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MODERN TIRE DEALER

THE INDUSTRY'S LEADING

ARS

**Jerry
Bauer**
Tire
Dealer
of the
Year





Rolling along

By Bob Ulrich

Jerry Bauer has spearheaded his company's steady growth with small town sensibility. His dedication, leadership and success have earned him the title of MTD Tire Dealer of the Year.

Jerry Bauer was recklessly rolling the passenger retreads out of the warehouse as fast as he could. One by one the 14-year-old zipped them to the man loading the truck until the warehouse was empty. His job was over — or so he thought.

Informed that four of the retreads had rolled down an embankment and into the Chippewa River, he nervously asked, "How much are the retreads worth?"

"One hundred dollars apiece," kidded the employee.

By the time Bauer had dragged the last of those nine-dollar retreads out of the water, he was a mile downstream.

"I figured there was four hundred dollars in the river and I better get (it) out," says Bauer, recalling the incident. "I would have been accountable."

Thirty years later, Bauer, now 42, is still the person who is accountable. He is president of Bauer Built Inc., a company his father, Sam, and uncle co-founded in Durand, Wis., in 1944.

Since Jerry took over as president in 1977, however, Bauer Built has grown dramatically.

In the last 17 years, Jerry has spearheaded expansion that has increased Bauer Built's earnings nearly ten-fold. The \$100 million dollar conglomerate has grown from:

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- two tire centers in Wisconsin to 22 tire centers in four states;
- one retread plant to five, making it the 14th largest retreader in the United States, according to *Modern Tire Dealer* research;
- one wholesale operation in Durand to nine locations.

Bauer's involvement in the tire industry stretches beyond the walls of Bauer Built and the corporate limits of Durand. As a member and former president of the National Tire Dealers and Retreaders Association (NTDRA), he has helped shape policies affecting his fellow tire dealers.

He recently completed two years as chairman of the NTDRA's Commercial Tire Management Council, and still serves on its Strategic Planning Committee. He also has been active and respected in his community, a man quietly accountable for the well-being of his company and its employees.

He's the kind of man chosen by *MTD's* three independent judges as

1994 Tire Dealer of the Year.

Small town sensibility

Bauer credits many people for molding his personal standards and business acumen.

"My dad was, of course, the number one influence on my business knowledge. Dad played a leadership role. But my personal traits, like my manners and etiquette, I think I have to attribute to my mom."

Bauer was fresh out of Wisconsin State University—Eau Claire with a business manage-

Standing the test of time

When Sam Bauer, with his brother, Ray, started the Bauer Oil Co. in April 1944, he had no idea how long and how large the business would become.

Today, the company has nearly 50 business units. In addition to its tire dealerships, retread shops and wholesale outlets, Bauer Built runs eight convenience stores, a bulk oil company, two quick lube operations, a NAPA parts store, and a small transportation company.

Here are some of the company's highlights:

- 1946 — first tire center opens in Durand.
- 1954 — first passenger and truck tire retread shop opens.
- 1956 — sales exceed \$1 million for the first time.
- 1959 — company is renamed Bauer Built Inc.
- 1960 — company becomes a Bandag retreader.
- 1963 — Sam buys out Ray and becomes sole owner.
- 1967 — retread shop burns down.
- 1968 — new retread facility is built on site of old one.
- 1976 — Sam sells majority interest in company to six partners, including sons Jerry and Jim.
- 1978 — company moves into Iowa tire market.
- 1980 — Sam sells the rest of his share and "retires."
- 1987 — company enters Twin Cities market.
- 1990 — shareholders vote to adopt an Employee Stock Ownership Plan; Jerry becomes president of the NTDRA.
- 1994 — Bauer Built celebrates its 50th anniversary; places 71st in the Wisconsin 100 list of its largest private businesses.



ment degree when he went to work for Jay Brown, Bauer Built's vice president of tire sales and purchasing.

For two years Brown schooled Bauer on the nature of the business. "He was my mentor," says Bauer.

Even John Wayne, Jerry's favorite actor, gets a bit of a mention.

"John Wayne just represented so many things. He is a

guy in the white hat, the good guy. He was 'The Duke.'

"When he died, there was a tribute to him in the *Wall Street Journal*. I still have it."

Bauer would be the first to tell you that Bauer Built's growth since he took over is the result of more than just his own hard work and determination.

When he helped buy a majority interest in the company from his dad in 1976, he was one of six partners.

Three remain in addition to Jerry: Jerry's younger brother, Jim, vice president of tire marketing; Larry Weber, vice president of finance; and John "Butch" Brantner, vice president of the petroleum division.

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CONGRATULATIONS


American Car Care Centers congratulates Jerry Bauer and the Bauer Built organization on being selected the "Dealer of the Year" by *Modern Tire Dealer* magazine.



Jerry Bauer
Bauer Built

Bauer Built is living proof of the American Car Care Centers success story. They were one of the founding member/distributors of American Car Care Centers, Inc. five years ago and have 27 American Car Care dealers.

We're proud of Jerry and the rest of the Bauer family and their many talented and loyal employees.



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Congratulations Jerry Bauer MTD's Tire Dealer of the Year



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Sam Bauer continued to guide the company as chairman of the board until he sold his remaining interest in 1980. Jerry says his dad maintained close ties to the company until his death last month at 75.

Two other vice presidents also report to Bauer: Jim Fenn, vice president of tire sales, and Don McElroy, vice president of information services.

Bauer Built's employees also have played an important role in the company's success under Jerry's leadership.

The company established an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) four years ago to help it deal with continuing growth. "We needed somebody to help us accomplish our expansion plans, and figured why not take them with us?" says Bauer. The employees own about 6% of the company.

All for one

"If he can't see a return on his investment, he doesn't want to do it," says one of Jerry Bauer's colleagues. And Jerry's the first to agree.

The return, however, doesn't always have to be in dollars and cents.

Bauer and Bauer Built are integrated into the community of Durand, population 2,003. "We're just part of the community," he says. "We're just regular people."

Jerry, his wife, Sue, and their two children, Tad and Mandy, live and work in Durand.

About 20% of Bauer Built's 500 employees work in Durand. Its headquarters, a retail tire dealership, retread shop, wholesale operation, NAPA parts store and two convenience stores are located there. In addition, the bulk oil division is run out of Durand.

Bauer is a member and former director of the local Lions Club. He's on the board of directors of the local bank, and an active member and past president of the Durand Commercial Club. He also serves on Wisconsin's Board of Advisers for Small Businesses.

"Our strength is in our people and the customers we serve," states the Bauer Built slogan. Jerry Bauer wholeheartedly agrees with that motto.

And that's why he says he accepted the Tire Dealer of the Year award not as the man who presides over a large and successful company, but as a man who considers himself a part of a greater whole. ■