



Northwest TIRE TALK

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR TIRE, WHEEL & AUTOMOTIVE SPECIALTY PROFESSIONALS
PUBLISHED BI-MONTHLY BY NORTHWEST TIRE DEALERS ASSOCIATION FOR IT'S MEMBERS

DICK NORDNESS - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - NORTHWEST TIRE DEALERS ASSOCIATION

Northwest Tire Talk • Kennewick, WA 99338 • Ph: (509) 948-2433 • Email: nwtiredealers@hotmail.com

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NWTDA & TIA OFFER FARM TIRE TRAINING

The Northwest Tire Dealers Association is bringing TIA trainer Matt White back to the Northwest to do two hands-on Basic Farm Tire Service (FTS) training classes. The first class will be held in Pasco, Washington on June 2 & 3 and the second will be held in Salem, Oregon on June 5 & 6.



Matt White

The classes are a minimum skills training program that outlines and explains the guidelines for servicing farm, agriculture and construction tire and wheel assemblies. Those who successfully complete the program will receive a certificate.

Participants will learn step-by-step procedures for demounting, mounting and inflating, single, dual and 3-piece assemblies as well as a servicing truck operation and liquid ballast installation/removal.

The normal cost for this two day program is \$495 for NWTDA and TIA members, however NWTDA has secured help from sponsors which will lower the price to \$400 for members and \$500 for non-members.

For more information please contact the NWTDA office at 509-948-2433.

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NATIONAL TIRE SAFETY WEEK

National Tire Safety Week 2014 will be celebrated June 1 - 7, according to the Rubber Manufacturers Association (RMA). National Tire Safety Week is an initiative of RMA's "Be Tire Smart - Play Your PART" program, a year-round effort designed to help drivers learn the simple steps they can take to ensure that their tires are in good working condition. RMA is the national trade association for the tire manufacturers.

"National Tire Safety Week is an opportunity for the tire industry to focus its collective efforts to educate motorists about the importance of proper tire care," said Dan Zielinski, RMA Senior Vice President. "Regular tire maintenance is critical to optimizing fuel efficiency, maximizing tire tread life and promoting a safe driving experience."

For more information on National Tire Safety Week visit www.betiresmart.org.

