

SUBURBAN  
BUSINESS  
LEADERS

Raymond H. Steben, Jr. has joined Bloomfield Hills-based Core Industries Inc. vice president-finance and chief financial officer.



Steben

Bonnie Detloff Ziellinski has joined Ford & Earl Associates as a graphics designer. Ziellinski will be responsible for design development of corporate graphics and various print materials.



Ziellinski

Bob Denton has been appointed chief executive officer at the Bloomfield Hills mortgage lender World Wide Financial Services Inc. Denton was previously executive vice president for Independence One Mortgage Corporation in Southfield.



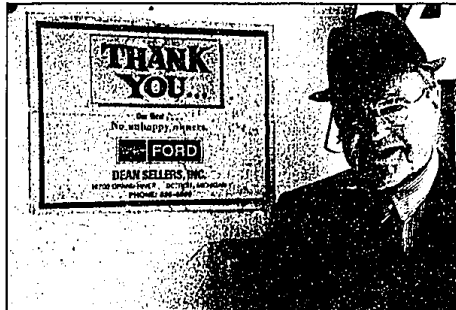
Denton

Dr. Gerald Robbins has been installed as president of the Michigan Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons. Robbins completed his residency training at Botsford General Hospital.



Robbins

Submit materials for this column to: Business Editor, Observer & Eccentric, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150. There is no charge.



JOHN STORMZAND/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Through the years: Dean L. Sellers (top), now 87, started it all back in 1948. Now, family members (at right, left to right) Blair, Tom, Liz and Dean E. tend to operations at the Troy dealership.

## The Sellers clan: Thriving, surviving

■ Grandpa Sellers' kids and grandkids are keeping the Fords rolling off his 45-year-old lot in Troy.

BY DOUG FUNKE  
STAFF WRITER

Not many auto dealerships in metro Detroit have been around for 45 years under the same family ownership and the same name plate.

Dean Sellers Ford in Troy is one. Purchased by Dean L. Sellers in northwest Detroit in 1948, the dealership, relocated to Troy, is now run by

son, Tom, with his three adult children — Blair, leasing manager, Dean E., truck manager, and Liz, dealer commitment/customer service coordinator.

Gross sales from all operations now approach \$59 million annually, Tom said. The dealership moves some 3,600 vehicles per year. About 2,600 of those are new, with 46 percent of those leased rather than purchased outright.

Sellers provides 102 jobs and pays an aggregate \$76,700 in property taxes to the Troy School District, city of Troy and Oakland County.



### It's about people

The family is proud of the Ford product line, but attributes its longevity in business to pleasing the customer.

"It's a people business," Tom said.

"Our number one goal is devotion to the customer," Liz said. "When my grandfather started the business, his

philosophy was, 'Take care of the customer.' My father carried over that philosophy. Now, Blair, Dean and I have applied it.

"Four of us are here every day during hours of operation to be accessible to customers," Liz continued. "A lot of Sellers are in the environs and customers are made aware of that."

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## Local business leaders hit streets for NAFTA pact

BY DOUG FUNKE  
STAFF WRITER

Wilhelm C. Kast, chairman of DPCS International in Livonia, and Paul Boudreau, who works for Allied Signal Automotive in Southfield, don't have to be sold on the value of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

The two are serving as co-chairmen of the Michigan International Trade Coalition and doing the selling themselves.

Some 150 large and small companies with roots around the state are pushing for Congressional ratification of the pact which they maintain will improve the business environment in Mexico.

Boudreau and Kast spend time contacting federal lawmakers, colleagues in the business world and the media to preach the good word.

Opportunity is that word. "It (NAFTA) will allow us to bring more product into Mexico without tariffs," said Boudreau, director of government and community relations for Allied Signal. "Mexico has content requirements. It will give us more ability to make sourcing (plant location) decisions."

"We can go to a much broader base and do business down there," Kast added.

The two agree that they have an uphill task, not the least of which is connecting the issue to the lives of a lot of people who don't readily see a connection.

■ 'As you take tariffs off, costs go down. Our business becomes stronger. I think that's pretty important. When the company is healthy, people get raises, we hire people.'

Boudreau

"We say to our employees, one in 16 Mexicans today owns a vehicle and 50 percent of the vehicles on the road in Mexico today are over 10 years old," Boudreau said.

"One projection shows that the Mexican auto industry will double to 2 million vehicles," he said. "If true, that will be very beneficial to us."

Allied Signal manufactures auto parts including braking and air bag safety systems.

"As you take tariffs off, costs go down," Boudreau said. "Our business becomes stronger. I think that's pretty important. When the company is healthy, people get raises, we hire people."

"I'm not going to move to Mexico, but I can sell services," said Kast, who provides computer and marketing advice.

A free trade agreement would provide copyright protections he presently doesn't have, Kast said. Also, more American companies doing business in Mexico provide more spin-off opportunities for service providers like himself there and here. "We can expand our services," Kast said.

Two major objections have arisen to NAFTA: job losses due to plant relocations and environmental contamination with rapid growth.

Boudreau and Kast downplay both.

"Mexico is a very protective country," Boudreau said. "Now, we have to pay tariffs and locate facilities there. If NAFTA were in place today, we wouldn't have to locate facilities there to supply. If anything, the current system forces jobs to Mexico."

"We have been exporting jobs to Mexico for the last 30 years, probably fewer today than 10 years ago," Kast said.

And what about environmental considerations? "Our argument is as Mexico becomes wealthier, it will have more opportunity to solve problems," Boudreau said. "If we keep Mexico poor, I assure you it will become an environmental disaster."

■ 'Mexico is a very protective country. Now, we have to pay tariffs and locate facilities there. If NAFTA were in place today, we wouldn't have to locate facilities there to supply. If anything, the current system forces jobs to Mexico.'

Paul Boudreau  
Allied Signal

Businesses like Detroit Diesel, headquartered in Redford, and Federal Mogul, headquartered in Southfield, have contributed financially to the Michigan International Trade Coalition lobbying effort, Boudreau said.

Other MITC members identified by that organization include Kenneth Way, chairman of Lear Seating in Southfield; Ronald L. Roudelush, automotive division president, Rockwell International, Troy; and James McGraw, executive vice president, Fruehauf International, Southfield.

Boudreau concedes, however, that NAFTA ratification is in trouble. Support of federal lawmakers generally shakes out along party lines, he said, with Democrats opposing and Republicans supporting.

Even if NAFTA were to fly, it would take years to fully take effect and trade wouldn't be totally free, Kast and Boudreau said. As now proposed, some businesses like glass manufacturers wouldn't benefit much.

Still, the consortium plugs away.

"The bottom line is a more open market in Mexico for Michigan products," Boudreau said. "Our products will be more competitive there and we'll have more flexibility to source products."



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