

# SERVICE QUARTERLY



December  
1994

\$10

An official publication of The Service Station Dealers Association of Michigan

## Seasons Greetings!

### Incumbents keep House seats

*GOP gains control of State House, Hillegonds pledges to work with Democrats*

Michigan voters returned all but one incumbent to seats in the State House and Senate. Governor John Engler and Attorney General Frank Kelley also regained their seats. Obviously, most voters liked what they saw the last two years.



John Engler



Dick Posthumous



Paul Hillegonds



Curtis Hertel

ever co-speakers. Michigan saw one of the most productive legislative sessions in its history. There were tremendous strides made in prop-

The last two years in Michigan politics have been historic thanks to Governor

Engler, Co-Speakers of the House Curtis Hertel and Paul Hillegonds, and Senate Ma-

jority Leader Dick Posthumous. With a 55-55 split in the house and the first

erty taxes, welfare reform and small business taxes. We

*see Election pg. 11*

### SQ turns the camera on you

In this issue we're introducing a new feature, "In Pictures," where we spotlight our members on the job and in the community.

Ron and Cathy Andrews are featured on pages 14-15. This summer the Andrews held a Customer Appreciation Day and DARE program at their Shell station in Grand Ledge, Michigan (pictured right).

If you have an upcoming event let us know. Call Amy Johnston at (517) 484-4096.

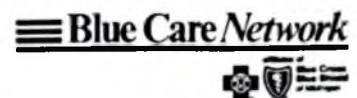


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14-15

### Dealer Profile

*New SSDA President Dennis Sidorski perseveres in an ever changing industry.*



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*Celeste Bennett of the Department of Agriculture oversees the motor fuel quality program, keeping an eye on quality in the industry.*

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# President's Corner

Dennis Sidorski, SSDA-MI President

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to wish all of our members a happy holiday season. Thanks to the Dealer Equity Bill, passed in 1988, most of us will have Christmas off to spend with our families.

The holiday season also focuses our attention on a new year, new hopes and new goals. I am especially opti-

mistic about 1995 as the SSDA continues to move forward. We have made tremendous strides in Lansing. Ten years ago we could knock on the Capitol doors and no one would talk to us. Today we are not only listened to in the legislature, but sought after for input. By continuing to stick together we can ensure future success.

## It's time to call on our younger members

The future of the SSDA, however, depends upon the involvement of younger dealers. Without younger members involved at the board level, there is no future for SSDA. We need their fresh perspective on the business, and their input on growing trends.

We're missing some of the essential comradeship between older and younger dealers. We can only benefit from each other. I owe a great deal of gratitude to the many dealers who helped me along the way.

The SSDA is a family and I see our younger members as those who will carry on the family business. I also see our older members as those who will pass along the wisdom of their knowledge.

One dealer I've learned a lot from is former president Mick Kildea. On behalf of the board and the membership, I would like to express our appreciation to Mick and Sally for all they have done for the gasoline retailing industry over the past 30 years. We wish them a great deal of happiness in their retirement.

The SSDA is a family and I see our younger members as those who will carry on the family business.

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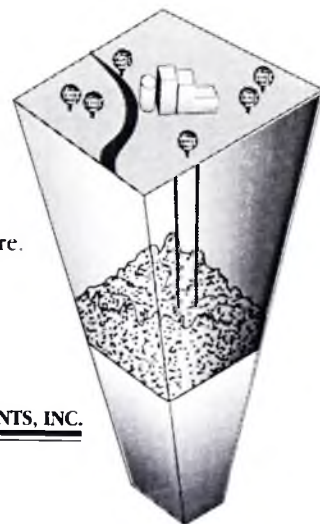
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# Inside the State

Amy Johnston, SSDA-MI

## Department of Agriculture keeps an eye on quality for dealers

If you own or operate a retail gasoline outlet in Michigan, chances are the Department of Agriculture's Celeste Bennett is looking over your shoulder.

And for good reason. Bennett is the motor fuel quality coordinator, and she says her department's mission is to make sure dealers, and their customers, benefit from quality standards on food, fuel and weights and measures.

Bennett is part of the Department of Agriculture's Food Division, where she once served as a field inspector. The Food Division, which also oversees weights and measures, was given the responsibility of motor fuel quality under Public Act 44 of 1984. Today Bennett oversees 63 inspectors in seven regions across the state.

Inspectors are responsible for taking fuel samples from service stations. Bennett said there are two kinds of samples: a random sample, where a dealer can be selected at any time; and a customer complaint sample, where the inspector is responding to a specific complaint.

"Consumers are very helpful. They know when their car is not running right," Bennett said, adding consumers often think bad gas is the cause of car problems.

The department's lab runs several performance and environmental tests on the fuel samples. Tests look at lead, octane, sulfur, oxygenates, distillation range, and corrosives. Bennett said a full range of tests takes about 45 days. When the tests are completed Bennett herself reviews the findings and determines the next course of action.



