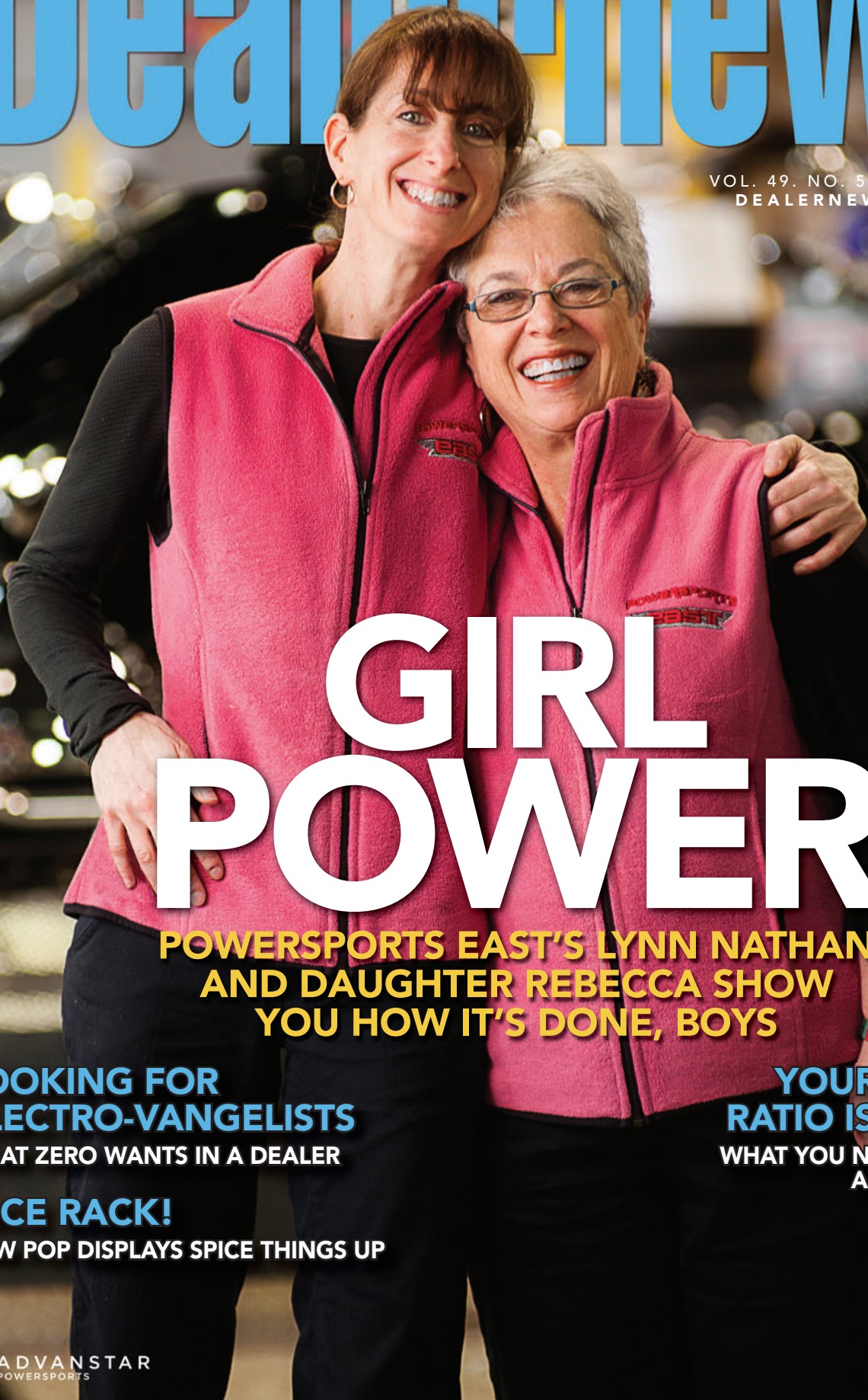


THE VOICE OF POWERSPORTS RETAILERS

# Dealernews

VOL. 49, NO. 5 MAY 2013  
DEALERNEWS.COM

NEW POP DISPLAYS • POWERSPORTS EAST • ZERO MOTORCYCLE



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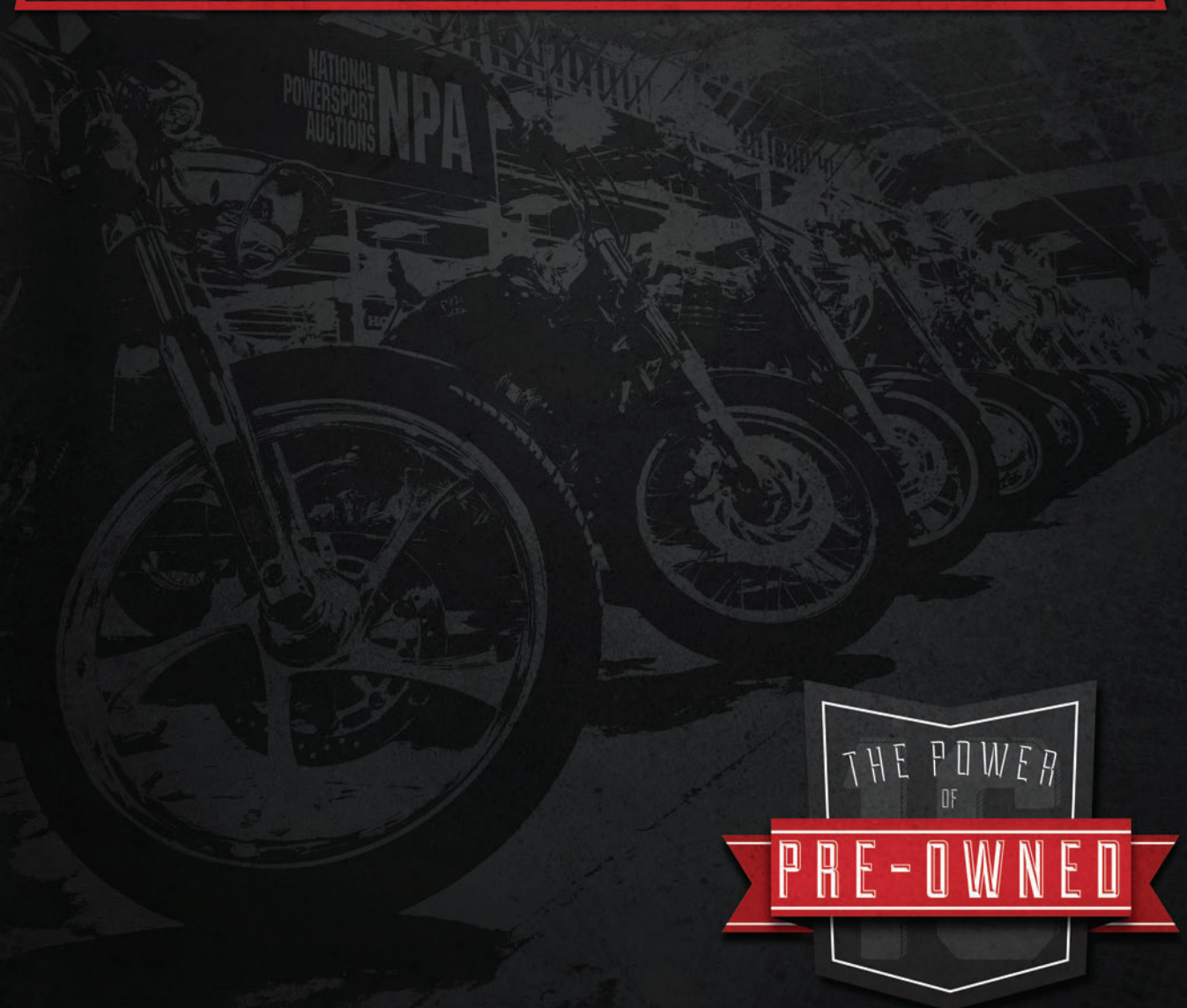
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**They feel that women are more trustworthy, that they're not just trying to sell them something — that they're really trying to help them."**

— Lynn Nathan on how customers respond to female staff

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## On the cover

What customer can refuse these smiles? Lynn Nathan, owner of Powersports East, and daughter (and store GM) Rebecca. Photo by Denmarsh Photography.



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# FROM THE EDITOR

Mary Slepicka

## Stop the moto-snobbery

**WHAT DOES A MOTORCYCLE** rider look like? Or an ATV enthusiast? Do they wear their hair a certain way? Do all men have mustaches? Do all women wear lots of dangling jewelry? Do they all walk into your store in full gear?

Of course they don't. Riders come from all walks of life. They're 18, 45 and 68 years old. They are thin, medium and heavy. They wear everything from jeans to business suits. They're of all races and heritages. Some of them look like outlaws, some look like pin-ups, some look like dentists and some look like moms.

Some of them ride all the time and in all weather conditions. Some of them ride just on sunny weekends. Some of them ride once a month, and some of them just ride along. And maybe some don't ride, but might want to learn and would like to get some information from you.

But they've all walked in your store for a reason.

I was doing a market visit earlier this spring, visiting about a dozen dealerships over four days. In all but three cases, I entered the store and walked around the showroom for between (I timed it) five to 12 minutes, touching product, picking stuff up, looking for sizes, throwing a leg over a vehicle before anyone came up and said "Hello." And in several cases, there were no other customers.

In one dealership I recall a salesperson walking by me twice before turning and saying, "Oh, do you need help?" The parts guys hid behind the counter, prepared to put as much interference as possible between them and their paying customer (if one had walked in). In

another case, the GM stayed behind the counter watching a couple look at helmets. He wasn't going to help them, he said, because 'they probably are going to just look and then buy off the Internet.' And he wasn't ready to expend any energy to try and change their mind, if indeed that's what they were doing.

I spent a half hour in an apparel area at another store trying in vain to find a certain size of \$300 jacket while the three accessory department ladies gabbed at the jewelry counter 10 feet away.

When I'm walking into a dealership and it's not for work, I'm there for a personal reason — to spend money, or to get information and enough attention so that I'm prompted to come back and spend money. I'm looking for a friendly face, a knowledgeable resource, an acknowledgment that I exist. It's the reason I do business with the dealership 30 miles up the road rather than the one 17 blocks from my house.

Now, I don't look like the stereotypical biker. (I recall riding into Sturgis in 1990 not in leathers but in a snazzy Eddie Bauer red rain jacket and full-face helmet...what can I say...) *But my point is, who does?* I'm sorry, but some of the dealer principals I see look like they'd be more at home on a golf cart than a full dresser.

Regardless of whether your visitors ride every day or once a month, they're still paying customers and they deserve your respect.

It's time to stop the moto-snobbery. Do you want the sale, or don't you?

— Mary Slepicka, [mslepicka@dealernews.com](mailto:mslepicka@dealernews.com)

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## Unmatched Service. Unbelievable Results.

To Chris Brewer and other Henderson, N.C. retailers, being able to draw consumers outside this quaint city of 15,000 is not only important, it's critical. That's why Brewer, owner of a well-established powersports dealership, has not only accumulated a number of well-known brands, but key sales and marketing services that extend his store's reach far north of the Kerr Lake Recreation Area and far south to the larger cities of Durham and Raleigh.

One of those sales and marketing services Brewer uses to spread his unit inventory to places outside of Henderson is CycleTrader.com, the industry's largest online unit marketing site with 1.5 million monthly unique visitors (Source: Adobe SiteCatalyst, 2013).

And getting those units online quickly is made easier using a direct feed from Brewer's PowerSports Network website. Dominion Powersports Solutions provides unmatched service in delivering a complete suite of business tools for dealers like Chris Brewer.

Read more about how he uses CycleTrader.com and PowerSports Network at [www.dominionpowersports.com/unmatched](http://www.dominionpowersports.com/unmatched)

"We're in a small town in North Carolina, but we're now selling units to consumers in Pittsburgh, Maine, Florida, and Georgia."

Chris Brewer from Brewer Cycles uses CycleTrader.com and PowerSports Network



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Dominion Powersports Solutions specializes in delivering leading-edge business solutions tailored to the needs of powersports dealers, including operations management, inventory, lead management, CRM, website, online marketing and social media. The company has a 30-year history of product innovation and is known for personalized relationships with dealers and industry partners.





# HONORING OUR HARLEY-DAVIDSON DEALERS

The Harley-Davidson Motor Company is proud to present and recognize the 2012 Bar & Shield Award Recipients, and those dealerships celebrating their 25th and 50th year as a continuously family-owned Harley-Davidson dealer.