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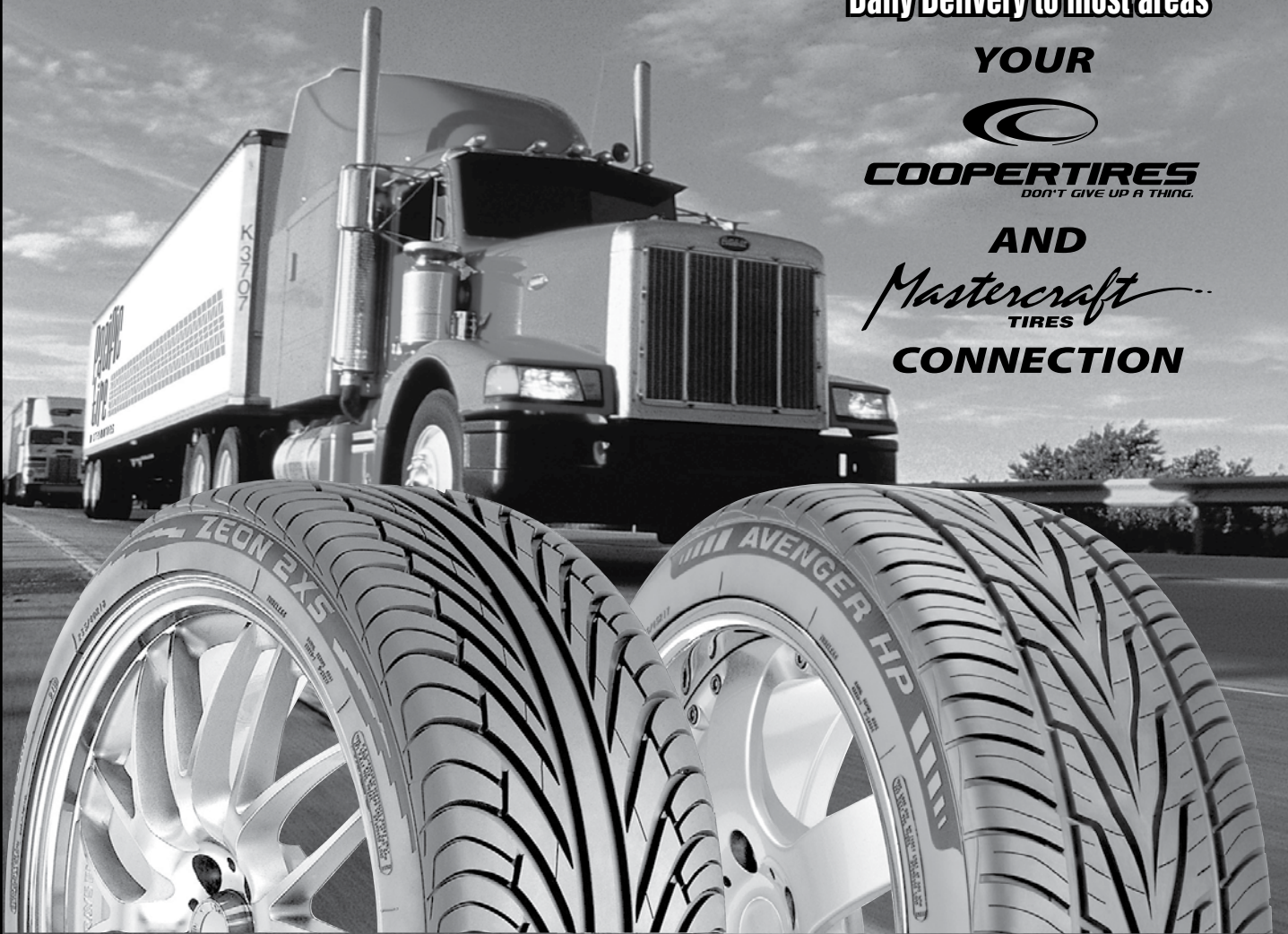


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42% OF DRIVERS CANNOT IDENTIFY TPMS WARNING LIGHTS

According to an article in Tire Review, 42% of drivers cannot accurately identify the tire pressure monitoring system dashboard warning symbol. While the customer survey, recently conducted by TNS on behalf of Schrader International, showed an increase in TPMS recognition from a 2010 survey, there is still plenty of room for more education, said Schrader.

Recognizing the lack of driver knowledge, Schrader and others are working to further educate drivers on the importance of TPMS.

“At Schrader, we’re committed to making a difference in driver safety, said Hugh Charvat, president and CEO of Schrader. “This begins with consumer education around how to recognize and what to do in a low tire pressure situation and continues with our dedication to delivering the best technology and operational performance in TPMS to our global original equipment manufacturer customers and aftermarket service partners.”

Schrader is working with its service partners to educate the public through point-of-sale elements such as product displays, waiting room posters, consumer-focused videos and handouts. Schrader also offers consumers online content to educate them before they have the conversation in the store.

With roughly 104 million vehicles in the U.S. equipped with TPMS and an estimated 91% of the U.S. vehicle population are expected to be TPMS-equipped by 2023, education is important, Schrader said. Because of this, Schrader wants to shine a “traffic light” - green (good news), yellow (areas for improvement) and red (staggering facts) - on TPMS education and awareness.

Schrader said its green light news is that drivers have expressed interest in safer and more environmentally friendly cars. Roughly 94% believe TPMS is an important safety feature for a car and 79% said it is also important for the environment. 95% of those surveyed consider safety features when shopping for a car.

Other good news is TPMS equipped vehicles can save

money through reduced fuel consumption and nearly half of drivers surveyed would likely purchase TPMS for their car if one wasn’t already installed.

Despite the green light news, there are still several areas for improvement, Schrader said.