*Celeste Bennett at her desk in the Department of Agriculture*

"If there is a problem, we do further investigations," she said. "We may ask for invoices or go to the distributor." If there is a problem, but no evidence that the retailer was involved, then Bennett said a notification letter would be sent. This whole process can take months depending on how much investigation is involved.

The notification requires the dealer to take action with the supplier on the problem, Bennett said. Later inspectors would return for another sample to determine if the problem was solved.

If the retailer is involved, Bennett said they may proceed with prosecution. However, recent amendments to P.A. 44 now allow the department to impose fines, ranging from \$50 to \$500 based on the number of violations, instead of court action.

While this process may appear to be pitting the Department of Agriculture against dealers, Bennett says it's just the opposite.

"One of the reasons we have this program is because the industry pushed for it so there would be a level playing field for all," she said. "Now everyone has to at least meet the minimum standards."

Before these standards, Bennett said, it was easier for some retailers to lower their price by selling cheap, bad gas.

This level playing field also includes taking a close look at weights and measures, particularly station pumps.

"We get more weights and measures complaints than any others," Bennett said.

She recalled a 1985 "sting operation" where 15 stations were selling 65-76 percent less than their

*see Agriculture pg. 20*

### Who to call:



Department of Agriculture - Food Division  
Celeste Bennett, motor fuel quality coordinator  
(517) 373-1060

Region 1 - Upper Peninsula  
John Helden, Supervisor  
(906) 786-5462

Region 2 - Northern Lower Peninsula  
Charles Shelley, Supervisor  
(616) 922-5236

Region 3 - West Central  
Susan Brace, Supervisor  
(616) 456-9688

Region 4 - East Central  
Michael Juhasz, Supervisor  
(517) 758-1778

Region 5 - Southwest  
Neal Fortin, Supervisor  
(616) 429-1007

Region 6 - South Central  
Robert Taylor, Supervisor  
(517) 373-1333

Region 7 - Detroit  
Harold Zorien, Supervisor  
(810) 356-1700



The Holiday Season always shows the important role our industry plays in everyone's lives. As people prepare for family trips, shopping, school functions, etc., they look to our industry to make sure their automobiles are prepared. Just in case something does happen, they know they can rely on us to be there whatever the time, day or night.

This season makes the word convenience more important to everyone. Our customers know we are convenient, open, and stocked with the items they need. Even if it is that last minute car wash before the Christmas party to make sure they look their best. Many times these dependencies are taken for granted by both the customers and the dealer.

Along with this season comes a general cheerfulness in people. It also allows us to greet customers that want our services. This makes a great opportunity to develop

new relationships with customers we do not know. It gives us a chance to strengthen relationships with our regular customers. These relationships turn into loyalty for that location, its staff and the dealer. That loyalty is one factor that makes the difference in a good station and a great station.

There are limited occasions for us to develop relationships with our customers when all the conditions are just right. This season puts those conditions all together. The customer attitude is generally positive. They need us and they want to feel needed.

Other times of the year we have to spend lots of

money in order to create this mood.

Customer appreciation days, grand openings and special promotions are attempts to create an attitude of station preference in the customer's mind. We have that desire and attitude now with little cost or advertising. This is also true of employees. This is one of the best times to get employees adjusted to the dealer's expectations of customer service.

We know these conditions will change rapidly after January 1 with Christmas bills and tax season knocking on the door. The time is now.

*Along with this season comes a general cheerfulness in people. It allows us to greet customers that want our services.*

Let's put our best customer relations attitude in gear and inspire our employees to do the same. We can show many customers the real advantage of a dealer owned and operated location: We care about the customer.

Have a great holiday season.

## Questions?

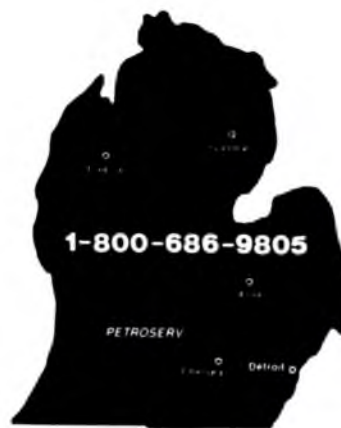
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# Environmental Update

Terry Burns, SSDA-MI

## Decision on postponing the MUSTFA phase-out still pending

On October 19th the MUSTFA Policy Board drafted a resolution regarding the phasing out of MUSTFA. That resolution was directed to the Director of the Department of Natural Resources. The resolution requested the Director to postpone the first phase-in of private insurance that is to take place January 1, 1995. That request was based on the fact that the Director can postpone the phase-in if it is found that either insurance is not available or available but not at a reasonable cost. That decision is to be based upon a study that was to be concluded by July of 1994. As of October 19 that study had not yet begun. Therefore, how can a determination be made with no study. The Policy

Board took the position that until that study is complete no action toward phasing out MUSTFA should be taken.

