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Contact: TIME PR Hotline
(212) 522-4800

Terry Burns
Michigan Automobile Dealers Association
(517) 351-7800, ext. 323

TIME MAGAZINE AND GOODYEAR HONOR BAY CITY DEALER

Thomas Thelen Wins National Recognition for Community Service and Industry Accomplishments at NADA Convention

(Orlando, FL, February 13, 2010) – Thomas Thelen, President of Thelen Chrysler Jeep Dodge, a Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge, Kia and Sprinter dealership in Bay City, Michigan, was honored today for his nomination for the 2010 TIME Magazine Dealer of the Year award.

Thelen 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.

Thelen, 67, was chosen to represent the Michigan 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.

“The most rewarding aspect of my career is establishing a family business that is true to the values we believe most,” says Thelen. “It has been a great journey.”

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Thelen graduated from Resurrection High School in Lansing, MI, in 1960, and then studied marketing at Lansing Business College. In 1963, he started in the car business as a Used Car Salesman, working his way up to Used Car Manager. Thelen moved to Williams Auto World in 1966 and was eventually promoted to General Manager. The chance to buy Bay City (MI) Volkswagen Mazda arose in 1977, and seven years later, the Chrysler-Plymouth-Dodge store was purchased. Subaru was added in 1994 and Audi two years later.

In 1997, Thelen's organization purchased 3D Honda in Midland, MI, relocating the business to Bay City in '99. That same year, the Kia franchise was added to the Chrysler-Plymouth-Dodge store. In 2003, Thelen purchased the Ford-Mercury store in Standish, MI. Finally, in 2008, the Jeep franchise was added to the Chrysler-Dodge-Kia dealership, along with the Sprinter line and the Dodge Medium Duty Truck Line. Today, Thelen is joined in the family business by three sons as well as several granddaughters.

In the area of community service, Thelen has a long and distinguished track record, having been an active supporter of area civic and charitable organizations, including the Downtown Development Association, the Bay City Boys & Girls Club, the Rotary Club of Bay City, Toys for Tots, the local art theater, and West Bay Area Merchants. He has served as president of the Athletic Association of All Saints Central High School, on the Athletic Association board of Holy Trinity Catholic Scholl and on the Board of Marketing at Northwood University. Thelen has also donated blankets and stuffed animals to the local ambulance services, fireworks for community displays, and he's helped Standish High School modernize the football field and funded several scholarship programs for individuals interested in the automotive field. Thelen has also been instrumental in the Northwood International Auto Show, lending cars and marketing materials to the student organizations preparing the show.

But establishing the Thelen Family Foundation Charitable Trust has been Thelen's most rewarding achievement. "Being able to give back to the community at large, whether helping those less fortunate, or donating to the arts, our charitable trust shows our gratitude towards our community," says Thelen, adding, "We have to remember that it is the community itself that keeps us in business and we need to give back with our time and money."

Nominated for the TIME Magazine Dealer of the Year award by Terry Burns, Executive Vice President of the Michigan Automobile Dealers Association, Thomas Thelen also represents Volkswagen, Audi, Subaru, Mazda, Honda, Ford and Mercury at his three other Michigan dealerships.

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