Some yellow light issues include the fact that one in 10 drivers have admitted to intentionally ignoring the TPMS warning light and continuing to drive. While 21% of drivers say they would continue driving until they could check their tires with the naked eye, Schrader notes that by the time someone can visually detect a tire’s underinflation it can be nearly 50% underinflated.

Schrader noted that 42% of drivers rarely check their tire pressure; and 34% of men saying they rarely do and 50% of women, adding to another area for improvement.

The NHTSA reports that there are nearly 200,000 accidents caused by tire-related issues, 660 highway fatalities are due to underinflated tires and 33,00 injuries due to underinflated tires annually.

WASHINGTON TIRE SHOP ROBBED AT KNIFE POINT

A 62-year-old man was arrested after witnesses told police that he threatened a Washington state tire shop employee with a knife and sped through a garage door.

The man was charged with first-degree robbery and malicious mischief. Witnesses told police that the man brandished a large sheath containing what they believed was a knife and saying he needed his car.

An employee told police that the man dropped his car off for \$1,000 worth of repairs. When he arrived the next day, he paid only \$150. The employee told the man that they would not be releasing his car.

According to court documents, the man pulled out a sheath and held it to the employee’s neck. He then grabbed the keys to his car and drove through a shop door, witnesses told police. He was later arrested.

WASHINGTON, LOCAL GAS VAPOR FEES UNDER STUDY

by Mark Johnson, WRA VP Gov. Affairs

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) is studying the fees and regulations associated with gas vapors.

There are concerns that gas vapors can be released when customers pump gasoline or when a fuel truck fills a station's tanks. Vapors not only can harm the environment but also can impact sales from loss of product. JLARC is expected to submit its report to the Legislature in December this year.

All businesses who sell gas to consumers pay these fees to state and local clean air authorities.

Skyrocketing and duplicative fees to the state and local government present two problems with the current fee structure.

Gas dealers currently have to pay fees for inspections to both state and local authorities. They are basically doing the same inspection. This seems duplicative. Perhaps only state authorities should be involved in collecting fees.

The fees charged by local authorities also are skyrocketing. The Northwest Clean Air Agency's 2010 fee was \$285; this year it's \$4,800. Further, gas vapors released into the air have declined significantly with the federal regulation that all cars manufactured after 2000 must have a vapor containment system.

It doesn't make sense that fees should have increased as much as they have considering the vapor emissions have decreased.

We are hopeful that JLARC will put the pieces of this puzzle together and make a case to the legislature that significant changes need to be made to the rate of the fees and to how fees are applied. The system as it works today is unfair and as a result, consumers are paying more than necessary at the pump.

SEATTLE'S \$15 MINIMUM WAGE

A vast majority of Seattle's surveyed small businesses do not support the immediate implementation of a \$15 an hour minimum wage, as proposed to a mayoral review committee.

A total of 18 neighborhood district chambers of commerce and 251 small employers participated in the questionnaire about calls for the city to implement a \$15 hour minimum wage. The current state minimum wage is \$9.32, the highest state minimum in the nation.

Ninety-one percent of those small businesses surveyed were against immediate implementation of a \$15 wage, called for by the advocacy group "\$15 Now".

Highlights from the survey:

- Fifty-one percent of those surveyed would conduct layoffs to adjust to the higher payroll expenses of a \$15 minimum wage.
- Sixty percent said if the minimum wage increases in Seattle, it should be phased in over a three year period, not imposed immediately.
- Fifty-one percent said factors other than a minimum wage - such as affordable housing and child care - would be more helpful to low wage workers than a significant increase in the minimum wage.
- Twenty-five percent said a higher minimum would influence whether they located a business in Seattle or outside city limits.
- Eleven percent said the higher minimum wage idea should be dropped.
- Just 9% said they agreed with immediately implementation of a \$15 minimum wage.

Seattlepi.com carried a report about the survey recently. Among other outcomes from the minimum wage debate were businesses putting lease negotiations on hold or concluding that a higher minimum wage would make it harder for inexperienced applicants to find a job.

