



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: rnordness@nwtiredealers.org

May | June 2022

BIG O CELEBRATES 60TH ANNIVERSARY

Big O Tires LLC, a subsidiary of TBC Corp. and a retail tire and auto service franchisor with 460 locations in the United States, is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year.

Big O's story begins in 1962 when a group of independent tire dealers set a theme of trying to exceed customer expectations and securing volume tire pricing by forming a tire buying co-operative. When it joined forces with TBC in 1996, Big O's reach and resources were broadened to offer a wide selection of consumer automotive maintenance services.

To mark its 60th anniversary, Big O says it will celebrate its achievements while shaping the future at the upcoming Big O Tires convention. With a theme of it is "Only the Beginning," more than 800 franchise owners, managers, corporate associates, and suppliers will gather together in Dallas at the end of June.

"To this day, Big O is still driven by the entrepreneurial spirit of our founders, which has enabled us to constantly push new boundaries, grow our footprint and continually expand our product offering while delighting our customers with honest, worry-free service," says Jim Bull, vice president and general manager of Big O Tires.

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AGE OF DOMESTIC CARS HITS RECORD HIGH

A preliminary analysis estimates that domestic nameplate cars averaged a new high of more than 15.2 years at the beginning of 2022

Domestic nameplate cars continue to increase in age. For more than two decades, domestic cars have reached a new record-high average age each year. Over the past 10 years, the average age of domestic nameplate cars has increased by more than two full years, according to a new analysis.

The ever-advancing age of domestic cars is the result of diminishing new vehicle sales, the increased durability of vehicles, and the soaring value of used cars and light truck.

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BRIDGESTONE TO RAISE TIRE PRICES AGAIN

Bridgestone Americas Inc. will raise prices on its Bridgestone and Firestone commercial truck and bus tires plus its OTR and Ag tires up to 15% on May 1.

The hikes are in response to “current market dynamics,” according to Bridgestone officials. “Adjustments will be made at the article and pattern level.”

Members of Bridgestone’s commercial sales teams are contacting customers to provide more detailed information.

Bridgestone hiked their brands of commercial truck, bus, OTR and Ag tire prices up to 14% this past February.

ASA NORTHWEST, MWACA JOIN FORCES

The largest affiliate of the Automotive Service Association in the U.S. has signed up with a new group and changed its name.

The Automotive Service Association of the Northwest has changed its name to Northwest Auto Care Alliance (NWACA), joining forces with the Midwest Auto Care Alliance (MWACA).

“ASA Northwest members deserve to have an association located in this region whose activities are directed and managed by their local board and staff,” the announcement said. “NWACA will continue to serve the independent mechanical/transmission and collision industry as it has for over 50 years.”

The northwest group covers the Washington, Oregon and Idaho territories and they are looking to move into Alaska as well. ASA Northwest began its transition under the name of NWACA in late 2021 and has completed the changeover effective

January 1, 2022.

The MWACA itself was originally part of the ASA, as the ASA-Midwest Affiliate. It broke away in 2018 to form an independent organization. The NWACA plans to follow in the footsteps of the MWACA.

BFG, MICHELIN, PIRELLI TOP TIRE RATINGS

BFGoodrich, Michelin and Pirelli have been judged the leading original equipment brands in the U.S by recent new car buyers surveyed by J.D. Power for the rating firm’s 2022 OE Tire Customer Satisfaction Study.

For Michelin, it’s the brand’s 19th consecutive year at the top of the heap among tire brands supplying the luxury segment and 97th award overall over the past 33 years from J.D. Power.

BFG was judged the best brand in the truck/utility vehicle category, while Pirelli earned top billing in the passenger car segment. It the BFG brand’s second win in the category.

J.D. Power’s satisfaction studies measure tire owner satisfaction in four areas (in order of importance): tire ride, tire wear, tire traction/handling; and tire appearance. Ranking are segregated by four vehicle segments: luxury; passenger car; performance sport; and truck utility.

The 2022 study is based on responses from over 29,000 owners of 2020 and 2021 model-year vehicles and was conducted from August through December 2021.



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BIG O TIRES CELEBRATES 60TH ANNIVERSARY

Continued from front page

Here in the Northwest the Big O Tires franchise was big through the 1980s. They had over 20 franchise stores in the Portland and Vancouver area. Jim Bacon Sr. operated his Big O Tire store in Beaverton, Oregon and now his son Jim Jr. and granddaughter Jenny operate the same location as a Tire Pros store.

Most of the other Big O locations in the Portland and Seattle areas have also moved on to other programs, some are now Point S Tire stores, some Tire Pros, and still others are no longer in business.

POINT S TIRE CONTINUES ITS GROWTH IN THE NORTHWEST

Point S Tire is continuing its growth in the Northwest with plans for a new warehouse in eastern Oregon.

The marketing cooperative is leasing a 50,000-sq.-ft. warehouse in Umatilla, Oregon. The warehouse will serve Point S locations in central and eastern Washington and Oregon and especially the stores in the Tri-Cities of Pasco and Richland. The new warehouse location will also be of help to stores in Hermiston and Pendleton Oregon.

The building is expected to be ready early in the third quarter, according to Walter Lybeck, the company's CEO.

The warehouse predominately will carry heavy agricultural and off-road products, "helping us to support the central Washington area."

Point S also operates two warehouses in the Portland area and one each in Denver, Salt Lake City, Albany Oregon and Memphis, Tennessee

2021 CONSUMER TIRE PRICES ROSE 13%

An analysis by the NPD Group shows consumer replacement tire prices increased 13% in 2021, and despite the increase, more expensive tires were more popular with buyers than before the pandemic.

