

## A milestone for Parts Plus of New Mexico

### Honegger family celebrates three decades of success with employees, customers, Network manufacturer partners

Thirty years ago, after Sam Honegger sold his local Yellow Cab company, he bought a small auto-parts store in Albuquerque in March 1981 that was advertised for sale in the newspaper. Despite having no experience in the automotive aftermarket, Sam was looking for a new challenge and was confident he could make it work.

"I thought, 'What the heck, I'm a true entrepreneur—I'll learn it,'" says Sam, who clearly had a vision for business.

Today, that vision has evolved from a single jobber store into Parts Plus of New Mexico (PPNM), a Network WD with a 40,000-square-foot main warehouse facility and eight company-owned locations making more than 800 daily deliveries throughout Albuquerque and the surrounding areas.

The WD utilizes a hot-shot process in which the warehouse will deliver the part directly to the service dealer should its company-owned stores have the part in stock, ensuring consistent, quality service.

PPNM's commercial customers can procure parts on an unlimited basis at any time via their local Web server that interfaces directly with their inventory-management system. Customers can see live inventory and price data online and execute orders on pick tickets directly into the warehouse. Their automatic call-distribution system routes calls the next available counter professional. The counter team answers 91% of the time within three rings and 96.5% within five rings. A dedicated printer is situated where the parts are pulled and staged in five to seven minutes before being routed directly to the customer.

The company recently celebrated their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a three-day celebration, which began with a wine-and-food pairing event in Santa Fe for their manufacturer partners who arrived early. The next day featured a customer/vendor golf tournament, followed by a reception dinner to thank the vendors and to recognize Sam for his hard work over three decades.

The third event was an Employee Appreciation Open House and Manufacturers Booth Show, attended by more than 400 customers, who each received a Parts Plus shirt and hat, and had the opportunity to win 150 door prizes. Eight lucky winners were awarded expenses-paid trips to Las Vegas for next

year's Network National Convention.

Thirty-eight manufacturer partners were on hand hosting booths showcasing their latest wares.

The camaraderie was not lost on PPNM's customers, including Dan Marek of Pilsner Fleet Maintenance.

"I was so impressed by the volume and expertise of those people who came to represent their respective companies," says Dan Marek of Pilsner Fleet Maintenance. "I made several good contacts and gleaned a great deal of new and better information in many arenas, from fuel pumps to intake manifolds to serpentine belts. This was a fabulous 'meet-and-greet' opportunity with the people behind the companies we do business with."

Adam credits Sam's decision to join Parts Plus in 1996 as key to the company's ongoing success.

"Parts Plus has meant everything to us," he says. "They have really brought our business to a whole new level. With the deep product-line buying, cutting-edge marketing and advertising, and all the pull-through business we get from the Car Care Center and auto-store programs, we've really put ourselves on the map."

The WD's partnership with Parts Plus served as a catalyst for a period of unprecedented growth for the company. Two years later, PPNM acquired Sandia/Lomas Warehouse, doubling their size and enabling the company to become a full-line warehouse. Two years after moving into their new warehouse, PPNM opened their first company-owned store. The following year, Los Alamos National Labs awarded the Parts Plus WD a 10-year contract to operate an in-plant store in their secure facility on Kirkland Air Force Base. In 2004, the PPNM earned a seven-year parts supply contract from Los Alamos National Labs.

The expanding company closed out the decade with a series of additional acquisitions.

PPNM's eight company-owned locations service 24 area Car Care Centers. Outside of Albuquerque, they service 20 independently owned auto stores.

With wholesale accounts representing 90% of their business, the stores' counterpersons provide an edge that transcends price, Adam says.

"Our counter pros are undoubtedly the absolute best in the state. They really



**Group effort: Parts Plus of New Mexico's owners and management team recently celebrated their 30th anniversary with the WD's employees, customers and manufacturer partners. Pictured from left to right: Anthony Archibeque, operations manager; Adam Honegger, president; Sam Honegger, chairman; and Andy Dietz, sales manager.**

go out of their way to establish very solid relationships with our customers and continually work hard to expand the product offering, push the related sales, and pass along technical information.

"Their professionalism is an extension of my dad's philosophy regarding customer service: good communication, vision, gratitude and appreciation. Our team realizes that without the customer we would not be here."

PPNM has also established a wealth of fleet business, including all local county and city municipalities, the State of New Mexico, the University of New Mexico, the New Mexico Dept. of Transportation, the Colorado Dept. of Transportation, the Dept. of Homeland Security, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Although the Honegger family enjoyed celebrating its past, PPNM won't rest on its laurels.

"We're proud of our accomplishments, but we're committed to growing and pushing to expand our distribution," Adam says.

"We'll continue to embrace and integrate new products, and business ventures.

We still have the attributes of a family business while reaping the benefits that typically accrue only to larger corporations." ■



**The people behind the products: PPNM's customers enjoyed the rare opportunity to speak to with 38 of the Network's manufacturers partners on hand for the final day of the three-day celebration.**