Shortly after October 19, a study was ordered to meet those July requirements. The study should be complete in early March. This gives another reason why no phase-in should begin.

It should be noted that the phase-in schedule that is to begin January 1, 1995 is only for those tank systems upgraded to 1998 standards before October 26, 1993. For those locations MUSTFA

will cover \$800,000 of insurance and the owner/operator would have to have private insurance for the additional \$200,000. Then in 1996 that would change to \$600,000 MUSTFA and \$400,000 private insurance.

For those locations that have not upgraded as of October 26, 1993, the phase-in will begin in 1997. MUSTFA will cover \$800,000 and the owner/operator will provide \$200,000 in private insurance. Then in 1998 MUSTFA will change to \$600,000 and the dealer will need \$400,000

in private insurance. On December 22, 1998 MUSTFA is no longer available.

Again, this is the proposed phase-in that was put in the law in 1993. The Director has the authority to postpone this phase-in but only under the two conditions described above. All effected parties, associations and industry, have been working on this issue in the attempt to have it postponed. As of this date no decision has been made. As soon as it is determined we will notify all members.

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# Membership

Dyck Van Koevering, SSDA-MI

You have probably heard us say, "Membership doesn't cost, it pays!"

Two solid benefits offered by SSDA the Dodson Workers' Compensation Insurance Program, and a new membership program with the Tire Wholesalers Company - really prove that point. These programs, available exclusively for SSDA members, will bring daily benefits to members' businesses.

**The Dodson Workers' Compensation Insurance Program** has proven very popular among SSDA members and has consistently delivered strong economic benefits to its subscribers.

Dodson enables a dealer to meet all state law requirements for providing coverage for work-related injury or loss. These include: medical and rehabilitation expenses; payment for loss of income resulting from work-related injury and occupational dis-

## Membership pays; two benefits prove it

ease; and payment to surviving family members if an employee is killed on the job.

Due to efficient program management, Dodson has each year been able to give participating members a dividend from premiums left over. This dividend has averaged 14 percent over the past five years.

Dodson Group also offers a wide variety of general and casualty insurance programs for small businesses at competitive rates.

**The Tire Wholesalers Program** is a recent member benefit for SSDA. For those subscribing to the SSDA/Tire Wholesalers program, SSDA will provide vouchers for additional points good toward Tire Wholesalers (TW) pro-

motional programs. These promotions are based on the purchase of tires, and prizes vary from trips to merchandise.

Any current SSDA member who signs up with TW will receive a voucher from SSDA worth 25 points toward a TW promotion. Any SSDA member who is a current TW customer will receive a voucher worth 10 points. And, any current TW dealer who joins SSDA will receive a voucher worth 25 points. Each future purchase of tires earns additional points.

TW has many promotions planned for 1995 and beyond. They will soon begin a "Cash for the Crew" program in which they will give back to

the dealer \$50 for each order of 50 tires. This money can in turn be passed on to sales employees as incentives for greater performance. TW will also offer Extended Terms for tire purchases, and Point of Sale promotions. They are also planning cooperative advertising programs with participating dealers.

For its top dealers, TW has a fishing getaway planned at Sugarloaf Resort in Traverse City, and a warm weather cruise.

"The SSDA/Tire Wholesalers program is easy to participate in and the results are great. If you are a tire dealer, give us a call to see what this program can do for you," said John Meyers, TW Marketing Manager.

If you have any questions or comments regarding these, or any other programs SSDA offers, please do not hesitate to contact us at 517/484-4096.

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### UST fee in place again

The Underground Storage Tank (UST) Section within the Department of Natural Resources has reinstated the \$100 Underground

Storage Tank Fee. Billing began in October, and several dealers have already been charged. The billing cycle is based on when you were billed in the past.

Payment of the fee is charged per tank, per year and payment is required to be

eligible for MUSTFA funds.

According to legislation, the fee is only collected when the UST program's administrative balance is below \$8 million. Two years ago the fund went above \$8 million and the fee was suspended. A recent change to the legis-

lation says that once the fund balance drops below \$4 million the fee will be collected again; and that is what has happened.

### Baskin Robbins moving to c-stores

Ice-cream giant Baskin Robbins is entering the c-store co-branding game with plans to have outlets in 200 c-stores by 1997.

Baskin Robbins already has a few units running and expects to have 22 by the end of this year and 55 by the end of 1995.

The cost to start up an outlet is about \$30,000, which includes inventory, equipment, uniforms, signage and general operation information. However, the up front costs is offset by royalty fees of only 0.5 percent.

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## *Election from pg. 1*

must remember that it took uncomparable joint leadership and all sides coming to the table to accomplish these many strides for Michigan.