## PLATINUM CIRCLE OF DISTINCTION AWARD RECIPIENTS (NATIONAL AWARD)

Greeley Harley-Davidson  
Greeley, Colorado

Cox's Harley-Davidson of Rock Hill  
Rock Hill, South Carolina

Fort Worth Harley-Davidson  
Fort Worth, Texas

Cox's Northern Tier Harley-Davidson  
Mansfield, Pennsylvania

Corpus Christi Harley-Davidson  
Corpus Christi, Texas

Wild West Harley-Davidson  
Lubbock, Texas



## GOLD CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE AWARD RECIPIENTS

### CENTRAL REGION

Harley-Davidson of Bloomington  
Bloomington, Indiana

Man O' War Harley-Davidson  
Lexington, Kentucky

Z & M Harley-Davidson Sales  
Greensburg, Pennsylvania

Mike's Harley-Davidson Sales  
Delbarton, West Virginia

### NORTH PLAINS REGION

Nees Harley-Davidson  
Galesburg, Illinois

Workman Harley-Davidson  
Rock Falls, Illinois

Faribault Harley-Davidson  
Faribault, Minnesota

Worth Harley-Davidson  
Kansas City, Missouri

### NORTHEAST REGION

Heritage Harley-Davidson  
Concord, New Hampshire

Harley-Davidson of Ocean County  
Lakewood, New Jersey

Harley-Davidson  
of Nassau County  
Bellmore, New York

Wilkins Harley-Davidson  
Barre, Vermont

### SOUTH PLAINS REGION

Mike Bruno's Bayou Country  
Harley-Davidson  
Houma, Louisiana

Cajun Harley-Davidson  
Scott, Louisiana

Route 66 Harley-Davidson  
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Longhorn Harley-Davidson  
Grand Prairie, Texas

### SOUTHEAST REGION

Adamec Harley-Davidson  
of Jacksonville  
Jacksonville, Florida

Smokin' Harley-Davidson  
Winston Salem, North Carolina

Thunder Tower Harley-Davidson  
Elgin, South Carolina

Colonial Harley-Davidson  
Prince George, Virginia

### WEST REGION

Bakersfield Harley-Davidson  
Bakersfield, California

Antelope Valley Harley-Davidson  
Lancaster, California

Red Rock Harley-Davidson  
Las Vegas, Nevada

Lone Wolf Harley-Davidson  
Spokane Valley, Washington



## SILVER CIRCLE OF ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENTS

### CENTRAL REGION

Indianapolis Southside  
Harley-Davidson  
Indianapolis, Indiana

IndyWest Harley-Davidson  
Plainfield, Indiana

Wolverine Harley-Davidson  
Clinton Township, Michigan

Biker Bob's Harley-Davidson  
Motown  
Taylor, Michigan

Adventure Harley-Davidson  
Dover, Ohio

Western Reserve  
Harley-Davidson Motorcycles  
Mentor, Ohio

Buckminns D&D Harley-Davidson  
Xenia, Ohio

McMahon's Harley-Davidson  
Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania

### NORTH PLAINS REGION

Conrad's Harley-Davidson  
Shorewood, Illinois

Calumet Harley-Davidson  
Munster, Indiana

Big Barn Harley-Davidson  
Des Moines, Iowa

Bergdale Harley-Davidson  
Albert Lea, Minnesota

Stutsman Harley-Davidson  
Jamestown, North Dakota

Black Hills Harley-Davidson  
Rapid City, South Dakota

J & L Harley-Davidson  
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Deluxe Harley-Davidson  
Casper, Wyoming

### NORTHEAST REGION

TSI Harley-Davidson  
Ellington, Connecticut

Old Glory Harley-Davidson  
Laurel, Maryland

Stan's Harley-Davidson  
Batavia, New York

Miracle Mile Harley-Davidson  
Great Neck, New York

American Harley-Davidson  
North Tonawanda, New York

Suffolk County Harley-Davidson  
Oakdale, New York

Harley-Davidson of Erie  
Erie, Pennsylvania

Susquehanna Valley  
Harley-Davidson  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

### SOUTH PLAINS REGION

Pig Trail Harley-Davidson  
Rogers, Arkansas

Four Rivers Harley-Davidson  
Paducah, Kentucky

Mike Bruno's Northshore  
Harley-Davidson  
Slidell, Louisiana

Desperado Harley-Davidson  
McAllen, Texas

Legacy Harley-Davidson  
Odessa, Texas

Central Texas Harley-Davidson  
Round Rock  
Round Rock, Texas

Caliente Harley-Davidson  
San Antonio, Texas

Whiskey River Harley-Davidson  
Texarkana, Texas

### SOUTHEAST REGION

Fort Myers Harley-Davidson  
Fort Myers, Florida

Gulf Coast Harley-Davidson  
New Port Richey, Florida

Jim's Harley-Davidson  
of St. Petersburg  
St. Petersburg, Florida

Great South Harley-Davidson  
Newnan, Georgia

Cox's Harley-Davidson  
Asheboro, North Carolina

Ray Price Harley-Davidson  
Raleigh, North Carolina

Harley-Davidson of Lynchburg  
Lynchburg, Virginia

Shenandoah Harley-Davidson  
Staunton, Virginia

### WEST REGION

Mother Road Harley-Davidson  
Kingman, Arizona

Arrowhead Harley-Davidson  
Peoria, Arizona

Buddy Stubbs Arizona  
Harley-Davidson  
Phoenix, Arizona

Harley-Davidson of Tucson  
Tucson, Arizona

Simi Valley Harley-Davidson  
Moorpark, California

Harley-Davidson of Sacramento  
Sacramento, California

Harley-Davidson San Jose  
San Jose, California

High Desert Harley-Davidson  
Meridian, Idaho





## BRONZE CIRCLE OF RECOGNITION AWARD RECIPIENTS

### CENTRAL REGION

**Heart of Dixie Harley-Davidson**  
Pelham, Alabama

**Harley-Davidson of Kokomo**  
Kokomo, Indiana

**Benson Harley-Davidson**  
Muncie, Indiana

**Harley-Davidson of Valparaiso**  
Valparaiso, Indiana

**Sandy's Harley-Davidson Sport Center**  
Fremont, Michigan

**Lake Erie Harley-Davidson**  
Avon, Ohio

**Powder Keg Harley-Davidson**  
Mason, Ohio

**Harley-Davidson Biketown**  
Youngstown, Ohio

**Appleton Harley-Davidson**  
Clarksville, Tennessee

**Bumpus Harley-Davidson of Murfreesboro**  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee

**Black Wolf Harley-Davidson**  
Bristol, Virginia

**Valley Harley-Davidson**  
Wheeling, West Virginia

### NORTH PLAINS REGION

**TNT Harley-Davidson**  
Quincy, Illinois

**Chi-Town Harley-Davidson**  
Tinley Park, Illinois

**Wiebler's Quad Cities Harley-Davidson**  
Davenport, Iowa

**Rawhide Harley-Davidson**  
Olathe, Kansas

**Apol's Harley-Davidson**  
Alexandria, Minnesota

**Zylstra Harley-Davidson**  
Elk River, Minnesota

**Mankato Harley-Davidson**  
Mankato, Minnesota

**Gail's Harley-Davidson**  
Grandview, Missouri

**St. Charles Harley-Davidson**  
Saint Charles, Missouri

**RoughRider Harley-Davidson**  
Mandan, North Dakota

**Harley-Davidson Appleton**  
Appleton, Wisconsin

**Milwaukee Harley-Davidson**  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

### NORTHEAST REGION

**Harley-Davidson of Danbury**  
Danbury, Connecticut

**Harley-Davidson of Baltimore**  
Baltimore, Maryland

**Harley-Davidson of Frederick**  
Frederick, Maryland

**Tramontin Harley-Davidson**  
Hope, New Jersey

**Liberty Harley-Davidson**  
Rahway, New Jersey

**McDermott's Harley-Davidson**  
Fort Ann, New York

**Performance Harley-Davidson**  
Syracuse, New York

**Battlefield Harley-Davidson**  
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

**Baer Harley-Davidson**  
Honesdale, Pennsylvania

**Valley Forge Harley-Davidson**  
Narritown, Pennsylvania

**Keystone Harley-Davidson**  
Parryville, Pennsylvania

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Essex Junction, Vermont

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Grand Junction, Colorado

**Rocky Mountain Harley-Davidson**  
Littleton, Colorado

**Thunder Mountain Harley-Davidson**  
Loveland, Colorado

**Renegade Harley-Davidson**  
Alexandria, Louisiana

**Bossier City Harley-Davidson**  
Bossier City, Louisiana

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Allen, Texas

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Beaumont, Texas

**Big Spring Harley-Davidson**  
Big Spring, Texas

**Dallas Harley-Davidson**  
Garland, Texas

**Laredo Harley-Davidson**  
Laredo, Texas

**Greene Harley-Davidson**  
New Braunfels, Texas

**Beers Harley-Davidson**  
Vernal, Utah

### SOUTHEAST REGION

**Stormy Hill Harley-Davidson**  
Clermont, Florida

**Peterson's Harley-Davidson South**  
Miami, Florida

**Harley-Davidson of Ocala**  
Ocala, Florida

**Space Coast Harley-Davidson**  
Palm Bay, Florida

**Harley-Davidson of Pensacola**  
Pensacola, Florida

**Harley-Davidson of Tampa**  
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**Harley-Davidson of Cartersville**  
Cartersville, Georgia

**Down Home Harley-Davidson**  
Burlington, North Carolina

**Harley-Davidson of New Bern**  
New Bern, North Carolina

**Harley-Davidson of Asheville**  
Swannanoa, North Carolina

**Crossroads Harley-Davidson**  
Wilkesboro, North Carolina

**Patriot Harley-Davidson**  
Fairfax, Virginia

### WEST REGION

**Superstition Harley-Davidson**  
Apache Junction, Arizona

**Chandler Harley-Davidson**  
Chandler, Arizona

**Chester's Harley-Davidson**  
Mesa, Arizona

**Bobby's Territorial Harley-Davidson**  
Yuma, Arizona

**Mathews Harley-Davidson**  
Fresno, California

**Orange County Harley-Davidson**  
Irvine, California

**Quaid Harley-Davidson**  
Loma Linda, California

**Palm Springs Harley-Davidson**  
N. Palm Springs, California

**San Diego Harley-Davidson Company**  
San Diego, California

**McGuire Harley-Davidson**  
Walnut Creek, California

**Chester's Grand Teton Harley-Davidson**  
Idaho Falls, Idaho

**Barnett's Las Cruces Harley-Davidson**  
Las Cruces, New Mexico



## LONGEVITY RECIPIENTS FOR 2013

### 50 YEAR

**Frieze Harley-Davidson Sales**  
O'Fallon, Illinois  
March 4, 1963

### 25 YEAR

**Harley-Davidson of Fresno**  
Fresno, California  
September 26, 1988

**Mitchell's Modesto Harley-Davidson**  
Modesto, California  
February 1, 1988

**Biggs Harley-Davidson**  
San Marcos, California  
March 9, 1988

**Metro Harley-Davidson**  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa  
May 24, 1988

**Twin Cities Harley-Davidson North**  
Blaine, Minnesota  
October 6, 1988

**Surdyke Harley-Davidson**  
Festus, Missouri  
February 22, 1988

**Worth Harley-Davidson**  
Kansas City, Missouri  
February 1, 1988

**Denney's Harley-Davidson**  
Springfield, Missouri  
December 22, 1988

**Russ' Ocean State Harley-Davidson**  
Warwick, Rhode Island  
January 27, 1988

**Texas Harley-Davidson**  
Bedford, Texas  
December 16, 1988

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## HAVE YOU SEEN JOAN?

### DESIGNWRAPS CEO RIDING TO EVERY HARLEY DEALER IN AMERICA

BY APRIL, Joan Krenning had traveled almost the entire length of the country in her quest to visit every single Harley-Davidson dealer in the U.S.

The founder/CEO of DesignWraps, of course, wants to round up sales and promote American-made products. But her Glory USA Freedom Ride also will raise funds for the Wounded Warrior Project as well as Helping with Horsepower, a charity directed by Laura Klock of Klock Werks.



"A small portion of every product sold by DesignWraps Brands will go directly into the Wraps of Hope Foundation bank account," Krenning said. "This guarantees that the money raised by the Freedom Ride will be donated directly to the charities." Proceeds from Krenning's eBay charity store and donations also will be forwarded to the organizations.

This year Krenning hopes to check off 200 Harley dealers from her list, as well as log more than 60,000 miles. In total, Krenning expects to ride 200,000 miles.

Krenning came up with the idea during the 2012 election season, when the country was dividing instead of uniting; this was especially true at rallies like Sturgis, she said. "I just felt there was more hatred than ever before," she told *Dealernews*. "People basically had this 'If you're not going to vote the way I do, I can't be your friend'-type attitude.

"I was just so heartsick over Americans fighting over this," she continued. "We have so many freedoms in America. We should love each other, and that should have no bearing on who we vote for or what we believe."

