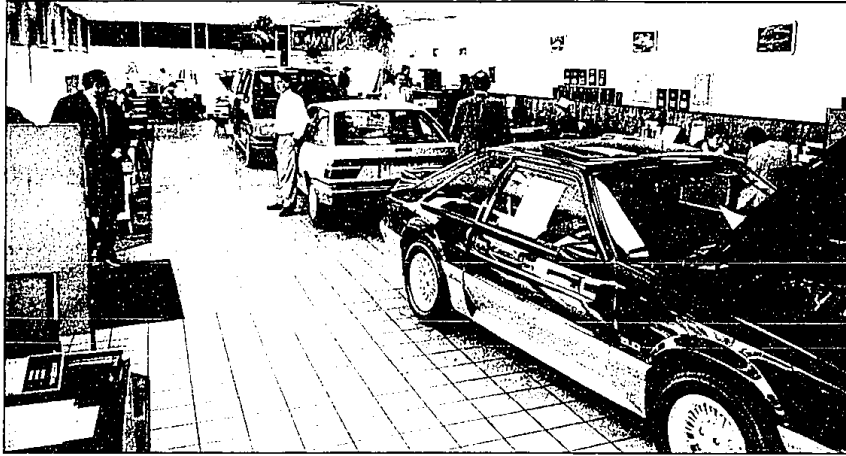


Business

Marilyn Fitchett editor/591-2300

Thursday, March 9, 1989 O&E

(F)1C



ART EMANUELE/staff photographer

The Federal Trade Commission said an agreement among car dealers to limit evening and weekend hours violated antitrust laws because it increased profits and limited comparison shopping.

'Don't tell us when to be open'

By Peggy Aulino
staff writer

A Federal Trade Commission ruling requiring Detroit area car dealerships to be open at least 64 hours a week is "no big deal" to many salespeople — lots of them say they already put in a work week that well exceeds 40 hours.

Most expect the ruling handed down last Thursday to be overturned by an appeals court anyway.

"Still, people who sell cars in the nation's car capital say they don't want the FTC telling them when to be open. And for now dealerships will not extend their hours."

"Our position is no branch of the U.S. government has got the right to tell independent businessmen how many hours they must be open, and any court in the land would overturn that order and will," said Dan Hayes, executive vice president of the Troy-based Detroit Auto Dealers Association. The organization represents approximately 240 dealers in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties.

THE DISPUTE stems from an agreement adopted more than 15 years ago by the majority of auto dealers in the tri-county area. They closed their doors to customers all day Saturday and on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday evenings "in response to employees' requests, pressures, whatever you want to call it," Hayes said.

The FTC said that move violated antitrust laws because it increased profits and limited comparison shopping. An administrative law judge disagreed with the federal commission in a 1987 ruling, but the FTC overruled that last week.

"They said it reduced competi-

'I think you would probably see a lot of people start to get out of the car business. They don't want to put in those kind of hours.'

tion," Hayes said. "The trial proved without a doubt that there was no effect on competition and that, in fact, car prices were lower in Detroit than anywhere else in the U.S."

The DADA has 60 days from the ruling date to file an appeal. Hayes and others said the matter could be tied up in court for years.

MOST DEALERS are currently open approximately 50 hours a week, which includes evening hours Monday and Thursday. The FTC ruling did not specify that dealers open on Saturday or Tuesday. It is the notion of working on Saturdays that is foremost in the minds of salespeople.

"Do you want to work on the weekends?" asked a salesperson at Bill Brown Ford in Livonia, who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "Nobody in this world wants to work on Saturday."

If the requirement is upheld, not only could it ruin the weekends of the Detroit area's 6,000 auto salespeople, some said it might prompt them to go into another line of work.

"I think you would probably see a lot of people start to get out of the car business. They don't want to put in those kind of hours," said Gary Krupa, who estimated he puts in 56 hours a week at Art Moran Pontiac in Southfield.

John Hillman, another Bill Brown Ford salesman, followed his father into the car sales business. But he said he would abandon it if he had to go beyond the 45 to 55 hours a week he now works.

Hillman termed his father's hours "horrendous," saying he worked Saturdays and weekdays.

"I used to see my father on Sunday afternoons," he said. "It's crazy."

And Hillman said if he is faced with the prospect of additional work he "would have to find a job that would provide me with less hours. I'm not going to sacrifice my home life for a job. That's silly," he said.

SALESPeople said they hear some complaints from customers about the inconvenience of not being open on Saturdays, but they said some shoppers take advantage of the weekend closings.

"Believe it or not, people like to look around on the weekend, find what they like and do their shopping Monday or Tuesday," Krupa said. "They don't want to be pressured. They don't want to be bothered. They just want to look around."

Most customers, the salespeople agree, make adjustments in their schedules when they shop for a car.

"I think 62 hours to come look for a car every three years is sufficient," said Al Reibburg, who works approximately that many hours at Don Massey Cadillac in Plymouth.

Reibburg doesn't support the FTC ruling, but he said a few additional hours would be "no big deal to us," he said.

IF THE FTC's objective is to get dealers to open on Saturdays, the plan could backfire, Hayes said.

"Salespeople would unionize overnight, and their first demand would be no work on Saturday," Hayes said. That would result in higher prices. "Whenever you add employee prices go up," Hayes said, and the dealer might still be closed on Saturdays.

But Reibburg said unionizing "can't work" in a business where salespeople work on straight commission.

"(In the auto sales business), if you want to make more money, you work harder," he said. "Maybe the rest of the world should be that way, too."

Dealership owners who were asked to comment either refused or did not return phone calls.