With the recent election in November, the Republicans now hold a 56-54 majority in the House. This means all committees will be chaired by Republicans, and Mr. Hillegonds will be the sole Speaker of the House. Mr. Hillegonds has promised to keep an open debate in the newly Republican-controlled House. He said Democratic cooperation is required for continued problem solving in the legislature.

The Republicans have kept their control of the Senate, although incumbent Gilbert DiNello lost to Ken DeBeaussiaert. The only other incumbent to lose in November was Secretary of

State Richard Austin. Candice Miller is set to step in as Secretary of State.

These subtle, but very important changes in the legislature are a reminder of how important it is for Association members to get involved. We need to remain a part, and a voice, in the many changes ahead.

With the implementation of term limits, each election in the future will bring many new faces. It is important for dealers to get to know these new legislators and help them understand the concerns of the gasoline retailing industry. Keep in mind that because of term limits, one of this term's freshman representatives will be Speaker of the House in four years. It is important that we maintain our presence for the good of the industry.

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# Determination

## PAYS OFF FOR DEALER

By Amy Johnston



Dennis Sidorski and Ed Paull service a vehicle in one of the Shell station's two service bays.

Perseverance.

It's the one theme that is continuous through Dennis Sidorski's 27-year career in the gasoline retailing industry. It's also one of the reasons Sidorski remains a successful businessman in Ann Arbor, and why he was recently elected president of the Service Station Dealers Association of Michigan.

Sidorski grew up in Birmingham, Michigan with several friends who would go on to become successful dealers and members of SSDA. In 1967 he went to work for two men, Bill Fox and Gary DeWitt, at their Shell station at 11 Mile and Stevenson.

"I started out working the drive," Sidorski recalled of the full-service pump days. "And then I started learning a little about mechanics. Back then everything was service oriented. Dealers would take their time to train employees."

Over the next 11 years, Sidorski worked for three other Shell dealers, learning more and more about the business along the way.

He even ventured out on his own and opened his first station at 14 Mile and Dequindre. It was not an overnight success.

"For two years I struggled very hard to make it work," he said.

His first station didn't last, but his perseverance did. In 1978 Sidorski assumed dealership of his present station, Maple and Miller Shell in Ann Arbor.

A few years later in 1982 his hard work started to reap some benefits as Sidorski was honored by Shell Oil Company as a dealer of the year.

A love for the business and the customers kept Sidorski committed to the gasoline retailing industry.



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"It's fast-paced work," he said. "I like helping and meeting new people. Every customer is different. Every car is different."

Sidorski said he loves the challenge of making a station a successful one. Many of those challenges come from taking risks. He said over the years he "tried all the things everyone else said you shouldn't." At one time Sidorski owned three Shell stations, including ones in Livonia and Pontiac. He decided later to concentrate on the one location.

His success as a dealer and willingness to try something new lead Shell to open one of its first convenience stores at Sidorski's Ann Arbor location. Today the small c-store may not be as large as one-stop-shopping mega stations, but Sidorski believes perseverance and old fashioned customer service are his greatest assets. However, he admits the industry is changing and dealers have to change with it.

"I'm concerned because we're losing contact with the customer in this industry. Once you lose contact with your customers they are no longer loyal. They can just go anywhere," Sidorski said citing new trends like pay-at-pump services. "The 90s is a discount era and it's hurting (businesses like) service bays. You have to stay with the times, though."

Keeping his eye on the future, Sidorski took over another station four years ago. The newest station, a Marathon in the same neighborhood as his Shell location, is run on a daily basis by manager John Long.

see Dealer

pg. 20



Dennis Sidorski, right, talks with manager John Long in front of his Marathon location.

## FORMALITIES

- Started in the gasoline retailing industry in 1967 working the drive for SSDA members Bill Fox and Gary DeWitt.
- A member of SSDA on and off for the last 27 years. Joined the Board in the mid 1980s.
- Children: Nathan, 19, Matt, 17, Andy, 16, Jessie, 13, and Denny, 11.



Dennis Sidorski's Shell and Marathon stations share the same busy intersection in Ann Arbor.

**SSDA-MI members shared \$163,604 in Dodson dividends last year.**

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*SSDA member, local police  
join forces for the  
community*



*Top of page: SSDA member Ron Andrews and his daughter Danielle laugh along with Barney and friends at Grand Ledge Shell's customer appreciation day this past June.*

*Above: Cathy Andrews, co-owner of Grand Ledge Shell and SSDA member, with Barney and pal Baby Bop.*

*Left: Grand Ledge police sergeant Steve Starr checks out his squad car which was decorated with balloons for the day.*



On Saturday, June 11, one of those perfect days this past summer, it was impossible to drive into Grand Ledge, Michigan without noticing all the commotion at Grand Ledge Shell. Banners were waving in the wind, police officers were pumping gas for customers, hot dogs were being passed around, and Barney the dinosaur was making some new friends.