Krenning left Phoenix on Feb. 2, her Street Glide wrapped in a replica of the Bill of Rights designed by Red Phoenix Marketing. Klock Werks donated a windshield and other products, Ride Wright Wheels donated wheels with the phrase "Made in America for Lady Road Dog" etched into them, and Roaring Toyz donated floorboards from its new line for the V-twin market. Other sponsors include Top 100 Dealer Harley-Davidson of Scottsdale, Yaffe's Bagger Nation, MGS Custom Bikes, Danny Gray Seats, Wire Plus Electronics and Saddlemen.

Krenning had originally planned to ride alone, but as word got out others expressed an interest in riding along at various legs of her trip. "This year, I'll be 60 years old," Krenning said. "I'm hoping that people will be inspired, that here's this older gal out here doing it, and if she can do it, so can I."

Krenning's blog, [www.ladyroaddog.com](http://www.ladyroaddog.com), will chronicle her travels. — Cynthia Furey

## SNEAKY, SNEAKY: ELECTRIC'S FUTURE IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

"We see fleet sales as great opportunity," says Richard Walker, CEO of Zero Motorcycles. "We see our core business built around sales of bikes to consumers through the dealer channel, but we also see huge opportunities for the application of our vehicles in fleet applications.

"The best example we've got right now is the police. It turns out police like the idea of a quiet vehicle for community policing. The city of Monterey [Calif.], and their use of Zero motorcycles is on YouTube. They talk about how it fits in with their stated policy of being green, it supports community policing; plus, they can go on trails where people are running and hiking, and they say can sneak up on people. It's a great application for that.

"One of the conversations we're starting to have with our dealers is to knock on the local police department door and explain what first attracted you to these vehicles, and see if you can get them to buy one to evaluate. This can lead to more sales, and of course

that has a knock-on effect. When consumers see the police on certain vehicles, it gives [them] a lot more credibility."

Read more of Mike Vaughan's interview with Walker, starting on page 28. Press image below courtesy Zero





**BRITISH INVASION.** Oxford Products is making a big push into the U.S. market with a new warehouse in the Southeast, a major product expansion and a claimed 40 percent dealer margins on all products.

The company is eager to fill what it perceives as a shortage of sportbike luggage (Oxford's bread-and-butter product line) in the United States. "The amount of dedicated, stylish and colored options of luggage that's available to American sportbike riders has not been as expansive as it is in Europe," Eric McFarlane, general manager of the company's U.S. division, said.

The 75-page Oxford catalog for the U.S. market also includes heated grips, vehicle covers, battery chargers, stands, tools, Kevlar jeans, security items and a variety of accessories. Iron Pony's Chris Jones has built a store within his Top 100 Hall of Fame dealership in Westerville, Ohio, to contain every product the company offers.

"I think Oxford probably has the best packaging in the industry," Jones said. "There are so many companies that make great products and then they don't spend any money on their packaging."

—Arlo Redwine



## TOP STORIES ON DEALERNEWS.COM

**SUZUKI BEGINS CUTTING MOTORCYCLE DEALERS** More than 80 in mid-March receive notice that their franchises will not be picked up by the new Suzuki Motor of America.

**TERMINATED DEALERS REPRESENT 2.5 PERCENT OF SALES** Suzuki's Larry Vandiver says OEM is offering to repurchase all eligible inventory, including P&A, and resolve each claim to 100 percent from the dealers not picked up by the new company.

**NHTSA FINES AN EXPENSIVE LESSON TO LEARN FOR TENNESSEE DEALER** Southern Honda Power-sports agrees to pay \$125,000 fine to settle charges it sold unrepaired, recalled vehicles between 2007 and 2012.

**NEW HAMPSHIRE BILL WOULD EXPAND FRANCHISED DEALERS' RIGHTS** Includes provision that would enable dealers to view their OEM files once a year.

**HARD PARTS ABOUND AT PARTS, DRAG WESTERN SHOWCASE** New seats, luggage, performance products and accessories on display in Anaheim.

**OUTPOST HARLEY-DAVIDSON SUSTAINS HEAVY STORM DAMAGE** Second-story façade is blown off the building at this Pueblo, Colo., Top 100 dealership.

**90-YEAR-OLD TECHNICIAN RETIRES AFTER 64 YEARS ON THE JOB** Kenny Clark started at **Hap's Cycle Sales** during the Truman administration. "I still like what I'm doing," he tells reporters.

**BURGLAR LOOTS HARLEY DEALER AS ITS FOUNDER IS LAID TO REST** Security video shows perpetrator laying out a sheet and stuffing it full of leathers. Store was closed so staff could attend memorial service.

**MOTORCYCLES AND MOONSHINE GET DEALER INTO HOT WATER** Authorities say the shop owner and his buddy were drinking at the business, and then got into an argument about an ex-girlfriend. From there, things got interesting.

**TRIUMPH RECALLS MOTORCYCLES TO REPLACE TURN-SIGNAL STEMS** OEM inspecting 3,800 units due to a manufacturing error that caused the stems to be weak

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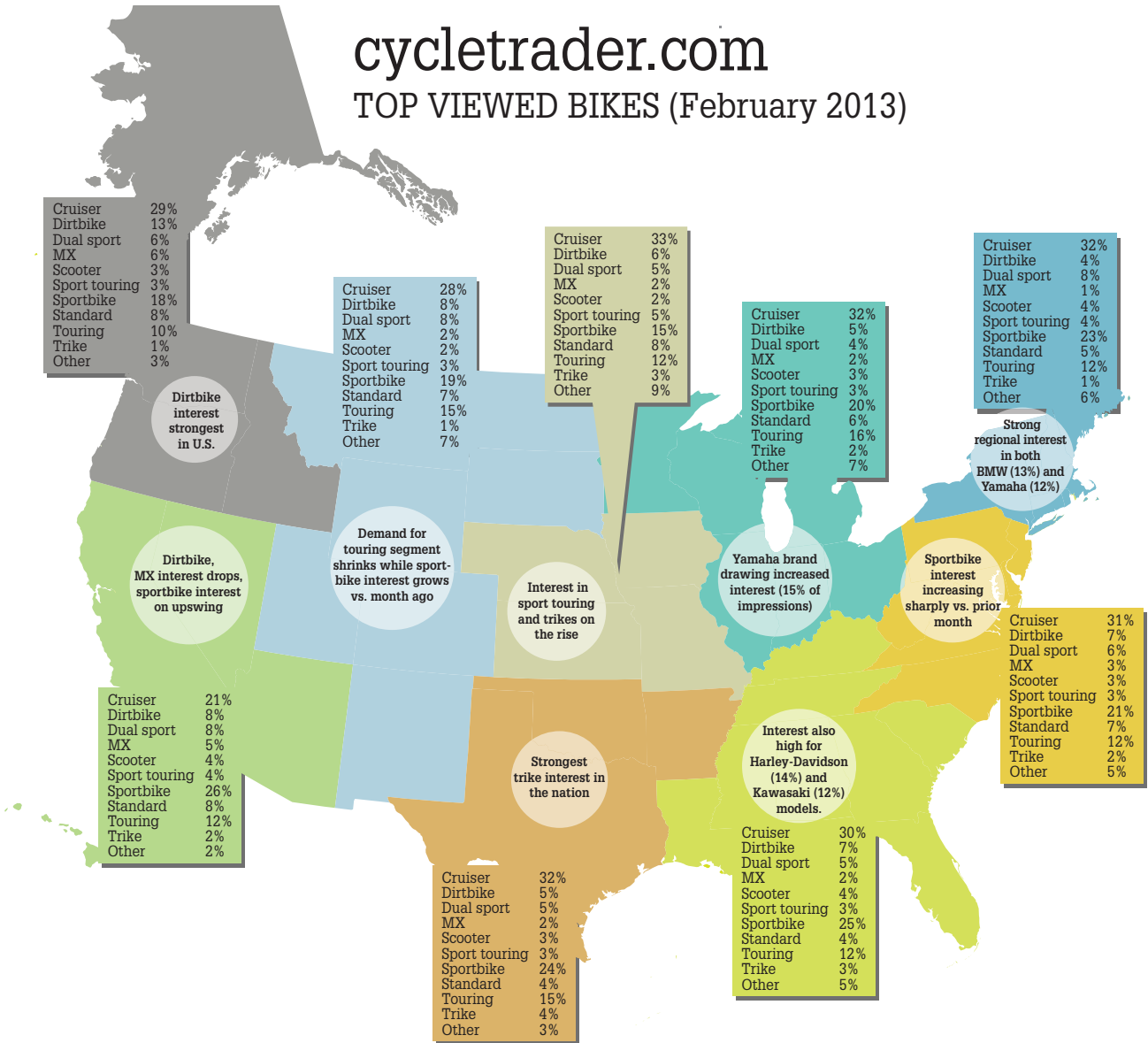
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### TOP VIEWED BIKES (February 2013)



#### Top OEMs by % of impressions

<b>Central Plains</b>	Harley-Davidson 23%, Honda 18%	<b>Northeast</b>	Harley-Davidson 17%, Honda 14%	<b>Rocky Mountain</b>	Harley-Davidson 28%, Honda 15%
<b>Great Lakes</b>	Harley-Davidson 20%, Honda 20%	<b>Pacific</b>	Harley-Davidson 17%, Honda 17%	<b>Southeast</b>	Honda 23%, Yamaha 17%
<b>Mid Atlantic</b>	Harley-Davidson 22%, Yamaha 18%	<b>Pacific Alaska</b>	Harley-Davidson 21%, Honda 19%	<b>Southwest</b>	Harley Davidson 20%, Honda 19%

Consumer study of vehicles enthusiasts are viewing online at CycleTrader.com. Study conducted by Dominion Insights, which collects data and reports to dealers and OEMs. Find out which specific models received most consumer interest at <http://dominioninsights.com/dealernews>

### TOP VIEWED PRODUCTS on dealernews.com



Honda's CBR500R gets exhaust boost from LeoVince

Stahlbus drain valve cleans up oil changes

R&G tail sliders cover your customers' assets



Beard's Super-TZ suspension seats built for high-performance SxS riding

Staun II tire deflator saves time on the trail

#### CORRECTION.

Mike Vaughan's "Out of My Mind" column in the April issue incorrectly claimed that there were 8,985 franchised and independent dealers in 2012, according to MIC figures. The correct total for 2012 is 9,895 dealers. We apologize for the error.



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Photo: Adam Campbell



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# Put the 'R' back into CRM

TOO MANY DEALERS FOCUS ON CUSTOMER MANAGEMENT AND NOT THE RELATIONSHIP

MANY dealership managers are familiar with customer relationship management, but too many focus on just customer management without much thought for the relationship.



Kilgore is the founder of the Powersports Business Development Center, co-founder of Traffic Log Pro and a veteran of RideNow Powersports, and now director of business development for More Than Rewards. He believes a lot of dealers misunderstand the role of digital technology. Dealers accustomed to the traditional showroom pace may not realize that web or email-based inquires have to be treated with a greater degree of urgency.

“One dealer, the verbiage at the bottom of their web page basically says, ‘We’ll get back to you in a couple of days. We’re busy,’” Kilgore said. That’s a turnoff for a guy with money burning a hole in his pocket today, he noted.

Kilgore discussed the state of CRM with Senior Editor Holly J. Wagner.

## Dealernews: When it comes to customer relationship management, what are dealers doing well?

**Kilgore:** Autoresponders. Most of the customer relationship managers and lead managers right now have a way to set those autoresponders up, and an autoresponder is so important. It’s a process. The autoresponder comes out, then there is a phone call, the invitation to come into the dealership.

## Is there a correlation between dealership size or sales volume and its CRM efforts and performance?

When we first introduced CRM, the bigger dealerships were more progressive. Who is more likely to be understaffed? Mom-and-pop dealerships. They may be cutting corners. Or maybe “that’s the way they’ve always done it.” At the bigger dealerships, it is all about accountability.

When V-Sept came out, they had such a good marketing campaign — they really helped dealerships understand what good CRM was. They definitely wised up that industry. And Polaris Industries did a really wonderful thing: It promoted the use of a lead manager and then rewarded the dealership for using it with the Max Velocity program.

## So where are dealers dropping the ball?

**Kilgore:** Follow-up. Follow-up is one of those things where dealerships fall into one category or the other. [Some] are follow-up crazy; maybe they come from auto or RV [dealerships] and they are used to really hitting the phones. Other dealerships only call back folks they consider Mr. or Mrs. Goodbuyer.

Sales teams don’t use the CRM as well as we want. You have to be taken off the

floor to learn. “When you’re learning, you are not earning,” they say. We’ve got to train these people without them realizing they’re being trained. CRM is behavioral; it’s how you act when things happen.

