

# FOR auto know

## AUTO NEWS FROM AROUND SOUTH CENTRAL PA

### LB Smith Salutes Company President Bruce Hetrick: Celebrating "45 Years in the Fast Lane"

By Richard E. Jordan II, CEO and Chairman of the Board, LB Smith Ford Lincoln Mercury

While economists and the Treasury discuss the requirements of a government bridge loan for GM and Chrysler, those of us on the front lines of the American automotive industry are quietly doing business on "Market Street."

As the largest Ford retailer in central Pennsylvania since 1940, LB Smith Ford Lincoln Mercury has navigated through the serious down cycles and challenges of World War II, the Vietnam War, the civil unrest of the 60s, the oil crisis of the 70s, and the 19% interest rates of the 80s. We are cycling through a downturn now, and when the tide changes, and Americans shift into car- and truck-buying high gear again, we will be here to meet the demand.

Our staying power in central Pennsylvania is the result of an extremely valued and loyal owner base—we are selling to our third and fourth generations of customers—but perhaps more important, it's the result of a deeply committed family of workers.

The LB Smith team of over 100 employees has an amazing 1,400 years of automotive industry experience. Unlike the business environment that most Millennials are entering, we have 30 employees who have worked with the company for longer than 20 years; 18 of whom have been with the company longer than 30 years.

In January, as Ford celebrates the Mustang's milestone of "45 Years in the Fast Lane," we celebrate our own milestone. L. Bruce Hetrick, grandson of LB Smith and president of the company, is retiring after 45 years of service. Ford's slogan in 1963, when Bruce started work at our flagship Lemoyne site, was "Total Performance." That's exactly what Bruce has brought to our dealership.

In every execution of his responsibilities, he has enriched our corporate heritage with a dimension only experience and wisdom can bring. We are grateful for his decisive leadership, his ability to be a friend to all, and his compassion—regardless of the business issues, he never lost sight of the individual.

Managing a full-service dealership demands the integrity and talent of a capable captain. Always keeping an expert eye on the sales team, tracking the 600 new and used vehicles onsite and in transit, guiding the service department which has fulfilled 16,150 repairs this year alone—more than any other Ford dealer in the Philadelphia/New Jersey region—as well as overseeing other departments and listening to the customers, Bruce is the ballast of LB Smith.

When asked what our employees will miss most about Bruce's departure, they say his leadership style and sound judgment. "No one has more knowledge of the automotive industry than Bruce Hetrick," says his brother, Homer Hetrick, who has been with LB Smith for 46 years and will succeed him as president. "He never asked someone to do something he wasn't willing to do himself—from washing a car to chauffeuring a customer. He has been my counterbalance."

"We work in a fast-paced environment to meet the needs of our car and truck customers. And every day I look forward to seeing Bruce's familiar face in the showroom. There was no idea I suggested that Bruce would summarily dismiss. If it would build the LB Smith brand and deliver value to our customers, he would embrace our suggestions," says Bill Yiengst, 20-year LB Smith veteran sales associate.

Under Bruce's leadership, LB Smith's "Voice of the Customer" rating reached 93 percent—one of the highest in the country. In 2005, the dealership received the elite President's Award for excellence in every sector. The community understands that these accomplishments don't just occur; nor are they achieved without a dealership in lockstep with its customer base. Understanding the clear signals of industry change, Bruce led the company through our recent consolidation in May—co-locating our three dealerships to the Lemoyne location and selling the LB Smith Jaguar dealership.

We appreciated his ability to get the right people in the right places, which is critical to a business's success. His tacit knowledge will be missed; his work ethic and obsession with excellence continue to be the gold standard for our team.

Like 2008, the year 1963 had its share of newsworthy events: President John F. Kennedy was assassinated, the Measles vaccine was approved, Ford won the NASCAR title, AT&T introduced the touch tone phone into homes, and gas was 30 cents a gallon. Each challenge—whether globally or in our backyard—brings new opportunities, and we are well-prepared to sell and service a stronger, more energy-efficient product line for the next 45 years, thanks to Bruce's leadership.

LB Smith's strength in each economic cycle and importance to multi-generations is no surprise to us—it's all about our people. In the New Year, Bruce may travel more, help out in his granddaughters' classrooms, or relax at his cabin. Wherever he decides to spend his well-deserved retirement, he'll be noticed in his new 2009 F-150—his own exclamation point to an extraordinary Ford career.

*Richard E. Jordan II is CEO and Chairman of the Board for LB Smith Ford Lincoln Mercury and Smith Land & Improvement Corporation.*



A dual celebration: Bruce Hetrick (left), retiring from LB Smith after 45 years, stands with a 2008 Shelby King of the Road edition in the LB Smith Ford Lincoln Mercury showroom. His brother, Homer Hetrick, (right) will become president. The Ford Mustang is celebrating "45 Years of Service in the Fast Lane."