SSDA members Ron and Cathy Andrews hosted a customer appreciation day this summer at their Shell station on Saginaw Highway in Grand Ledge. They joined with the Grand Ledge Police to make the event a DARE (Drug Awareness Resistance Education) program as well.

The day was such a success that Ron and Cathy hosted another DARE fundraising event on September 16. Grand Ledge Shell donated 2 cents to DARE for every gallon of gas sold throughout the day.

The SSDA is proud to recognize members like the Andrews, who realize the importance of getting involved with the community. They exemplify the independent dealer's commitment to the neighborhoods they live and work in.

*Service Quarterly is taking ideas for "In Pictures." If you, or a fellow dealer, are planning an event at your station let us know. If you have recently hosted a program and have pictures we could borrow we'd like to hear from you. Please call Amy Johnston at (517) 484-4096.*



Grand Ledge police sergeant Steve Starr at the DARE table with one of the day's many young visitors. Grand Ledge Shell donated 2 cents to DARE for every gallon of gas sold. DARE is a program that puts police officers in the classrooms to warn students about the dangers of drug use.



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## PMPA 'fixes,' an improvement on original act

Sixteen years after its adoption, the Petroleum Marketing Practices Act has been amended. Added to the Act are some important "fixes" intended to repair several serious problems with the original Act. The amendments were approved by President Clinton in late October.

The changes to the Act followed more than a decade and a half of experience with the law (and nearly that long trying to change it). PMPA is a good statute. It has protected every operator in the country from arbitrary termination or non-renewal. But there were numerous compromises inherent in the legislative process that produced the original act. And there have been dozens of restrictive judicial decisions interpreting the law. These showed numerous soft spots in the law that could only be repaired by additional legislation.

The amendments are the product of a very long series of negotiations between SSDA-AT and representatives of the major oil companies. Association negotiators began discussions with a long agenda and many proposals for change. Not everything was accomplished. But the changes that were approved make very significant improvements to the law. This brief overview of the law will be supplemented in future writings.

### 1.

A change to section 102 (b)(3) strengthens the prohibition against conversion of facilities. A franchisor is forbidden from making changes for the purpose of converting operation of the franchise to agents or employees of the

franchisor. Authors of the amendments argue that this change would permit dealers to challenge unreasonable rent increases or changes in hours. It remains to be seen whether this change will have that effect. But it will certainly make clear that a franchisor may not remove a dealer with the ultimate goal of installing an employee or "agent" of the supplier (expect considerable future litigation regarding the word "agent." Does it mean an independent dealer who has been selected by the supplier?).

### 2.

#### A

change to section 102(c) adds critical protection to dealers leasing property that is leased to the supplier. Until now expiration of the underlying lease meant that the dealer would have to surrender his or her franchise. And PMPA had no remedy for dealers who lost a franchise because a supplier refused to exercise an option to extend the underlying lease. The amendments change that.

PMPPA now requires a supplier to (a) notify the dealer of the potential expiration of the underlying lease before the dealer approves

the franchise; (b) offer to assign to the dealer its options to extend the lease (conditioned on receiving from the dealer a complete release against certain liability claims and a right of entry to the premises to permit environmental remediation); (c) make a bona fide offer to sell to the dealer its interest in marketing improvements.

These changes will protect the many dealers who occupy premises that their supplier does not own. They will have the opportunity to continue the operation of their businesses despite the expiration of a lease. These changes permit continuity by permitting dealer exercise of options to renew leases and to purchase property improvements.

### 3.

A change to section 105 protects dealers against one of the more outrageous demands of suppliers. Some franchises required dealers to waive certain rights under state or federal law. Others stipulated that the law of a certain state would govern the supplier/dealer relationship. This was especially noxious. It meant that dealers might have to, say, have an

Ohio court enforce Delaware law in construing a franchise operated in Ohio. This presented untold problems in enforcing a franchise. The amendments now require that no franchise may require that it be construed by or enforced under the law of any state other than the state in which the franchise is located.

### 4.

A change in the Act enhances the rights of states to adopt their own laws protecting franchises. PMPA originally contained a very strong provision against any state adopting any law affecting dealer franchises. But the amendments permit a state to make unlawful certain practices (perhaps mandatory 24 hour operation).

### 5.

Suppliers did not come away from this negotiation empty handed. The amendments forbid a state from requiring certain payments to dealers on termination or non-renewal. Some states had adopted statutes or their courts recognized precedent requiring payment of goodwill ("blue sky") when a franchise ended. The law now forbids a state from doing so.

PMPPA is far from perfect. And these changes did not solve all the problems in the law. But the changes in the law are important. And PMPPA still remains the most important source of protection for Michigan dealers.

*The changes that  
were approved  
make very  
significant  
improvements to  
the law.*



Larry Wright, L.A. Wright, Inc.