## Okay, how do you overcome sales force resistance?

Meet with that group and get it all out in the open before you start. The salespeople have to understand this is not “Big Brother” so the sales manager or owner can see what they’re doing all day. They have to understand you can feed information into these systems and they will pretty much do everything for you.

The biggest issue is that you always want to get the salespeople to make their follow-up phone calls. Some will and some won’t. I’ve seen plenty of people who have done quality outbound phone calls. They may not be the best at making the deal on the floor, but they may be the best at follow-up phone calls.

So set goals for salespeople that exceed the number of customers they will get from the front door every day. If they will get three customers from the door, make them log five.

## Usually salespeople need some immediate gratification to get started. What’s the simplest thing a dealer can do to make a difference today?

**Kilgore:** Treat every customer as a buyer. They have a whole set of rules for that in the sales process. Log every person that shows interest to the dealership, whether it be through the front door, side door, sales or service, web leads, inbound phone calls, emails, social media outlets. Then follow up with outbound phone calls.

You have to stop thinking sales is the only revenue source. Instead, treat every interaction as a revenue source. Every one of those touchpoints can make a sale.

There is so much going on out there with social media and the Internet. We are just on the tip of it right now. The most important thing dealers can do right now is build that wealth of data.

## What’s the most important thing to do today for long-term success? One specific step?

**Kilgore:** Accountability. Accountability in customer service. Dealerships must understand that they have to follow up with every one of their customers. Some can’t seem to get it done; they throw money at it but they are not getting it done. You have to ask yourself whether you have someone to do this, or whether you should hire someone from outside to do it.

## How can I tell if all this is working? How soon should I expect a measurable result, and how do I measure it?

**Kilgore:** You have to drive that result on a daily basis. CRMs or Internet lead managers or whatever, somebody has to be accountable. Salespeople, it’s the choice that they have made to be there. If you don’t sell anything, you don’t get paid. But you have to be accountable. Inspect what you expect. Each of those CRM providers has that — to inspect what you expect.

If we build it day by day, we build a good week and then a good month. Every contact they make with a customer is important. Just having a database is powerful. Start by logging everyone who comes into the dealership for 30 days. **D**





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BY JOE DELMONT

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## PWC, ATV AND USED BIKE SALES PROVIDE SOLID INCREASES IN EARNINGS

*EDITOR'S NOTE: The Dealer LAB project is a joint effort between Dealernews and PowerHouse Dealer Services, a consulting firm run by Bill Sherk, detailing his efforts to return a Florida powersports dealership renamed Destination Powersports to profitability. The financial information in this report is taken from the dealership's Composite Report supplied by Sherk and is prepared as part of the dealership's participation in the PowerHouse Dealer 20 Group. The Composite Report is produced from the store's monthly financial report. In preparing these Dealer LAB reports, Dealernews reviews the dealership's unaudited P&L statement and Balance Sheet and its Composite Report.*

**THE STRONG 2013** performance of **Destination Powersports** in Punta Gorda, Fla., continued through its second month with a February earnings performance double that of the same period last year.

February sales were driven by solid increases in sales of new watercraft and ATVs, plus sales of used motorcycles. Total sales of new and used units were 57, up from 44 in February 2012.

Unit sales generated a gross profit of \$51,471 for the month, up from \$43,604 last year.

"New powersports sales are driven very much by weather and OEM programs of the moment," Bill Sherk says. "I really don't know of any reason for the product mix changes year-over-year, since we did nothing different in terms of promotions. One thing that is different is that our used inventory mix overall continues to improve."

During February the sales department created

another \$10,000 in profit from some units it picked up and ran through an auction at wholesale.

Earnings were \$36,596 on total revenues of \$535,130, up from earnings of \$18,129 on total revenues of \$387,872. Gross profit for February was \$133,487, up from \$104,183 last year.

So far, the dealership is well ahead of last year in sales and earnings. Total sales for January and February are \$1,106,945, compared to only \$787,198 for the same period last year. Two-month earnings were \$78,935, more than double the \$37,237 two-month earnings total posted last year.

Inventories in February were lower than last year — 255 units (\$2,345,399) vs. 263 units (\$2,108,107), respectively.

F&I also did well for the month, generating a gross profit of \$22,569 — nearly double the \$11,784 earned in February 2012. Twenty-eight units were fi-

### Month-Over-Month Comparisons and YTD Totals: February 2013

SALES	% of Total Dollars			% of Total Dollars			% of Total Dollars			
	Feb-13	Dealer	Top Gun	Feb-12	Dealer	Jan-13	YTD 2012	YTD 2013	PVS	DLR
Units Sold (New & Used)	53			49		53	87	110		
Sales	410,288	76.7	77	286,805	73.9	444,008	584,980	854,296	7,766	77.2
F&I (net)	22,569	4.2	4	11,784	3	19,043	25,838	41,612	378	3.8
Parts	37,449	7	6	24,244	6.3	30,163	46,693	67,612	615	6.1
Accessories	29,136	5.4	7	37,761	9.7	34,757	71,092	63,893	581	5.8
Service	35,688	6.7	6	27,278	7	43,844	58,595	79,532	723	7.2
<b>Total Sales</b>	<b>535,130</b>	<b>100*</b>	<b>100*</b>	<b>387,872</b>	<b>100*</b>	<b>571,815</b>	<b>787,198</b>	<b>1,106,945</b>	<b>10,063</b>	<b>100*</b>
Total Cost of Sales	401,643	75.1	76	283,689	73.1	412,777	580,074	814,420	7,404	73.6
Gross Profit	133,487	24.9	24	104,183	26.9	159,038	207,124	292,525	2,659	26.4
EXPENSES	% of Dept. Gross Profit			% of Dept. Gross Profit			% of Dept. Gross Profit			
	Feb-13	Dealer	Top Gun	Feb-12	Dealer	Jan-13	YTD 2012	YTD 2013	PVS	DLR
<b>Payroll</b>										
Total Sales (5.25/4.0 Empl)	29,064	39.3	28	17,887	32.3	33,467	34,804	62,531	568	37.7
Total P&A (2.20/2.5 Empl)	9,787	38.7	52	8,452	37.9	10,175	16,386	19,962	181	38.6
Total Service 4.50/5.00 Empl)	20,703	58.0	57	14,464	53.0	25,467	30,899	46,170	420	58.1
Flooring	8,698	11.7	12	6,440	11.6	8,394	11,505	17,092	155	10.3
Admin Payroll	6,969	5.2	8	6,631	6.4	8,028	13,604	14,997	136	5.1
Advertising	3,399	2.5	2	4,190	4	3,263	8,033	6,662	62	2.3
Administration	15,316	11.5	14	13,794	13.2	21,390	26,461	36,706	334	12.5
Rent	12,355	9.3	12	13,108	12.6	12,797	25,275	25,152	229	8.6
Co. insurance	2,095	1.6	3	1,845	1.8	2,098	3,659	4,193	38	1.4
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>108,386</b>	<b>81.2</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>86,811</b>	<b>83.3</b>	<b>125,079</b>	<b>170,626</b>	<b>233,465</b>	<b>2,122</b>	<b>79.8</b>
Misc. Expense	0	0	7			0		0	0	0
Additional Income	11,495	2	2	757	0	8,380	739	19,875	181	1.8
<b>Net Profit</b>	<b>36,596</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>18,129</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>42,339</b>	<b>37,237</b>	<b>78,935</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>7.1</b>
<b>Net Profit + Misc Exp</b>	<b>36,596</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>18,129</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>42,339</b>	<b>37,237</b>	<b>78,935</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>7.1</b>

Notes: Top Gun = The top performing dealerships in the PowerHouse training group. PVS = Per Vehicle Sold. Sherk began operating Punta Gorda dealership on March 1, 2009. \* Totals equal 100 due to rounding of numbers.



nanced in February, compared to 15 units last year. The F&I gain was \$158 per unit sold at retail, and \$61 of that was in finance reserve.

"You either have a source of money for your customers that provides margin opportunity, or you don't," Shenk says. "Three years ago, we had no reserve opportunity. Today we have some on certain street vehicles. The rest of the F&I gain of \$97, in my opinion, was not from us selling better but from finance sources buying deeper than last year (49 percent financed vs. 34 percent last year). A financed deal is much easier than a cash deal to sell finance products."

*"Even if you lose 30 percent of your work force to injury, like we did, you can't drop that person. We could not hire someone to fill that position and then let him go, or not take back the injured tech when he was ready to return to work, even though this caused some customer problems."*

— Bill Shenk

Service produced another strong month, coming in at almost 31 percent ahead of last year. February's revenue was \$35,688, compared to \$27,278 last year, a trend that's reflected in the two-month performance for service. At the end of February, service revenue was almost 36 percent ahead of last year.

There are a couple of reasons for the improvement in service performance. "We had two issues last year," Shenk explains. "First, we had a manager losing focus for several reasons, and second, we had a tech cut the end of his finger off.

"In today's world, the team comes before the customer. What I mean by that is even if you lose 30 percent of your work force to injury, like we did, you can't drop that person. We could not hire

someone to fill that position and then let him go, or not take back the injured tech when he was ready to return to work.

"This really caused customer issues that took time to deal with," he adds.

Customer labor in February was up nicely over last year: \$26,060, compared to \$21,217, a gain of almost 23 percent. Year-to-date, customer labor is up \$14,615, or 32 percent over last year.

Gross profit per service technician in February was \$8,689, off from \$11,143 last February but ahead of the Top Gun performance of \$6,248 for the month. The dealership had three technicians in

February, compared to only two technicians in February 2012.

Total expenses increased 24.8 percent, climbing from \$86,811 to \$108,386. Big expense jumps were attributable to increased compensation for the sales manager and technicians — these two accounted for \$14,504 of the \$21,575 increase.

"Payroll expense for sales was up a bit, from 32.3 percent of gross profit to 34.8 percent, but I'm OK with that ratio," Shenk says.

Year to date, the dealership's net income is 7.1 percent of total sales, more than double the 3.5 percent of sales posted by Top Gun dealers.

Shenk says he is confident that this performance can continue with the team and processes he has in place. **D**



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Powersports East management (l to r): Brandy Sporay, office manager; Lynn Nathan, owner; Rebecca Fasten, GM; and Gina Moussa, Bookkeeper



# EASY DOES IT

POWERSPORTS EAST COMBINES A RELAXED SALES ENVIRONMENT WITH A PARTY ATMOSPHERE TO PUT ITS FAN BASE — ER, CUSTOMER BASE — AT EASE

By Dennis Johnson • Photos by Denmark Photography

*“So much change is in the air. The stock market is up. Way up. The clocks have only just today sprung ahead. Weeks of cold rain have finally given way to brilliant sunshine. Even the most blatant pessimists must now admit that spring is in the air. It is difficult not to be optimistic in general. It is time to ride your bike, damn it!”*

— Excerpt from Powersports East’s March monthly ride report

**EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE** a business becomes such a familiar presence in a customer’s life that the store and all of its employees start to feel like family.

This is the goal of many powersports dealerships — the shared enthusiasm, the regular riding and bench-racing, the first-name-basis hi and goodbye. But what separates a regular marketing drill from a sincere desire to connect? Ask Lynn Nathan (opposite page, second from left); she’s been connecting for 28 years at Powersports East, her Top 100 multiline dealership in Bear, Del.

Monthly street and off-road rides. An open-door policy even on days they’re closed. An exclusive annual customer appreciation day. An annual bike auction. The regular events (parties, actually). A consultative, low-pressure sales atmosphere that likely reflects the nature of a store run by women — one of them, the GM, is Nathan’s daughter, Rebecca (third from left in photo).

But it’s those monthly rides, held since the early days, and the meals and camaraderie shared out on the road that help make the store seem like home. Riding is close to Nathan’s heart. Before opening the dealership, she served as the curriculum director for the Motorcycle Safety Foundation and was, along with her husband Joel Samick, a chief riding instructor. “It gives the riding community in our area a real sense of belonging to the dealership. We want to make them feel like they’re part of the family,” Nathan says. “We want to know them by name and what they ride.”

They launched the off-road rides as a way to show their ATV customers recommended areas where they could legally ride their quads. The street rides emerged after the store ran a motorcycle safety course: The owners figured that with the new riders trained and licensed, it was time to get them out on the road. The camaraderie is informal; during these rides, the owners sometimes may even get to find out why someone shops at another dealership. “It’s very enlightening to tell the truth,” she says.

The now-retired Samick still leads the way for both the street and dirt rides each month, and writes up entertaining and irreverent ride reports for the store’s website. The narratives now serve as something of a voice of the dealership.