Long-distance paging offered

By Peggy Aulino
staff writer

When Captain James Kirk told his "Star Trek" associates to beam him up, he wanted the crew to bring his entire body to the Enterprise, which was cruising along in outer space.

Transporting one's body may still be possible only in the realm of science fiction, but technology has been developed to "beam up" voices and send them from D.C. to L.A. and points in between.

National Satellite Paging uses such technology to keep its customers in touch with their home offices, clients and anyone else who dials an access number.

MOST PAGING services are effective only within a local range. There are a few other nationwide systems, but they rely on FM radio frequencies.

"(Those systems) are a patchwork of FM stations throughout the country. They don't own their own network," said Helaine Bank, national accounts manager in the NSP's Farmington Hills office. "We are the only company licensed at this time with the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) to use 931 MHz, the highest frequency."

FM radio frequencies are less reliable than satellite transmission, Bank said.

"I tell people you don't know whether you're getting a page or Wayne Jennings," she said. "A person with a satellite system beeper can be tracked down whether he or she is on a subway train or in the bowels of an office building, Bank said.

BANK PEDDLES SkyPager and SkyTalk, two satellite transmission systems aimed at the business traveler who must rely on high-tech lifelines to survive in a competitive market.

With SkyPager, a caller dials 1-800-SKY-PAGE, then punches in the individual's access number. The NSP customer's beeper goes off and the number to be called lights up on the unit.

SkyTalk, which can be reached by calling 1-800-SKY-TALK, is based on the same principle, but the caller can leave a voice message. The person being beeped calls an 800 number and hears that message.

The basic monthly cost for SkyPager is \$45. SkyTalk costs an additional \$20 per month.

THE ORIGINAL call goes to a computer in Washington, D.C., home of the NSP headquarters, and is transmitted to an "uplink" station in California.

"From there it goes 22,500 miles up to our satellite," Bank said.

The signal then comes back down to transmitters set up in every major metropolitan area, representing hundreds of cities.

If a call comes in when the NSP customer is not within range of a transmitter, the message is saved until the person with the beeper enters a service area.

"We are still not in real remote places," Bank said.

But NSP will put up a transmitter for an individual company if that company agrees to use \$9 to 100 pages.

NSP HAS offered SkyPager in the Detroit area since its inception in 1987. SkyTalk was added in early 1988. With the opening late last year of the regional office on Northwestern Highway, the company has big plans for the state of Michigan.

NSP transmitters are in Detroit, Ann Arbor, Flint, Lansing and Grand Rapids, and the company plans to expand to Saginaw, Benton Harbor and Battle Creek this year.

MICHIGAN TWO-YEAR CD SPECIAL

9.50% annual percentage yield* 9.08% annual percentage rate

Limited Time Offer

Act now for an incredible rate on a deposit as low as \$500.

We're offering this special two-year Certificate of Deposit rate only in Michigan — and only for a limited time.

Your deposit is FSLIC-insured up to \$100,000 per account relationship for total security.

To take advantage of this special offer, visit your nearest Empire of America office or call SMARTLINE® at 1-800-843-2443 from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., seven days a week.

*Interest and principal must remain on deposit a full year at the stated rate to earn the annual yield shown. Interest is compounded daily. Substantial interest penalty for early withdrawal.

EARN 1/4% EXTRA INTEREST

Open a 5 1/4% N.O.W. Checking Account for \$1,000 or more when you open your CD and earn an extra 1/4% on your CD rate! Plus receive your first order of personalized checks free. Present this coupon when you open your account.

Offer expires 3/17/89. This offer is not available for Certificates of Deposit of \$100,000 or more.

Empire of America
Federal Savings Bank Member FSLIC

Business programs in demand

By Peggy Aulino
staff writer

Local interest in graduate-level business programs is booming, according to officials at two colleges that are launching programs to meet the demand.

Walsh College in Troy, which is offering a master of science degree in management program in the fall, attracted about 250 people to an open house last week, according to David A. Spencer, vice president for administration.

"We have had a very positive show of interest from business people and people from other professional areas," Spencer said Tuesday.

Tuesday was the first day of classes for students pursuing a master's degree in business administration at Southfield's Lawrence Technological

University. That program was scheduled to begin in the fall, but the level of interest prompted the school to move up the starting date, said LTU spokesman Bruce Annett. The 115 students currently enrolled in the MBA program amount to "more than twice as many as we expected," he said.

Both schools are tailoring their programs to people who have been in the workforce for a couple of years and want to prepare for a management position or just further their education.

THERE ARE MSM programs sprinkled throughout the country, but the degree is not as common as the MBA. Walsh surveyed Detroit area businesses and researched other MSM programs before designing its new curriculum.

"Our master of science in management degree is specifically focused on management-related skills, and we feel that serves the needs of some people seeking business background and experience more appropriately than the traditional MBA program," Spencer said.

He said the MSM does not offer as wide a range of exposure as the MBA but is "more pragmatic, more application oriented."

To that end, students must take a series of classes divided into three areas: process, function and integration. Process skills courses include



management theory and leadership classes; the four function skills classes include managing human resources and financial management. The integration classes are external environments, management strategy and an elective.

As of Tuesday, the school had received about 40 applications for the MSM program, Spencer said. It will accept 125 students for the fall semester and another 120 in the winter term. Evening and weekend classes will be offered.

The MSM candidate must complete 36 semester credit hours to graduate. The cost is \$145 per credit hour.

LTU requires the completion of 48 credits for its evening-only MBA program. Graduate credit hours are \$130. The school also offers a master's degree in architecture.