## IRS loosens up on delinquent taxpayers

It's possible to pay off your back taxes for an amount substantially less than you owe. Tax amnesty was a popular approach for many states to raise much needed capital as well as to solve a number of voting taxpayer's problems within the state. While the tax amnesty program was reviewed by the federal government, it never gained enough popularity to be implemented. Consequently, many taxpayers hoping for some federal tax relief (and relief from interest and penalties), found that relief not forthcoming at the federal level.

However, the Internal Revenue Service has had an Offer in Compromise Program in place for many years. Congress, in its profound wisdom, provided a more liberal interpretation of the Offer in Compromise rules and hinted that the IRS should take a more aggressive position in settling past tax issues. While IRS is not a strong proponent of publicizing tax savings approaches, the word has, nevertheless, leaked out and the new Offer in Compromise guidelines are a popular tool for many delinquent taxpayers.

At the end of 1992, businesses owed the federal government \$6.8 billion in delinquent payroll taxes, including penalties and interest. There are at least 10 million non-filers in this country, and millions of taxpayers who owe uncollected income taxes that run into additional billions of dollars. The fact of the matter is that the government simply cannot collect what it is owed.

The revised procedures for handling delinquent taxes through the Offer in Compromise programs are done so in the hopes of giving taxpay-

ers a "fresh start" and encouraging those who do not file to get back into the system. The enormity and severity of the tax collection problem (most often created by an abusive system itself) imposes abusive interest and penalties for disagreements on tax issues. The IRS has issued new guidelines to help taxpayers pay the delinquent taxes. These guidelines ushered in a new era of flexibility in resolving delinquent tax problems. No longer does the government take a highly restrictive and dim view of offers to pay reduced amounts in compromise of past liabilities. Today, IRS is encouraging such offers.

An "Offer in Compromise" is an offer to pay less than the full amount of taxes, penalties and interest due, based on doubt as to the liability or collectability. Doubts as to liability are rarely the basis for acceptable Offers in Compromise because the liability can be addressed by the IRS administratively or by the courts.

The collectability issue is something else. When a taxpayer owes a debt that exceeds his ability to pay, the government will entertain accepting less than the amount of the tax liability, penalties and interest in full cancellation of the debt, so long as the following conditions are met:

A. The taxpayer must submit, under oath, a finan-

cial statement showing his financial inability to pay.

B. The taxpayer must make an offer to pay the government an amount which it considers sufficient, given the financial condition. (The taxpayer's net worth is a guideline for this offer.)

C. For the government to accept such an offer, the taxpayer must be current in all filing and tax payments and stay that way for five years after acceptance of the offer.

This is the first time that the government has taken such a liberal stance in connection with its Offer in Compromise procedure.

For the taxpayers who are financially able to pay what they owe, but not currently, the government will generally accommodate such taxpayers by entering into an Installment/Payment Agreement that requires periodic monthly payments. Unlike Offers in Compromise, Installment/Payment Agreements must pay off the full amount of tax, penalty and interest owed. In fact, the government continues to charge the going rate of interest on the outstanding liability. The IRS will not take enforcement action as long as the agreement is in force and the taxpayer performs all his obligations under it.

As with Offers in Compromise, Installment/Payment Agreements oblige the taxpayer to remain current in filing and paying throughout

the agreement. What constitutes an agreeable amount for an Offer in Compromise? For ongoing business that amount generally must equal the amount of tax owed, not including penalty and interest. For individuals who are responsible officers of the corporation or owe income taxes, the offer does not have to equal the tax liability but must reflect the ability of the individual to make the payments. Where an individual is incapable of paying even the tax owed, the government may accept in full compromise a sum that it feels it realistically could collect within a 10 year collection period, discounted to present value.

An IRS Offer Specialist first reviews the offer. Any dispute as to whether the amount offered is acceptable can be appealed to an Appeals Officer.

The Offer in Compromise gives the taxpayer an opportunity to satisfy his tax obligation in full for less than its face amount. The Installment/Payment Agreement avoids enforced collection.

Further evidence of the government's recognition that many taxpayers are unable to pay comes from the insurance by the IRS of Treasury Form 9465. It permits a taxpayer who files a return to set his own installment payment schedule for sums less

*See Business pg. 20*



## Q. What can the SSDA do for me?



- A.**
- Provide you with one hour of phone consultation with our legal consultant.
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  - Give you additional promotional points toward Tire Wholesalers programs, as a Tire Wholesalers customer and SSDA member.
  - Host an annual convention each year filled with business advantages and entertainment.
  - Protect your interests by having a SSDA representative on the MUSTFA Policy Board.
  - Make sure your voice is heard in Lansing with an active legislative support network and PAC.
  - Put a staff at your fingertips to find the legislative and regulatory answers you need.
  - Invite you to join a network of hundreds of other dedicated professionals in the industry who can help with advice and support.
- The SSDA can provide you with the knowledge you need and the savings you want.