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*“I warned everyone about the 35 MPH speed limit and how the road was patrolled and how tickets for speeding cost \$180 (a number that I just made up on the spot.)”*

— Excerpt from the June 2012 street ride report

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While the rides are the thing that keeps the dealership connected to the local riding community, inside the store there’s a little something-something that connects management and employees with their customers. Not only is it a family-run business — with daughter Rebecca slated to take over the store next year when Nathan retires — it’s a dealership proudly run by women: Nathan and her daughter, the store’s insurance agent and bookkeeper. Nathan says that if she could only find female sales personnel she’d be thrilled, but has yet to find anyone to fit the bill.

What’s so special about the atmosphere of a store with so many women in positions of power? Well, for one thing it engenders an overall culture of the business that’s much more touchy-feely, Nathan says. Customers respond differently to women than they do to men, she points out. New riders, especially men, are more at ease when dealing with women, and they don’t mind admitting to a female employee that they don’t know what they’re doing. “They don’t get embarrassed,” Nathan says. “They also feel that women are more trustworthy, that they’re not just trying to sell them something — that they’re really trying to help them.”

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*“It was the kind of Sunday when all you want to do is stay in bed but, hey, I am a man with a mission. My job is to get you all out on your bikes so they wear out and need service. Eventually, if I am successful in my mission, you will have to buy a new bike. New bikes are cool so that will make you happy. It’s also good for business so we all win.”*

— Excerpt from the April 2013 street “Blob Tour” ride report

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And then there’s the clichéd nature of a motorcycle store being an aggressive, testosterone-filled haven of high-pressure manliness. Not





so at Powersports East. "We pride ourselves in not having aggressive sales staff," she explains. "We're very low-pressure. If someone's too high-pressure, they don't last here. It's not part of our culture."

In addition to keeping a more mellow sales atmosphere, Nathan insists on a clean, professional-looking store. Not only does it make a great first impression and allow customers to easily find merchandise, it adds a built-in value to any of the store's products or services, she says.

### EXTENDED PEDIGREE

Nathan is no stranger to running things from the top. In addition to her role at the MSF back before the safety agency relocated to Southern California, she ran a number of other businesses, taught at the university level as an English instructor at the University of Massachusetts, and worked as a bilingual education director at Newbury College in Brookline, Mass. Oh, and she raced Formula IV from 1976 to 1981.

"I've never done anything where I wasn't the head of it," she says.

One person who can attest to Nathan's prowess at the helm is industry veteran and longtime *Dealernews* columnist, Eric Anderson, who worked with Nathan during the transition of moving the MSF from the East Coast to the West Coast. Not only does Anderson con-

sider Nathan a genius, she's a heckuva rider, too. "She taught me how to scrape the pegs on a Harley," Anderson says.

Anderson points out that Nathan can take very complex issues and break them down into something everyone can understand. It's an ability that not only helped her develop what is now modern motorcycle training curriculum, but also attack something as complex as the retail business, he says. "She gets retail and so does her husband. She is very interesting and so are her children. It's an incredible family," Anderson adds. "You might think they're just academic, but with the Nathan family, they can envision it, create it and implement it. When she took on the task of retail, I was like, 'Wow, watch this.'"

***"Turnout at these ATV rides has been thin lately. All the rain we've had is not helping, but neither are you, sitting there at home staring at your computer screen. Hey, you bought the darn thing. Why not take it out and ride?"***

— *Excerpt from the September 2011 off-road ride report.*

Turns out that Anderson's observation was prescient. A wife and husband jump into the retail world and after 28 years are still going strong. (OK, there were a few major hiccups along the way; more on







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that later.) One way to make your dealership feel like home, a place to be when the customers are not riding, is to simply invite them in for a good time.

"I like to run things where it's a party," Nathan says. "It's not a sale. There is a sale going on that day, but once things get started, it's a party."

The big one this spring was the annual customer appreciation fiesta, complete with free Mexican food, discounts on accessories, a pre-owned unit sale, product giveaways and a vehicle auction that grows more successful each year. To keep things exclusive, customers must register for the private party (TIP: This helps keep tabs on how much food to buy.) and commit to attending. At the time of this interview, 453 tickets out of a possible 500 had already been claimed.

In the high-flying days of the business, the store would sell tickets, rent a hall and give away \$20,000 in prizes. For a seven-year run, the party was the most successful event in the dealership's history, but we all know what happened to those days. Now it's more down-to-earth, more fun. You know, a party.

The auction is the chance to clear out bikes with mechanics' liens. This year the store is holding it during the start of the season, rather than the end as in year's past. A local salvage yard also comes by with bikes when needed, but not this year, Nathan says. She's got a full lot. As in years past, she'll likely have to have the police help manage the

crowds and direct traffic. Yeah, it's big. It's also a chance to get folks in the store checking out the new PG&A for the season and learning about its available services. "I don't know why other dealerships don't do it," Nathan tells *Dealernews*, "but maybe they will after you write about it."

### ON-THE-FLY MOTIVATION

Visit the store and you'll discover a great, grand collection of professionals. More than half of Nathan's employees have been with her for more than 10 years, one for 21 years. "My bookkeeper has been here since 1987," she notes. "She started when she only had one kid. Now she has five."

Although her staff is scaled far back from the peak of business a few years ago, those on-hand are a loyal bunch. When the industry nosedived, all agreed to take a 5 percent pay cut that she has since given back. Now, during the slow months, she asks for volunteers to take reduced hours or go on layoff for four weeks. "I had five people this year out of the 25 take one month of layoff," she notes.

The dividends to retaining staff rather than firing and rehiring new people are huge, she says. "Everything you've built up about your brand, all the knowledge you have in the store is gone," she says. You not only have to find employees, you have to train them and reintroduce them into the culture of the dealership, she adds.





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Nathan's long-term, well-trained service staff is sent to annual training. Sales staff receive regular product updates and familiarization clinics, and parts employees get product training from distributor reps. All staff are paid hourly wages to attend training.

And then there's the on-the-fly motivation. Powersports East is not a discount dealer in any way, she says; they hold the line and sell the value. But when her parts employees started saying they needed to match the Internet prices customers were bringing by, Nathan let them know that the store had to maintain a certain gross profit percentage or risk closing the doors. Matching prices is a race to the bottom.

"I incentivized them, saying that if they keep the gross profit above a certain amount, I'll give them this much extra in their paychecks," she says. "It worked." Gross profit in January is up over the prior year and the volume did not go down.

With a store so focused on the riding of the vehicles it sells, one could imagine that the push to get cruising runs along the entire sales process. As it continues after the sale with the monthly rides, it starts at the beginning — with test rides. Powersports East has been far ahead of the curve when it comes to demo rides, offering them since the moment it opened its doors. "We allow them to test ride everything except high-performance sportbikes," Nathan says. "If they really want to test a high-performance sportbike, we sell them the bike with a buy-back agreement. I think that once in 28 years we had to buy a bike back."

It was a little difficult in the early days when it was a Honda-only store and the OEM was insistent that any bike with more than three miles on it had to be paid for. Three miles doesn't make for a very

thorough test ride. So, they worked out an agreement with the OEM. "You have to work with your manufacturers," Nathan says.

Now, the dealership tries to get everyone on a test ride before they buy. If they're a little apprehensive, they tend to ease up a bit when Nathan, an "older woman," comes over and encourages them to do so. And the demos are effective; on the last store ride, there was an enthusiast in the bunch who bought from Powersports East only because Nathan urged him to do a test ride.

So it comes full circle back to those monthly rides. Actually spending time on motorcycles and ATVs, heading between points A and B — even if point B is an unknown — is the one common, elemental thread that draws enthusiasts together no matter what side of the retail transaction they're on.

And Powersports East — especially Lynn Nathan and husband Samick — gets this.

"It's always interesting because the people who come on those rides, if they haven't been on one before, they ask Joel what relationship he is to the dealership and he says, 'I'm an owner.' They all think it's fantastic because it puts thing on a personal level," Nathan says. "Then he says, 'My wife runs the dealership and my daughter is general manager, we've done this for 28 years. We're a family business.'"

*Many of the riders were regulars, some join us occasionally, and there were one or two brand new faces, including Woody and his wife Kat. Woody, an Australian, was here 'temporarily' but got captured by love, and with his wife is now a Delaware resident. They rode two up on a magnificent cruiser.*

— From the August 2009 street ride report



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DEALER DATA

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 website: [www.powersportseast.com](http://www.powersportseast.com) • email: [mail@powersportseast.com](mailto:mail@powersportseast.com)

Owners: Lynn Nathan and Joel Samick  
 General Manager: Rebecca Fasten

Number of Employees: 23  
 Years in Business: 28  
 Years at Location: 28  
 Store Size: 23,200 sq. ft.  
 Annual Revenues: \$6.5 million  
 DMS used: Lightspeed  
 Hours Of Operation: Tue. – Thu. 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.; Fri. 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.; Sat. 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

**SALES DEPARTMENT**

Manager: Mike Maricich  
 F&I Manager: Pete Clarkin  
 Employees: 6  
 Showroom Size: 9,900 sq. ft.

**PARTS DEPARTMENT**

Manager: John Blossick  
 Employees: 5  
 Size: 5,120 sq. ft.

**ECOMMERCE DEPARTMENT:**

Manager: Brent Pierce  
 Employees: 1

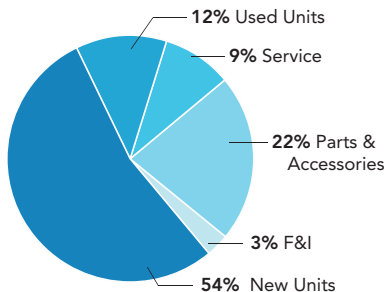
**SERVICE DEPARTMENT**

Manager: Rebecca Fasten  
 Technicians: 7; Lifts: 10  
 Size: 6,700 sq. ft.  
 Shop Rate: \$ 95/Hour

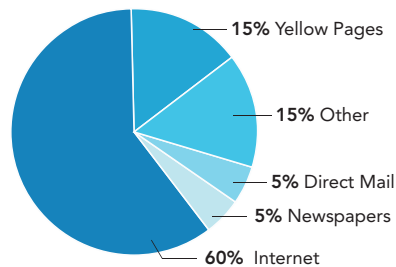
**OTHER INFO**

Distributors: Parts Unlimited, Romaha, Sulivans, Tucker Rocky, WPS  
 Club Sponsorships: Hey Riders  
 Community Involvement: Ride For Kids, various local charity runs; goodie bags to MSF Rider Program for graduates

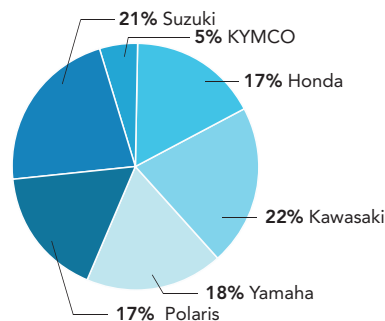
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advertising budget



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# Looking for electro-vangelists

ZERO CEO WALKER DISCUSSES FLEET SALES, PRICING AND A MANDATE FOR NEW DEALERS

Richard Walker was appointed CEO of Zero Motorcycles in July 2012, after spending more than 30 years in the technology sector, including tenures with Hewlett-Packard (HP), and most recently Control14, where he served as executive vice president of the Products Group. At HP he was responsible for the HP Pavilion, Compaq Presario and HP Touchsmart product lines.

He brings a unique background to the motorcycle business, and one that may be well-suited for an electric motorcycle company, according to Mike Vaughan, who spoke with Walker earlier this spring.

## Dealernews: What drew you to Zero?

**Walker:** The company is full of people with extensive motorcycle experience. So my combination of skills to build a consumer business combined with their knowledge and depth of understanding of the motorcycle industry is a good match.

## How has it gone so far?

**Walker:** The thing that I've learned so far is just how passionate people are around motorcycles. In the tech industry you certainly get people who are passionate, but I've just been blown away with the level of passion, not just within my own company around motorcycles but as I meet dealers, and customers — it's just a joy. We've revamped our website from being product- and technology-centric to being customer-centric, and when you click on the video testimonials of our customers and listen to them talk about the experience they get from riding our vehicles, it's a real pleasure.

We know we've got something that people feel is valuable, the experience is very different, and that's why we're excited about the chance to build a new business because we need to do that, and that's where the dealer channel becomes very important to us.

## How does the Zero experience differ from an internal combustion motorcycle?

**Walker:** Part of our value proposition to consumers has been that you're not going to be needing parts. The powertrain's got a battery, a motor, a controller and the battery management system wrapped around it, so one of the few moving parts is the shaft of the motor to drive the bike. When you get on an electric motorcycle you don't have the noise, vibration, the emissions; there's no complexity, no transmission, no liquid cooling — our bike is passively air-cooled. Our whole belief system is driven around simplistic sophistication, which means we can hide the complexity of that in the powertrain and focus entirely on the experience of riding.