"The tire industry, like many others, is experiencing the effects of a shift in overall consumer behavior as it relates to pricing and demand," says Nathan Shipley, automotive industry analyst for NPD. "Driving behavior has changed over the past two years but the needs are still there. Consumers are currently focused on getting what they want, while they can, with what is available to them at retail stores."

NPD says tires that were priced at least \$140 per unit "contributed significantly more to sales in 2021 and gained more than 10 unit-share points in the fourth quarter, when compared to 2019."

In addition to moving more units, NPD says the higher-priced tires sold faster than they did before the pandemic.

When looking at just the fourth quarter, NPD says the average price of passenger car and light truck tires increased by more than 20% in 2021 compared to 2019.

And while the year saw pricing actions from tiremakers in every category, consumers also bought more tires in 2021. And NPD notes that the growth "came almost entirely from full-price tire sales." Consumers paid full price for their tires 80% of the time in 2021, compared to 73% in 2019, NPD says.

"Consumer behavior has taken a wild ride since the start of the pandemic, and many behavioral changes surrounding recreation and mobility are here to stay, greatly benefiting the automotive aftermarket," Shipley said.

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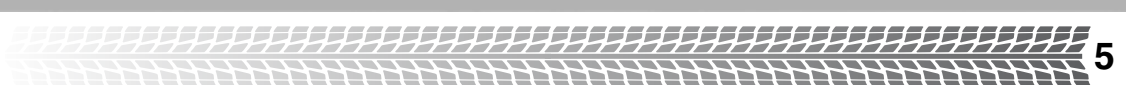
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WAIA HEALTH TRUST

The Washington Automotive Industry Health Trust, is an Association Health Plan option available exclusively to automotive businesses in Washington State and members of the Northwest Tire Dealers Association are included.

Since its inception in October 2013, the Health Trust has seen excellent growth. The first group was effective January 2014 and as of the September 2019, the Trust is serving nearly 190 businesses and more than 2,600 employees and dependents.

Premiera Blue Cross is the exclusive medical carrier for the Trust. By participating in the medical plan groups may also elect dental through Delta Dental of Washington, vision through VSP, and group Life benefits through LifeMap Assurance Company. Groups of 2 or more employees are eligible to participate.

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TIA SEEKING NOMINATIONS FOR 2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Tire Industry Association is seeking nominations for four Board of Director positions that will become open in November 2022.

Newly elected Board members will serve three-year terms and may be re-elected to serve two additional three-year terms. Positions on the TIA board are open to individuals who fulfill the following requirements:

- Employed by a TIA member company
- Member company must be in good standing for two consecutive years prior to election; and
- Represents a manufacturer, tire dealer, wholesale distributor, supplier, recycler or retreader;

Nominations should be submitted no later than Monday, May 9, 2022, at 5 pm EST.

Newly elected Board members will be installed during the TIA Annual Membership Meeting, Oct. 31, 2022, in Las Vegas, prior to the start of the Global Tire Expo/SEMA Show.

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AGE OF DOMESTIC CARS

Continued from front page

The following are highlights from the Jim Lang (Lang Aftermarket iReport) study:

The increasing age of domestic nameplate cars

The average age of domestic nameplate cars on U.S. roads climbed by nearly 2.5 years between 2012 and 2022.

They averaged 12.9 years at the beginning of 2012 and reached 14.2 by 2017

Average age increase to 2022

Over the last five years, domestic nameplate cars had climbed steadily in average age, reaching 14.6 years by 2019 and 14.8 years in 2020. Lang Marketing estimates that domestic nameplate cars averaged a record high of more than 15.2 years at the beginning of 2022. Final results will be available in several months.

Domestic cars added nearly 2.5 years to their average age in the past 10 years, pushing their average age to approximately 4.0 years above that of foreign nameplate cars.

Dropping new domestic car sales

The domestic car share of new light vehicle sales has greatly diminished over the past 15 years. From 22 percent of sales in 2006, domestic nameplate cars captured less than 6 percent of the 2021 new vehicle light market in the U.S.

This steady decline in the share and volume of new domestic nameplate car sales has reduced the number of lower-aged domestic cars to offset the growing number of older domestic nameplate cars on U.S. roads. As a result, the average age of domestic nameplate cars continues its upward trend, and Lang Marketing expects this trend will continue unabated.

Increasing vehicle durability

Vehicles are staying on U.S. roads for an increasing number of years. Cars and light

trucks produced over the past 20 years remain in operation an average of four to five more years than vehicles manufactured earlier, reflecting advances in the materials used in vehicle construction and improved manufacturing technology. This increased vehicle durability means that there is headroom for additional domestic car age growth.

Record-high used vehicle prices

The recent surge in used car prices is reinforcing the trend of extended vehicle survival. The increasing value of used vehicles makes it less likely that they will be scrapped due to crashes and other conditions that in years past would have resulted in their final trip to the junkyard.

Three major aftermarket consequences

First, the increasing age of domestic cars presents the aftermarket with a growing parts proliferation concern. As domestic nameplate cars become older, manufacturers, distributors, and retailers must continue to maintain inventories of replacement parts for this aging segment of the vehicle population.

Second, the owners of aging domestic nameplate cars are becoming more price-sensitive to the cost of replacement parts and services, affecting the mix of product brands used in their repair and types of DIFM outlets where this work is performed.

Third, older domestic cars provide inexpensive transportation for consumers, especially younger buyers, who will generally drive them more annual miles than they would otherwise travel

This is a positive for the aftermarket since older vehicles require more repair per mile than the average car and light truck.

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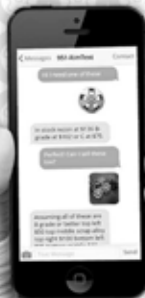
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