*Please send the application below to SSDA, 200 N. Capitol Suite 420, Lansing, MI 48933*

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP	
I (we), by submitting this application and the payment of scheduled dues, hereby apply for membership in the Service Station Dealers Association of Michigan, Inc.	
BUSINESS NAME: _____	
BUSINESS ADDRESS: _____	
CITY: _____	MI ZIP: _____ PHONE: (    ) _____
COUNTY: _____	TYPE OF OWNERSHIP: <input type="checkbox"/> CORPORATE <input type="checkbox"/> NON-CORPORATE <small>SOLE PROPRIETORSHIP PARTNERSHIP</small>
ENCLOSED PLEASE FIND A CHECK FOR _____	
PLEASE CHARGE MY MEMBERSHIP TO MY MC OR VISA (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE) CARD # AND EXP. DATE _____	
<b>PLEASE BILL ME</b>	
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Add \$120 per station after four stations.	
_____	_____
Signature	Date
December 1994 SQ	

## Knowing the signs of violence at work

We read it in the papers and see it on the nightly news. Violence is tightening its stranglehold on our city streets and in our neighborhoods. Now it has bullied its way into the workplace.

The statistics are alarming.

- A study by Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance estimated more than two million Americans were physically attacked in the workplace in 1992.

- That same year, says the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1,063 job-related deaths resulted from violence.

- The National Safety Council (NSC) now ranks homicide as the fastest growing cause of occupational

death. For women, it is the number one cause of work-related deaths.

- Attacks can happen by former or current employees, acquaintances of employees, customers or strangers. According to the 1993 Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries prepared by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, one in seven victims of work-related homicide were killed by a co-worker or personal acquaintance.

You can reduce your risk by being aware and prepared. The NSC suggests the following tips for employees in dealing with violence at

work:

**Recognize signs that may precede violence in your co-workers.**

Violence is usually preceded by warning signs. Immediately notify a supervisor if another employee:

- makes verbal threats on the job about "getting even" with co-workers or your employer for disciplinary action or dismissal;

- continually threatens or intimidates co-workers;

- believes other employees are out to get him/her;

- is easily angered or is very defensive about work actions;

- talks about buying a weapon, or brings a weapon to work.

**Recognize signs of potential violence in your customers.**

Immediately notify a supervisor if a customer:

- becomes unusually angry with you because of perceived slow service, poor product quality or lack of information;

- cannot be calmed or appeased;

- talks abusively when making a telephone complaint;

- threatens you or your co-workers.

**Know how to stay safe and avoid violence.**

- Avoid potentially violent

*see Dodson pg. 20*

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For further information call the SSDA-MI  
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than \$10,000. This form does not even require the taxpayer to submit an accompanying financial statement.

The time has come for taxpayers who have delinquencies to deal with the IRS by making either an Installment/Payment Agreement or an Offer in Compromise proposal to satisfy past taxes. Given the down turn in the economy and the recognition by the new administration

that the amount of assessed tax cannot be collected, taxpayers with delinquencies now have a golden opportunity to pay a fraction of what otherwise would be owed.

Although the government has never declared a formal tax amnesty, its new attitude, as evidenced by these procedures, could reasonably be considered an informal tax amnesty.

### Agriculture from pg. 6

pumps read. Bennett said tougher enforcement and more concern within the industry has definitely brought this abuse under control.

Working with trade associations, like the SSDA, has helped solved many problems. Bennett said her department often relies on dealers to help them in the field.

"SSDA members really know what the marketplace is like, they have a much better view than us," she said. "In getting the total picture they have been very helpful.

Proposed legislation is another area where the SSDA and Food Division

have come together for the good of the dealers. Bennett said they try and work closely with associations on drafting language for acts.

All in all "the industry has been very supportive of this program remaining in tact," Bennett said.

*Service Quarterly is looking forward to bringing you more information on the Food Division and its effects on your business. We are working with Ms. Bennett to bring you updates and interpretations of the laws and policies that govern the food, fuel and weights and measures of your business.*

### Dealer from pg. 13

"I let him run it pretty much as the dealer. He calls all the shots," Sidorski said.

Taking on the challenges of running a gasoline retail outlet is not something a dealer should go at alone, Sidorski believes. He said the guidance and advice of other dealers was one of the biggest keys to the prosperity of his business. This is the biggest advantage of joining SSDA, said Sidorski, who has been a member on and off for 27 years.

"By just sitting and talking with other dealers, you get what you've paid for," he said. "You can learn enough from other dealers' mistakes

to save your cost of membership."

With all he has gotten from the Association, it was time to give something back. That is why during the mid 1980s Sidorski joined the Board of Directors.

"I fully believe that you have to give back to the industry," he said. "The industry has always been good to me. I felt I could do some good. Plus I was always impressed with the board."