One of the advantages of an electric motorcycle is that we can put it on the network, so with model year '13 we have a Bluetooth capability. You can have two driving modes: Echo mode and sport mode. Sport mode is dialed into the bike; [and] in Echo mode you can restrict the top speed, dial back the torque or up the regenerative braking.

Ultimately, we'll start to build out community-based portions of the application so you can figure out if there are other Zero bikers in the area, and you can share your ride routes.

## What criteria must dealers meet?

**Walker:** Our issue is choosing the right dealers. We've been trying to build out the dealer channel in North America for about a year and a



half. We have 57 dealers.

The thing we've learned about dealers who are successful with our products is the principals are very passionate — they believe that electric is here to stay, they want to be a part of it, and they want to be a part of evangelizing the experience. We get people on the sales floor who really get behind it. For us, it's not about signing up as many dealers as we can to get coverage; what we're trying to focus on is finding the right dealers, someone who believes that electric motorcycles

can deliver a great experience for consumers and willing to invest the time to educate.

As we've seen at the [Progressive International Motorcycle Show], people come along to look at the motorcycles and they don't know what questions to ask. They look at it and don't see an engine, they don't see a muffler, and when you ask if they have any questions, they say, "I don't...well I've never seen one before." So there's an education piece that goes with it. Obviously when there's education, there's cost, right? It's easy when someone comes in and asks for something, but [what] if you have to spend time to educate people about the components of an electric powertrain, what kind of experience they expect, the range, how long does it take to charge, and the price? It puts the selling process in a new dimension. So there is an education you have to go through.

## Do you provide floorplanning and consumer financing?

**Walker:** We do. We have a relationship with GE and we also have a relationship with Freedom Road, so we've got programs to support flooring and consumer financing.

## What kind of margins can dealers expect?

**Walker:** I think we're competitive. We may not be the richest, and we're a young company. But margin hasn't been an issue for our dealers. I'd say we're right in the range of what you'd expect, and at some point when we get bigger and more successful than we are, we hope to offer a little more, but right now I'd say we're competitive.

## The motorcycles are pretty simple and don't require a lot of service. On the other hand, dealers derive a significant amount of their revenue from service. What's been the reaction to that?

**Walker:** When the business model is so much driven by support of the internal combustion engine and dealers have heavy investments in their service departments, it becomes a real issue.

We hope they're going to be able to add a variety of accessories. Right now that's a relatively small array of offerings, but we're looking



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*“The profile sweet spot of our customer is 40 to 49. I’d love to see more young people get engaged... How to do that is still a question.” — Richard Walker, CEO, Zero Motorcycles*

to build that out. We’re looking for dealers to try to attach as much to the vehicle as they can when it is sold. We are encouraging our owners to go back for service checks, because even though the powertrain has few moving parts it’s still got standard motorcycle bits that need to be checked out or adjusted: tires, brake pads, suspension and other wear items.

On the other side, we’re looking at other tools we can provide our dealers who can then start to wrap their arms around that customer so that they can see at any given point in time how many Zero riders are out and about. They can start to get data back from the bikes if the owner’s willing to allow that information, then if they see any issues. They can proactively notify the owner that there’s a need to come in for some kind of service work or software update.

How that translates into money, we don’t know. However, when a bike is on the network, there is a ton of opportunity to provide those kinds of tools.

#### How does your customer differ from a customer buying a conventional internal combustion motorcycle?

**Walker:** The profile sweet spot of our customer is 40-49, in that range. I’d like to see a lot more young guys. I’d love to see more young people get engaged in this. How to do that is still a question.

Most of them self-identify as early adopters, either driven by the latest, greatest, coolest technology, or driven by ecological reasons, and

a few very heavily driven by political reasons. Most of them have had a motorcycle license for many years and stopped, because other life priorities kicked in. Many now have decided to come back and want a different experience than they had when they were younger.

#### Prices seem to be high; do you expect them to get lower?

**Walker:** Our entry-level bike with one battery module is \$7,999. The biggest battery pack, four modules, is \$15,999. It’s not cheap, and most of that cost is driven by the cost of the battery itself.

If you look at the automotive industry in general, electric vehicles are more expensive because batteries are expensive and the chemistry wrapped around them is expensive. But as you look out at some of the cell suppliers and their chemistry and their research inevitability, what’s going to happen is you’re going to get a lot more density and energy within a cell, which will improve range over the next two to three years. We can then decide to add more flexibility, and we can start to think about more about pricing slightly differently.

The good news is the bikes aren’t exorbitantly expensive when you consider an internal combustion engine alternative. It depends on how many miles you ride. Our website has a calculator that shows when you’d break even against an internal combustion bike. That’s driven a lot by miles. There isn’t any engine-type maintenance. We like to point out that you can ride between 20,000 and 25,000 miles for \$200 in electricity vs. what that would cost you in gas. **D**



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This 520 quick acceleration racing kit features chromoly steel front sprocket, Vortex 7075 T6 alloy rear sprockets available in clear or black hardcoat and RK's RX or XW sealed ring performance chain.

## Q/A 520 STEEL CONVERSION

Drop that 525/530 size chain for these 520 steel conversion kits. This kit contains RK's RX or XW sealed ring chain, with chromoly steel front sprocket and premium steel rear sprocket.

## 525/530 SUPERSTOCK KIT

Features RK's performance XW or RX sealed ring chain, Vortex 7075 T6 aluminum rear sprocket in clear anodized or PTFE black hardcoat and a chromoly steel front sprocket.

*\*Most chains are available in Gold or Non-Gold finish. \*\*Most countershaft sprockets feature lightening holes for improved performance.*



# VORTEX®

## V3 Levers



Made in the USA, V3 Levers are designed with a large radius lever surface to improve ergonomics and rider comfort, and a dual bearing-supported pivot for increased rigidity and reduced free play. V3 levers have a 6-position adjustment to quickly dial in controls. With a stylish, ultra-minimal design, modern and refined look, V3 levers are eons of sophistication ahead of the competition. Comes stock with Silver adjuster switch. Customize your bike with our newly-designed lever adjuster switches available in Blue, Gold, Black, Red and Silver.

## V3 Frame Slider Kit

Made in the USA, the innovative V3 Frame Slider Kit come complete with black anodized bases, molded pucks and aluminum anodized end caps in Black. V3 Frame Sliders are designed with bike preservation and attractive design in mind. Colored caps for customization are sold separately and are available in Gold, Red, Blue, Silver and Black. Replacement pucks also sold separately and come with a Black end cap.



## V3 Gas Caps

Made in the USA, V3 Gas Caps boast coarse thread enables quick closure without cross-threading; large, contoured finger tabs allow for easier opening compared to classic Vortex design; safety lock switch prevents accidental cap loosening due to vibration or contact; integrated dual check valve assembly eliminates fuel tank pressure issues; vent and chamber design helps stop leaks by containing any fuel that gets past the check valve; up to 50% lighter than stock keyed fuel tank caps; customize to match your bike with interchangeable, colored safety lock switches. Comes standard with Silver lock switch.



## V3 OS MX/SX Bars & Pads



Vortex redefines strength with its V3 OS Handlebars for MX and SX applications, 29% stronger than the competition, you can ride with confidence knowing that Vortex has put years of research, development and testing into these super strong bars without sacrificing weight and speed. Comes with Black Bar Pad. Colored Bar Pads sold separately.



# The Revolution Is Here.

## Performance Links Racing Chain

Available in Black, Performance Links V3 Racing Chain is available in our proprietary Duo Glide, Tri Glide and Non O-Ring technologies for street, racing and MX/SX applications. Available this year!

## V3 Race Stands

Made in the USA, our V3 Race Stands are lighter and stronger due to the one-piece, over-sized tube design. Optimized geometry allows proper lift leverage without the need for long handle, which create a tripping hazard while working around the bike. Our CNC bending process ensures dimensional accuracy. The unique fork lift design securely lifts the front end from the bottom of the forks to facilitate tire, brake and wheel service. The CNC-machined 6061 Aluminum lifting cups are light, strong and durable. Twin Spar lift arms with pinch screws tighten down securely and allow for quick adjustment without the need for tools.



Front Stand



Rear Stand

## V3 Race Stand Wheel Kit

Made in the USA, the V3 Race Stand Wheel Kit is sold separately with your choice of color-anodized aluminum wheel mount brackets. Make a statement by customizing your V3 Race Stands to coordinate with the colors in your pit or garage.



## Vortex is pleased to present more additions to the V3 Line!

Years of research, development and testing have gone into producing the fastest and strongest product offering yet from the proud team Vortex.



# Pro Series

## Universal Sportbike Wheelset

Pro Series' universal wheel system allows the user to mount the wheel from one brand or model to another using model specific carrier adapters. This unique system makes your investment in Pro Series long-term and doesn't end when you change models or brands. The aggressively styled Pro Series design is machined from forged aerospace aluminum for increased strength and the stunning anodized "Magnum Gray" finish compliments the look of any bike. Available for many Japanese sportbike models.

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CBR1000RR	2008-2012 / NON ABS
RC51	2000-2001
RC51	2002-2006
KAWASAKI	
ZX-10R	2006-2010
ZX-14R	2006-2012
SUZUKI	
GSXR1000	2005-2008
GSXR1000	2009-2012
GSX1300R	1999-2007
GSX1300R	2008-2012
TL1000R	1998-2003
TL1000S	1997-2001
GSXR750	1996-1999
YAMAHA	
YZF-R1	2004-2012

Suggested Retail price for a complete front 17"x3.50" and rear 17"x6.00" wheelset with carriers:

**\$1895\***

\* Valve stem and tire not included

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# High-road, low road, and on the rough road: Adventure bike products

FROM LIGHTING TO SEATING TO CLOTHING — AND EVERYTHING IN-BETWEEN — AFTERMARKET MANUFACTURERS ARE PAYING CLOSE ATTENTION TO THE BOOMING ADV-RIDER CROWD WITH PRODUCTS FOR MULTIPLE MOTORCYCLE BRANDS.

## Black Dog fork light mount kit for BMW GS

Black Dog Cycle Works' latest edition to its lineup of dual sport parts is a new fork light mount kit made specifically for BMW R1200GS/ GSA motorcycles. The product attaches directly to the forks above the lower fender, moving with the front wheel to give better visibility in the direction of travel. The company says this design offers an advantage over crashbar-style mounts that keep the light in one position and makes lights less prone to damage in a tipover. The mount is machined and hard-anodized, and fits Rigid Industries SR-Series 6 in. LED lights for the BMW adventure touring bikes. These lights are also available from BDCW in two configurations. [www.blackdogcw.com](http://www.blackdogcw.com).



## Sargent Cycle's new Super Ténéré seat helps stop the riders' slide

Sargent Cycle Products reports that its new World Sport Performance front and rear seat for the Yamaha's Super Ténéré cures the stock perches' tendency to slide riders and passengers forward.

Sargent's development team reportedly eliminated the Super Ténéré saddles' crowned shape and forward slope that gives it minimal support. Now, the rider's seat is slightly lower in the bike's standard and tall mounting positions.

The seat is 20 percent wider than stock. It's built with a durable, injection-molded PolyTec base pan that includes a molded-in storage nook for small essentials. It's also closer to the ground than stock. The seat features Sargent's proprietary Super Cell Atomic suspension foam, and is covered with marine-grade, UV-stabilized, waterproof upholstery. Sargent's seat can also be upgraded to include heating components. [www.sargentcycle.com](http://www.sargentcycle.com).



be fitted to the vehicle's original pipes with a mid-pipe. It is available in four versions, plus a catalytic converter kit. The Arrow Exhaust for the F700GS is an easy-to-install slip-on. Available in titanium and aluminum finishes, plus a collector kit. All exhausts are said to offer a 40 percent savings in weight, plus increased performance, power and torque. [www.arrow.it](http://www.arrow.it).



## BMW adventure bikes get bright lights

Baja Designs' new line of BMW Adventure Bike lights includes the combined 7,200 lumens of two Squadron LED lights or the combined 3,600 lumens of the SII LED lights. The new aluminum and stainless steel brackets are manufactured in-house. Each bracket uses a stock OEM mounting point to create a clean look as well as 100 percent plug-and-play installation, the company reports. The lights reportedly offer riders a smooth spread of light over a great distance plus enhance their visibility while riding during the day. Each kit is engineered, designed, tested, and manufactured in the USA and carries the company's limited lifetime warranty. Fitments available for BMW's G650X, F800GS and 1200 GS. [www.bajadesigns.com](http://www.bajadesigns.com).

## Saddlemen Adventure Tour: Do big miles in comfort

Saddlemen adds to its adventure bike market lineup with the Adventure Tour saddle, designed for racking up big miles in comfort.

The seat combines the company's SaddleGel progressive density foam and uses a Gel Channel-design cover. The Gel Channel technology is not externally visible but is designed to provide riders with support and perineal relief.