There is talk that as many as four ballot measures on the minimum wage could be out there for voters this fall. This would make it very confusing and difficult to argue for or against. In the end, voters could vote no on all of them and send the issue back to the city council to finalize.



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Rick Mustion
Northwest Regional Sales Manager

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WORKERS COMP PROGRAMS

Many NWTDA members in Washington have been part of the Washington Retail Association's (WRA) Workers Comp Retro Program for over 15 years. This program has saved NWTDA members money on their workers comp premiums.

From time to time, our Retro members think of changing risk classifications for their employees if workers' compensation insurance rates rise.

In hopes of saving money on insurance premiums, members often think it would be best to assign some workers to low-risk categories, even if they sometimes are called to be in a more dangerous work environment. A salesperson in a tire store, for example, might better be assigned to a lower insurance classification even if their job calls on them to walk through the back shop, occasionally carrying tires and exposing them to the greater risks being around heavier equipment.

This problem with this reasoning is the way the workers' compensation system works. Each classification is expected to meet its own claim expenses from the premiums paid into its fund. In this case, by removing salespeople from the higher risk classification a company would reduce the number of rate payers and reduce its fund to pay for treatment of injuries.

In such a situation, rates can jump for those workers changing the tires largely because the salespeople were removed as contributors to the insurance fund for the back shop.

Far better than shuffling workers among risk classifications is to commit to operating a safe work environment in which injuries are reduced and costs, as a result, are kept in check. You have some control over your rates through your experience rating. You can reduce your experience and pay less than the base rate within the risk class through safety and reduce losses.

If companies find themselves weighing the options of changing risk classifications, it's important to remember that the lure of low rates on one hand could be outweighed by the rising of costs of other workers

left with fewer contributors across whom to spread the risk of getting hurt on the job. Since most hours would continue to be paid in the higher risk classification, most members would potentially lose with a new risk class assignment.

What can you do? WRA can identify members who may not be paying any employees under the 4904 -Clerical category. WRA will advise members to identify at least one person who is devoted to the front sales area that never enters the shop and does not handle or move tires. You can save significantly by assigning one person to this risk and reducing their hazard exposure. If you would like WRA to review your risk classification for further consideration, please contact Robert Mitchell at 360-943-9198 ext. 14 or Robert.mitchell@retailassociationsservices.com

FALKEN V.P. RETIRES

Richard Smallwood, president of Falken Tire Corp., has announced the retirement of veteran Sales Vice President Bruce Ware, who has served the tiremaker for 11 years, and has been a part of the tire industry for more than 30 years.

Many will remember Bruce from his days with Big O Tire, when he served as a Northwest Regional Manager, working out of the Portland area.

"Bruce's dedication to always doing the best job possible has consistently contributed to Falken's success throughout the years," Smallwood wrote in a personal note to all Falken personnel. "His accomplishment for more than a decade as head of sales have enabled Falken to achieve immense growth. And while I'm happy Bruce will be able to spend more time at home with his family and enjoy what he has worked so hard for all his life, I am sad to lose him as a valued part of the Falken team."

In response to Ware's retirement, Smallwood announced that current Vice President of Marketing Andrew Hoit will move into Ware's position. Smallwood noted that "Andrew's aggressive attitude should prove invaluable in moving Falken's sales to new heights" and that Hoit has significant experience in the tire business, including managing a national salesforce.



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TIA ANNOUNCES HOTEL FOR GTE AT SEMA

The Tire Industry Association has announced that Caesars Palace will be its host hotel for the 2014 Global Tire Expo - Powered by TIA, part of the SEMA Show. SEMA is scheduled November 4-7 and TIA's pre-show events will take place November 3rd.

The early bird rate for rooms in the Roman Tower is \$185 and expires June 27. After that date, the room rate is \$215 with the final cut-off date for the room block on September 12th.

To reserve a room by phone, call 800-221-3531. Mention TIA to get conference room rate. Attendees may also make a reservation online.

