

TIME

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TIME MAGAZINE AND GOODYEAR HONOR EMPORIA DEALER

Jeff Longbine Wins National Recognition for Community Service and Industry Accomplishments at NADA Convention

(Orlando, FL, February 13, 2010) – Jeff Longbine, President – Dealer Principal of Longbine Auto Plaza Inc., a Chevrolet, Buick and Pontiac dealership in Emporia, Kansas, was honored today for his nomination for the 2010 TIME Magazine Dealer of the Year award.

Longbine was one of a select group of dealers from across the country honored at the 93rd annual National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA) Convention & Exposition in Orlando today. The announcement of this year's Dealer of the Year and finalists was made by Mark Ford, President and Group Publisher of TIME Magazine, and Johann Finkelmeier, Vice President & General Manager - Original Equipment N.A. Consumer Tire, The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, at the formal opening of the convention, which is attended by more than 25,000 individuals involved in the automobile industry.

The TIME Magazine Dealer of the Year award is one of the automobile industry's most prestigious and highly coveted awards for new-car dealers. Recipients are among the nation's most successful auto dealers, but they must also demonstrate a long-standing commitment to effective community service.

Longbine, 47, was chosen to represent the Kansas Automobile Dealers Association in the national competition--one of only 45 automobile dealers, from 17,000 nationwide, nominated for the 41st annual award. The award is sponsored by TIME Magazine in association with Goodyear, and in cooperation with NADA. A panel of faculty members from the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan selects one finalist from each of the four NADA regions and one national Dealer of the Year.

“My introduction to the automobile business began at birth,” says Longbine, adding, “As a fourth-generation dealer my life has always revolved around the business.”

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Longbine graduated from Emporia (KS) High School in 1980, and then studied Business Administration while playing varsity football at both the University of Kansas in Lawrence and Emporia State University. But Longbine's automotive career started earlier than most. "My father started his automobile career in my great grandfather's store when I was five days old," says Longbine. "When I was five years old, our family moved across the state to begin working for my grandfather at our present location."

As a young man Longbine would join his father at work some evenings. "I was constantly asking him if I could clean cars or configure new car orders." When Longbine was old enough, he started working part-time cleaning cars and sweeping the shop floor. "All of my family's lives have revolved around the automobile business," he says with pride, adding, "I have always appreciated the dedication and passion that I learned from my great grandfather, my grandfather and my father." Longbine made every stop imaginable, from part-time detail man in the late 1970s to summers in the early '80s as a Service Advisor to full-time work starting in 1983 as a Sales Consultant, Service Manager, Used Car Manager and Sales Manager. By 1992, he had risen to General Manager, adding the title of Partner in 1997, and, since 2004, he's been Dealer Principal.

In the area of community service, Longbine's long and distinguished track record matches his family's roots in the auto business. He's been a trustee, board member or committee member of countless regional and statewide organizations, including the Kansas Chamber of Commerce, the Emporia Area Chamber of Commerce, the Regional Development Association of East Central Kansas, the Walter S. and Evan C. Jones Foundation, the Emporia State University Foundation, the Flint Hills Technical College Foundation, and the United Way. "Our local newspaper does a series each year asking readers to vote for the best business in many categories," explains Longbine. "Our dealership has won the 'Best of the Flint Hills' award for automobile dealers four times."

Longbine's political service is also noteworthy. He's been Mayor of the City of Emporia since 2008 and City Commissioner since 2007. In fact, he was named "Citizen of the Year" by the *Emporia Gazette* in 2007, and he says, "This award was especially fulfilling because it recognized my accomplishments that made our community a better place to live, work and raise our families." But Longbine's most notable accomplishment is also his most personal: "Upon the death of our teenage son in 2005, my wife and I established a foundation in his name. The proceeds from this foundation are used to support athletic teams at Emporia High School. We feel it is a great way to remember our son's passion."

Jeff Longbine was nominated for the TIME Magazine Dealer of the Year award by Don L. McNeely, President of the Kansas Automobile Dealers Association.

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