The durable marine-grade vinyl cover is reportedly weather-resistant and resists cold-cracking. According to Saddlemen, each seat features specially sculpted foam that has been widened where the rider settles in for the long haul. The seat's nose area is reshaped to help the rider touch the ground, plus the pitch has been carefully adjusted to prevent unwanted sliding into the fuel tank.

The seat has a CF-look and smooth vinyl cover with accent stitching, and is available in the following configurations: single-piece



seats, two-piece sets or select standalone solo rider seats. Most models also come in an optional low-profile setup.

Each seat mounts to the bike and retains the original seat's height adjustment features (if equipped.) Integrated bag/cargo mounting points on the pillion portion of the Adventure Tour seats allow for the installation of the matching Adventure PACK luggage or other cargo.

[www.saddlemen.com](http://www.saddlemen.com).

### Nelson Rigg's Survivor Edition bags work with factory and aftermarket

Nelson Rigg's new Survivor Edition adventure dry bags are made from 24 oz. tarpaulin PVC that's coated for strength and to help prevent slipping and marking. They're also reportedly 100 percent waterproof.

The company notes that the bags were designed to work with factory and aftermarket tail racks, seats and saddlebag racks on most popular adventure and dual-sport models.

Each bag is built using electronically heat-welded seams and an air-tight roll closure system that helps ensure that no water enters the bag — even, the company says, in the harshest of downpours.



The duffel bags are mounted using anodized heavy-duty quick release buckles and nylon soft tie webbing. They can be mounted across or along the seat or tail section. The bag's compression straps also feature hi-viz reflective accents. D-rings provide mounting points for additional items.

The bags come in two sizes — a medium bag with an approxi-

mate capacity of 39 liters and a large bag with a 71 liter capacity. The Survivor Edition dry bags come in hi-visibility yellow, orange and black. [www.nelsonrigg.com](http://www.nelsonrigg.com).

### Richa moto-gear is feature-rich apparel

Belgium-based Richa has developed a high-end jacket and pant that boast a few things not found on your normal high-end garments.

Features include a NanoSphere-treated Dynatec outer shell which, in addition to being highly abrasion-resistant, water and dirt simply don't adhere to the surface, meaning it's waterproof, needs less frequent washing and always looks good. The "Bionic Climate Membrane" is a bonded inner liner that reacts to changes in temperature and moisture, opening as temperature and moisture increase, and closing as temperatures drop and activity drop, thereby retaining body heat. The only other company licensed for this product is BMW. The jacket comes with a removable soft shell liner that can be used as a casual jacket.



MSRP for the jacket is \$599.99, and \$479.99 for the pants. As vice president Jean Demund points out, the combination eliminates the need for multiple jackets and pants, and is a true all-season garment. Sizes range from small to 8XL. 8XL prices run \$100 per piece more.

[www.richa.eu](http://www.richa.eu).



### Barkbusters goes for pricepoint with Jet line of handguards

New to Barkbusters line of handguards are the Jet models, guards designed for multiple fitments at affordable prices. According to Twisted Throttle, the exclusive distributor of Barkbuster products, the two-model Jet line was created using clever new design features and production methods, resulting in a lower-cost handguard for a variety of off-road, dual-sport and adventure bikes.

Twisted Throttle reports that key features include: aluminum backbones that are heat-treated for maximum strength; an ergonomic drop down design of the backbone that's ideal for bikes with long levers; a flat spine that offers a wide frontal area to help protect riders' hands; high-impact-resistant plastic guards that help protect from the elements; and three axis mounting clamps for easy installation. Available in black, blue, green, orange, red or white. [www.barkbusters.net](http://www.barkbusters.net). **D**



# Your closing ratio is terrible

BUT YOU CAN TURN THAT AROUND (HERE'S HOW)



**Tory Hornsby** is the executive vice president of Dealership University and Powersports Marketing.

**YOUR DEALERSHIP'S CLOSING** ratio is terrible.

That's what the statistics tell us. However, regardless of who you are, it can be increased — assuming you can get past the "I've been doing this for X number of years, I know exactly what it takes, you can't teach me how to sell more motorcycles..." attitude.

I apologize for the candor and I realize the truth can be painful, but here it is: *If you knew how to increase your dealership's closing ratio, sell more units and be more profitable, you'd be doing it right now instead of wondering why you can't do it.*

I hate the old adage, "You don't know what you don't know" because it ends up being an excuse to remain the same. Nobody knows what they don't know, but you can learn; you can improve, adjust and perform at a higher level. Unfortunately, most dealer principals are too caught up in the swirl and don't have the intestinal fortitude to take action.

I just returned from a trip where I consulted a group of district managers for a large OEM. We spent the majority of our time working on two areas: following a sales process, and understanding the five profit centers of a dealership. After our fast-paced, intensive time together, it occurred to me that these district managers now understood more about operating a profitable and successful dealership than the majority of actual dealers. Dealer principals don't invest in their own knowledge, so they don't find it necessary to invest in training their team.

I've heard every excuse in the book when it comes to training, including "Why would I train my staff? The effects just wear off!" Well, the effects of a shower wear off, too, and that's why you should take one every day. Or how about, "My staff is trained; I sent them to a conference last year." That's like saying you're in shape and healthy because you worked out once a few months ago.

One of my personal favorites is, "Why would I train my staff? They're just going to leave." Think about it: The only thing worse than training an employee and having them leave is *not* training them... and having them stay.

## TRAINING: NOW JUST HEAR ME OUT

Turnover is a huge challenge in this industry, especially in the sales department. Every time you lose a salesperson, it impacts your business. Turnover costs everyone time and money, and it creates a void in production. I'm often asked why there is so much turnover in powersports, and it comes down to two things: You either fire them, or they quit.

If you are firing people all the time, you have a problem with your recruiting system, hiring process

and training. Your recruitment system is how you go about getting applications. One of the best recruitment systems I used back in my dealership days is putting signs all around the store. I never put up "Help Wanted" signs; instead, I made them say, "Now Hiring" and focused on the fun (have fun working in a fun place). If you can hire people who are already enthusiasts, you won't have to do as much training on the basics of this industry.

Your hiring process should have a quality filtering system. You have to get good people. Notice I didn't say *great* people or *perfect* people, I said *good* people. That means they have a good attitude, a good car (to get to work) and a good work ethic.

Then, training takes over. Training is a journey, not a destination, and it should never end. There are three areas in which you must train your front-line employees:

- **Selling skills.** Everyone is in sales, and every business is designed to grow by selling goods and/or services.

- **Product knowledge.** The more your staff members understand and know the products, the more expert they become and the more value they can build.

- **People skills.** Everyone needs continual improvement on how to work with people and overcome all sorts of situations.

Whether you invest in an online training system, hire someone to come into your store, or find and study the materials to perform the training yourself, training is non-negotiable. Dealer principals and general managers cannot merely hand this off to someone else. The culture of your dealership comes from the top, and "Do what I say, not what I do" simply doesn't last — it never has and it never will.

We are all constantly becoming dull in one area or another, so we need constant sharpening. Training creates a happier staff, prolongs the average length of employment and gets more productivity out of your team — especially when you've hired right.

I'm sure you've heard that the definition of insanity is doing the same things over and over and expecting different results. Stop expecting to have better numbers when you're doing the same things you've always done. Training is the key to getting the improvement you need — it raises your closing ratio, increases your profit margins and boosts your customer satisfaction. It's time to take action. **D**

## On the Web:

My August 2012 article really struck a chord with some dealers. It was written specifically to dealer principals and managers on how "the root of your dealership's problems is you." I hope it struck such a chord that it leads you to do something about it. You can find that article at [www.dealernews.com](http://www.dealernews.com) by searching under the keywords *profit-sucking vampires* — Tory Hornsby



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# POP up your displays

POINT-OF-PURCHASE DISPLAYS CAN BOOST YOUR REVENUE, IF THEY'RE USED WISELY. HERE ARE A FEW OFFERINGS THAT HAVE RECENTLY CAUGHT OUR ATTENTION

## WHO: DESIGNWRAPS HEADWEAR

**WHAT:** Two- and three-sided counter displays, freestanding store racks

**HOW:** DesignWraps' POP displays are free of charge when ordered through the company's Smart Ordering System — a new program that allows dealers to trade in non-selling headwear styles for newer merchandise. "We offer four different tiers of purchasing where they can pick their budget, and we pick the styles for them," says Joan Krenning, president of DesignWraps. "If some styles aren't successful, they can exchange the styles for styles that are selling." Tiers range from \$1,000 to \$3,800, and the choice generally depends on your store size. "If you're not a very big dealership, you wouldn't go with Tier 4," Krenning says. "I don't want to overstock people. It defeats the whole process of helping people be successful."

Most dealers, Krenning says, order the three-sided counter rack, though smaller stores lean toward the two-sided rack. Both feature mini gridwall to hold merchandise. Krenning will choose a mix of products that typically is 65 to 70 percent Wraps of Hope (for women) and 25 to 35 percent RidersWraps (for men) — but will tailor each order to fit the needs of the store's demographics, location, etc. "And if [dealers] don't want the display racks, we can use mannequin heads," she says. When dealers indicate they don't have room for racks or other displays, Krenning will mail out the company's marketing materials — including images — for the dealer to use in the store.

**Contact:** DesignWraps, 877-700-4687 or [www.designwraps.com](http://www.designwraps.com).



## WHO: NATIONAL CYCLE INC.

**WHAT:** Dealer display kits for VStream windscreens and SwitchBlade windshields

**HOW:** Display kits, ranging in value from \$60 to \$118, are free with purchase. "We want to see somewhat of a commitment on the dealer side," says Paul Gomez, aftermarket sales manager at National Cycle.

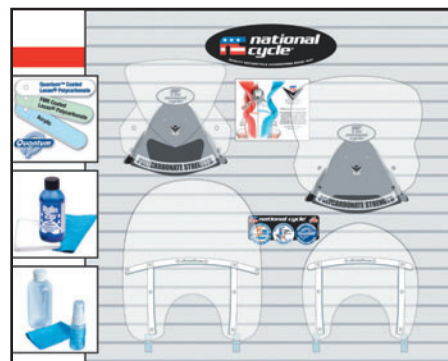
The VStream Six-Pack kit is included with an order of six VStream windscreens. It includes a 21-inch National Cycle header sign, mountable VStream and Warranty graphics (one each), a waterfall windshield display and a Quantum hardcoating scratch test kit.

The SwitchBlade Hat Trick dealer kit, included with an order of six SwitchBlade windshields, has the header sign, a Warranty/Materials

graphic, two sets of slatwall display brackets, the Quantum hardcoating scratch test kit and one package of the company's RainZip Rain Repellent.

The Dealer's Dozen kit comes with an order of six VStream and six SwitchBlade products. This kit includes a header sign, VStream and Warranty/Materials graphics (one each), two waterfall windshield displays, two sets of slatwall display brackets, the Quantum hardcoating scratch test kit and RainZip Rain Repellent, and one package of Shield Wash windshield cleaner. All kits can be mounted on slatwall.

**Contact:** National Cycle, 877-WSCREEN, or email Gomez at [paulg@nationalcycle.com](mailto:paulg@nationalcycle.com).



## WHO: TRIMAX LOCKS

**WHAT:** Heavy duty stainless-steel display rack

**HOW:** After a year and a half of design and manufacturing, Trimax has unveiled The Razor Display — which builds upon the company's original TDR40 rack — a rack that allows customers to demo the company's Razor Adjustable Trailer Hitch System.

"First, customers get attracted with the product, then they can actually see it demonstrated on the rack," says Jim Sentz, sales manager at TRIMAX Locks. "This makes it really an ideal display rack."

The display comes with a header card and 25 metal hooks to display an array of TRIMAX's other products (like tow balls, receiver locks and cable locks, among others) around the Razor system demonstration area (pictured in the middle of the photo). At the bottom of the rack, a stack of boxed Razor systems make it easy for customers to just grab and go.

"It's like a magnet in a retail store," Sentz says.

The rack can be set up in less than 10 minutes, and is included for free with a minimum order. Sentz says that TRIMAX is "flexible" and he can help dealers put together an assortment of TRIMAX products that fits the needs of their store, while fulfilling the minimum requirement.

**Contact:** TRIMAX Locks, 866-796-8500, [www.trimaxlocks.com](http://www.trimaxlocks.com).





**WHO:** RIVCO PRODUCTS INC.

**WHAT:** Interactive counter displays

**HOW:** The moto-accessories manufacturer is known for developing smart displays to fit its best-selling products, including the WENCH Oil Filter and the BAGGER BUDZ Saddlebag Feet & Pin Retainer Kit.