TIA's pre-show events, open to all attendees, include:

- Annual Meeting, 12 p.m. - 12:30 p.m.
- Cocktail Hour, 5 p.m. - 6 p.m.
- Tire Industry Honors Awards, 6 -7:30 p.m.
- Welcome Reception, 7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

WHEEL MART'S NEW PORTLAND WAREHOUSE



Wheel Mart's Bill Dokak is opening a new warehouse in Portland. After several months of looking for the right location he has located his perfect spot at 5908 NE 112th just off of airport way in Northeast Portland (not too far from one of his favorite fishing holes).

Bill will have an inventory of both tires and wheels and plans to offer same day delivery in the Portland and Southwest Washington markets.

Wheel Mart's new Portland warehouse phone number is 503-889-0321.



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DAVE ROBBLEE PASSES AWAY

John David “Dave” Robblee, CEO of Six Robblees Inc., passed away peacefully at home in Kirkland on April 6, 2014. He struggled with cancer during the past year and a half, and spent his remaining time at home in the care and company of his family and friends.

Dave is survived by his wife Anne, and their three children: Tim Robblee and his wife Carolyn of Chicago; Andy Robblee and his wife Michelle of Newcastle; and Beth Soderlund husband Aaron of Woodinville. He was very close and devoted to his four grandchildren; Jessica, Jacob, Nathan, and Josh.

Dave joined Six Robblees’ Inc., a trucking-parts distributor and supplier based in Seattle, in 1966. He worked first as a sales manager, became President in 1976, and held this role until 2000. During this time, Six Robblees’ grew from three branch stores within Washington to over fifteen within five northwestern states. Through his leadership, Six Robblees’ became active members in Heavy Duty America Truck Pride (HDATP) and Ascot Tire Supply. In addition, Dave served a term as president of the National Wheel and Rim Association from 1985 -1986. As a supplier member of the Northwest Tire Dealers Association Dave received the “Outstanding Achievement Award” in 1998.

In addition to being a business owner and employer, Dave was dedicated to Christian service and volunteered for numerous organizations. In retirement, he valued working with World Vision’s micro-enterprise projects and was able to travel to observe the impact of these projects in communities throughout the world. He also was active at the Bread of Life Mission in Seattle, for which he served as chairman of the Board of Directors. Previously, he was active in such organizations as Young Life, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Bridge Ministries for Disability Concerns, the Boy Scouts , and Newport Covenant Church.

A memorial service was held at Newport Covenant Church in Bellevue on Saturday, April 12.

CALIFORNIA JURY FINDS SEARS NEGLIGENT

A jury ruled that Sears, Roebuck & Co. was negligent in not warning a Fresno, Calif., man about a bad tire, but the retail operation did not cause “substantial harm” resulting in a horrific freeway crash four years ago.

On June 11, 2010, Brandon Horn’s left rear tire on his 2002 Volkswagen Jetta lost its tread, causing his car to flip off Highway I80 east of Fresno. Horn, who was wearing a seat belt, suffered major head and spinal injuries after the Jetta rolled down an embankment and landed on its roof.

Horn sued Sears for more than \$3.5 million for lost wages, medical bills and pain. His attorney, Roger A. Dreyer, told local media the jury got it wrong and he plans to motion for a new trial.

The case claimed employees at Sears in Fresno were negligent for not telling Horn to replace the left rear tire before it fell apart. Horn went to Sears twice in 2009.

On Jan. 2, 2009, he bought two new tires for his Jetta and Sears’ workers put them on the front axle, Dreyer said. The technician noted in his work order that the rear tires were “cupped,” but the employees did not mention this to Horn.

Horn returned to the Sears store on July 29, 2009, when the tread on the Jetta’s right rear tire began to separate. A worker who had been on the job less than two months sold him one tire and never recommended replacing the other rear tire.

Dreyer said Sears’ employees broke company policy when they failed to tell Horn to replace the worn left rear tire that was nearly six years old. Eleven months later, while Horn was traveling 65 mph on the highway the tread of the left rear tire began to separate and Horn crashed.

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