As a successful Michigan dealer and leading voice in the SSDA, Dennis Sidorski has put his perseverance to work for the good of the industry.

co-workers;

- Develop a "danger signal" to use with co-workers;
- Have the phone number for police or security near the phone in your work area.

The following actions can sometimes prevent or diffuse a tense situation with customers;

- Remain calm and speak clearly. Don't raise your voice, avoid arguing;
- Address each customer with a friendly greeting, whether you are on the phone or meeting the customer in person;
- Empathize with the customer's problem.

**If you are threatened at**

**work, don't panic.**

- Think and size up the situation;
- If there is time, call security or police;
- Use prearranged "danger signal" with co-workers;
- Try to remain in control of the situation. Keep direct eye contact with the possible attacker;
- If the attacker demands money or valuables, give them up immediately. If possible throw the valuables one way and run the opposite direction;
- Report the incident immediately to your supervisor or human resources department.



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# Member Briefs cont.

SSDA. Juli said she is excited about shifting gears from banking to association work.

"I've always worked with people," she said. "I was involved in member services at a credit union so this will all fit in real well."

She said the legislative and regulatory aspects of the industry really interest her. She's also looking forward to helping, and meeting, members.



Juli Chamberlin Byington in the SSDA office.



Denise Bernwanger in her office at the SSDA.

Denise Bernwanger is stepping in as member services representative, specializing in the Association's Blue Cross/Blue Shield program. Members can call Denise with questions on billing, plan changes, and general concerns with Blue Cross.

Denise is currently working with Blue Cross to imple-

ment a new computer system that will make things easier for members.

"For one the new system will make it easier for Blue Cross to process claims faster," Denise said.

A native of the Detroit area, Denise recently moved to Lansing from Laredo, Texas when her husband Patrick was transferred with General Motors. Her daughter Tracey Deakins, a student at Michigan State University, also lives with her in Lansing.

Denise said she's looking forward to serving members as their liaison between the SSDA and Blue Cross, learning more about the Association, and meeting members. She is not, however, looking forward to Michigan winters.

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# New Products

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The above products can correct rusted parts, sticking cables, contaminated brake linings, dirty ABS electrical connections, and vapor lock in brake fluid. For more information call (215) 674-4300.



## Drive Impact Wrench



Snap-on introduces the Shock Wave, a new 1/2" Drive Impact Wrench. At lower torque settings, Shock Wave is ideal for automotive shocks, muffler and brake work. In reverse, Shock Wave can generate up to 600 ft. lbs of torque at 90 psi. That's what's needed to remove over tightened fasteners from tires, engine blocks, suspension components and body panels. For more information call (414) 656-4372.

Snap-on introduces the Shock Wave, a new 1/2" Drive Impact Wrench. At lower torque settings, Shock Wave is ideal for automotive shocks, muffler and brake work. In reverse, Shock Wave can generate up to 600 ft. lbs of torque at 90 psi. That's what's needed to remove over tightened fasteners from tires, engine blocks, suspension components and body panels. For more information call (414) 656-4372.

## Mitchell Sensor Manuals



Mitchell International has released two new quick reference manuals for engine performance troubleshooting, the "Mitchell Sensor Locations & Specifications Manuals."

One volume covers 1981-1993 domestic cars, light trucks and vans. The other covers 1986-1993 imports. The new books provide the most commonly used/needed sensor locations, specifications, testing procedures and system wiring diagrams.

Mitchell offers a discount when both are purchased together. For more information call 1-800-648-8010.

## Coolant Change 'n Clean



FTI has introduced the Change 'N Clean, which uniquely performs two cooling system services with one machine.

First the C'N Clean provides a fast coolant drain and fill service drain. In less than 10 minutes a vehicle's cooling system is drained and refilled.

The second service is a recycling center housed on the back of the machine. In 15 minutes, 15 gallons of used coolant are safely recycled.

For more information call 1-800-934-9384.

## Modular Buildings



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The buildings are easy to assemble and designed for easy removal and replacement of any wall section.

For more information call 1-800-284-5346.

## Thread Starter



Steelman has completed production on the 12" Thread Starter, which is designed to start the threads of a bolt, nut or screw that is in a recessed area where fingers can not reach.

Thread Starter is perfect for under the dash and recessed areas under the hood. It is designed with "finger touch" sensitivity so that if threads are crossed you can feel it.

Just snap the fastener head in, align the fastener and twist the knob to start the thread. For more information call 1-800-255-7011.

## A/C Leak Detectors

Tracer Products has introduced disposable Tracer-Stick capsules, which are prefilled with premeasured doses of Fluor-Lite dyes.



They pinpoint the exact source of all refrigerant leaks with a bright yellow-green glow under UV light. The sticks also lower the cost and increase the speed of automotive A/C leak detection. Only one prefilled Tracer-Stick capsule is needed to test a car's A/C system.

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Ken-Toll has introduced the Reversible Jaw Professional Mechanic's

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