The WENCH display employs an actual Harley-Davidson oil filter, allowing users to demo how the wrench can work in tight spaces between the vehicle's crankcase, sensor and filter. The company says that the display is available for purchase, but dealers who purchase two cards of 10 WENCH filter wrenches get the display for free.

The company's BAGGER BUDZ Feet & Pin Retainer Kit display is made of steel and comes in the shape of a saddlebag. The display makes it possible to see the BAGGER BUDZ in action: On the bottom, the "feet" are placed to show customers how they actually work to protect paint, while the lanyard-pin connections allow customers to test them. The display itself holds grab-and-go kits. Dealers can purchase the kits through RIVCO, but the company also offers a promo through Drag Specialties: Buy a dozen kits, and get the display for \$12.

**Contact:** RIVCO Products, 888-801-8222, [www.rivcoproducts.com](http://www.rivcoproducts.com).

## DON'T GO OVERBOARD

JIM RASMUS, president of Retail Design Associates, offers some tips on how to best employ point-of-purchase displays.

- **Keep it simple.** Rasmus recommends no more than eight to 10 fixture systems in a store, and warns against hanging onto fixtures over time. Fixtures also should "be neutral and match the store," he says. "When we start bringing in too many vendor fixtures, the next thing you know we're seeing Fox merchandise on an ICON rack. That, to me, destroys the image and quality of that particular brand."
- **Consider the grocery store.** Putting POP displays right by the front door is a tactic that's proven profitable for your local supermarkets. These stores often have a large POP display almost blocking the front entrance; this prevents a customer from walking directly to the back of the store and instead creating a subconscious path that snakes through the aisles. "The main reason they have these things is to get products into the customers' hands before they get to their destination," Rasmus says.
- **Highlight "need items" — products to which customers can form an emotional attachment.** "Handlebars are not a 'need' item in the sense of, 'I need it today,'" Rasmus says. "It's a replacement item. Given the right product, packaging and display, you want a customer to say [to his significant other], 'Oh, honey, I need that item.'"
- **Use counter POP sparingly.** "When you clutter up the counter, where does the customer put their products that they pick up from the sales floor?" Rasmus asks. And with many dealerships switching from checkout counters to kiosks, space is at a premium. Putting floor racks around the kiosks and counters might be the better way to go, he notes.

# P R E M I E R S T Y L E



The NEW FX-19 offroad helmet from AFX offers state-of-the-art construction at an affordable price. It is DOT and ECE-22.05 certified — and features an aerodynamic design with a removable, brushed nylon liner; a removable, screw-on visor; ample ear cavity space for speakers; and 13 points of ventilation. The FX-19 is available in a variety of colors and graphics to complement any personality. Get in touch with your Parts Unlimited rep. to learn more about helmets from AFX.



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# Defying the stereotype

MORE WOMEN ARE IN SERVICE-RELATED ROLES THAN EVER BEFORE.



## FUEL FOR THOUGHT

Dave Koshollek teaches sales and service classes for dealers. Contact him at [dakoenterprises@cs.com](mailto:dakoenterprises@cs.com), or via [editors@dealernews.com](mailto:editors@dealernews.com).

## On the Web:

Read all of Dave Koshollek's columns at [www.dealernews.com/dealernews/columnists](http://www.dealernews.com/dealernews/columnists)

**IT'S MAY!** Spring is in full swing and there are tons of motorcycles on the road with more females in the saddle than ever before. Being a Geezer rider, I can reflect back to the '70s when it was extremely rare to see a female motorcycle rider and even more rare to find a woman working in the service end of our business.

Today, while not a majority, there are more women in service-related roles than ever before. And some, like Jennifer Stipkala, Rose Velasco and Janette Thornley, have moved up the ranks to hold prominent positions that affect hundreds of individuals, both male and female who are either in our business now or learning the ropes to begin their service careers.

You may already be familiar with Janette Thornley if you've attended an All Harley Drag Racing Association race. Thornley is the tall, long-haired gal blasting down the quarter mile at speeds greater than 160 mph on her nitro-fueled Harley dragster.

That performance is a far cry from her 11 years working as a MSF Rider Coach, although I'm sure all that experience in the saddle serves her well on the strip.

Today, Thornley works for the Motor Co. as a Service Operations Area Representative (SOAR), where she assists dozens of California-based Harley dealerships in growing their service revenues.

Thornley explained, "What attracted me most [to the SOAR position] was the challenge of problem solving, and coaching staff as they continue their efforts toward exceptional customer service." Away from the track, Thornley rides a 2012 CVO Harley-Davidson Road Glide Custom.

Thornley sees a growing number of females in the field. Her recommendation for women interested in a service career is to "...spend a day at a motorcycle shop observing the daily activities and interactions with others." This will give them a feel for what to expect.

"I spoke to several SOARs, both male and female, before I moved forward [(to apply for the SOAR position)]," she said. That's also smart advice.

Rose Velasco began riding back in the '90s and has a varied taste for two-wheeled iron: She rides vintage Triumphs, late-model Buells and Harley-Davidsons.

She graduated from MMI in 1997 and then worked as a technician at a number of Harley dealerships for more than 10 years, with a four-year stint at a custom shop. Velasco is building a 1970 Triumph 250 bobber from a basket of parts.

Velasco used her education and experience to land a job at MMI-Phoenix over a year ago; she now runs classes in the Dealer Service Operations (DSO) section of MMI's Harley-Davidson department.

"Rose is an outstanding Instructor and I think she has found her niche in DSO," said Mike Trimeloni, her supervisor. "She possesses the right balance in her approach to teaching by holding a high student performance expectation; yet she is always very personable and approachable. She consistently receives excellent feedback from students."

That's high praise when you consider Velasco teaches predominantly male students. At just 5 feet tall and weighing a little over 100 lbs., Velasco admits that her size creates limitations; for example, she can't lift an engine by herself.

But "some men can't fit their hands into small spaces on a bike, so when we work together it all works out," she said.

"The suggestions that I have for other females who are interested in this line of work would be, don't give up! If you were interested in bikes enough in the first place to be drawn toward it, then stick with it no matter what anybody says," Velasco said. "Take to working in a shop with mostly men lightheartedly. They were like brothers to me, and still are."

Working with men has never been an issue for Jennifer Stipkala. She grew up spending a lot of time



TOP: Jennifer Stipkala leading one of her dealer service marketing seminars. BOTTOM: Rose Velasco grades a DSO student at MMI.

with her father and brothers working in their garage on all types of mechanical contraptions. That led to riding mopeds and motorcycles in early teens. Today, Stipkala rides big Harleys: a '12 Street Glide and an '06 Heritage Softail Springer Classic. She works as a SOAR serving Harley dealerships in Ohio and Pennsylvania.

"I really enjoy the technical side of business as well as the numbers side, so this seemed like a perfect fit to me," she said of the SOAR position.

Stipkala gathered hands-on experience through 12 years working at a Harley dealer on the East Coast. She started in the MotorClothes department, then moved to motorcycle sales and rentals. After that, she became service manager and then GM of the entire dealership.

Stipkala has witnessed the industry change toward its view of women working in the service area. "Although females working in service are not common, it is definitely more accepted now than in the past," she told me. "As we grow the number of



Racer and MSF coach Janet Thornley now helps dozens of Harley dealers in California with growing their service revenues.

female riders on the road, I think we'll see more females working in service department shop roles as well as managing those shops."

The road wasn't always smooth for these three.

"In my early years in service, the core customers didn't initially take me seriously," Stipkala recalled. "But once they saw I knew what I was talking about, they accepted me pretty quickly."

That rings familiar with Thornley, who admitted that even today "some of the people I encounter are not sure if they want to listen to

what I have to say." Obstacles like this inspire Velasco: "I would have to say honestly the challenge to defy stereotype was a driving force for me to succeed at this profession."

I'm glad to see more females in service roles. Almost to a person, I have found that females pay attention to details, have compassion and empathy for their customers and are seldom egocentric.

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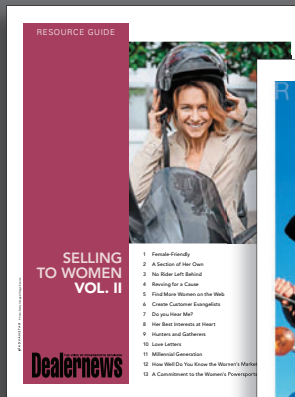
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**Rick Fairless** is the owner of Stokers Dallas, Stokers Icehouse and Stokers Ink.

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# Living my dream

I AM A FULL-FLEDGED, CERTIFIED, ADHD MOTORCYCLE JUNKIE

**DEAR GRANDMA & GRANDPA,** I hope things are going good up there in Heaven. Spring is here, and that's always a good thing for us in the motorcycle industry.

Growing up, my Dad always told me that I should work for myself. So, when I decided to start my motorcycle shop, I couldn't wait to tell him. The conversation didn't go so well.

"Hey Dad, I'm gonna take your advice, I'm gonna do it, I'm gonna go into business for myself."

"Attaboy, son, I'm proud of you. You're gonna open your own paint store?"

"No Dad, I'm gonna open a motorcycle shop with a beer joint on the same property."

"Wait a minute, boy. Motorcycles are your hobby, selling paint is how you make your living and support your family! Don't let your love for motorcycles cloud your judgment."

"I know, Dad, but I'm certain that I will be good at it and I know I can make a good living for my family."

Then my Dad said something I'd never considered before: "Boy, a motorcycle shop is like a Dairy Queen. You'll be busy in the summer and dead in the winter."

And, boy, was my Dad right. Luckily this is Texas and we have good weather most of the time.

Hey, Grandpa, I talked to a friend today that owns a shop in Erie, Pa., and they still have snow beside the roads up there. Down here in Dallas we've already been in the 90s. I couldn't deal with that dang cold weather, But I guess some people can't deal with the three months of 100-plus degrees that we get every summer.

I know ya'll have never been to my Stokers Dallas, but hopefully you can check it out from up there. I don't know how Heaven works but I guess you can be anywhere you wanna be at anytime you wanna be there and with anybody ya want — maybe like breakfast in Rome with Michael Angelo, lunch at Harrah's in Lake Tahoe with Marilyn Monroe and supper in Transylvania with Lon Chaney? Man, that would be swell! Do ya'll eat a lot up there? Do people get fat? How about stuff like headaches or athlete's foot... do ya'll get those ailments up in Heaven?

Anyway, if you can see Stokers Dallas then you know that my place is a very eclectic kind of joint. It's 2.5 acres of bikes, babes and beer. But it's not just a motorcycle shop. It's also got a bar & grill and a tattoo parlor. I have tie-dyed dinosaurs on the roof. In the courtyard area where everybody parks their bikes and hangs out, I have a 20 ft. tall tie-dyed giraffe be-



side the band stage and an 8 ft. Bettie Boop on top of the stage. My courtyard walls are all painted graffiti-style. I have live music and bikini girls selling cold beer every weekend, and I have a cool, old, graffitied school bus that opens up into a bar.

Inside Stokers Dallas and Stokers IceHouse I have lots of old pictures, lots of crazy custom bikes and lots of goofy stuff everywhere ya look. This place has grown to be a destination, and we get visitors from all over the country every single day.

We are like a very eclectic museum or even a return to days gone by. People always tell me that we have the coolest motorcycle shop they've ever seen.

Most of my customers are Harley-Davidson riders, so I guess they are comparing me to the H-D shops. I'll tell you this, Grandpa, my shop is very different from any of the big, fancy H-D shops. There's nothing in the world wrong with those kind of shops and obviously the H-D formula is working quite well, but for me, my formula works. We are a throwback to days when motorcycle shops were all unique and reflected the personality of their owners.

Nowadays, most motorcycle shops around the country are very corporate, and I believe they have lost a lot of their personality. As ya'll know, I have always been a different kinda guy. Well, I still am and I'm very proud of that. I think so far outside the box that I can't even see the dang box from here.

Here's a quote I recently read; "People with ADHD (which I have) are usually 'outside the box' thinkers that usually turn out to be creative, intelligent and successful people. They tend to be people who think differently than most mainstream people. Some famous outside-the-box thinkers include Henry Ford, Walt Disney, Steve Jobs, Andy Warhol and John Lennon."

Now listen, I am in no way comparing my dumb ass to any of these great, important cats here, I'm just saying that other people have done very well while thinking outside the box.

I guess what I'm trying to tell ya'll is, I'm still just a motorcycle junkie that's living my dream every day. I get up in the morning and can't wait to get to work. I work every single day and I never take a day off work. If I ever get to Heaven, I pray that I'll be still be designing and building custom bikes, designing cool parts, and still selling Victory Motorcycles, just like I do every day right here at Heaven on Earth: Dallas, Texas.

I love you, Grandma and Grandpa. **D**





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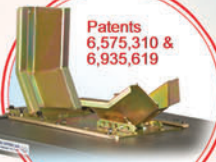
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