

# VIP greases up for education

BY JANNICE TIGAR-KLAMMER  
SOCIAL WRITER

These days, Larry Detjen knows what sort of week he's having by the amount of grease under his nails.

Since Nov. 1, the new president of Lexington, Ky.-based Valvoline Instant Oil Change has visited more than 14 company-owned service stores in nine states "to learn the business from the bottom up," as he put it.

"The junket, called President in the Pits, brought Detjen, 41, to three Valvoline centers in Okemos, & Eccentric county last week, where he greeted customers, made sales presentations, worked under the hood and, generally, "got down and dirty," he said.

The VIP stopped at Valvoline centers at 31005 Greenfield, Beverly Hills; 26835 Plymouth Road, Redford Township; and 32686 Grand River, Farmington.

Detjen's company-issued overalls were grease-free until 11 a.m., when local business people began to fill the Farmington center's four bays, which handle about 65 cars a day. Everett Morgan, assistant manager, and the store's seven technicians, say this lunch-

time rush generally runs to 1:30 p.m.

Detjen worked on three cars in a half-hour, checking fluid levels, air filters, PCV valves, breather filters, coolant and the like.

How did the customers react to the VIP service? Most didn't notice because the Farmington center, whose sales volume is second highest in the Michigan-Toledo region, is a customer friendly place, anyway. The center's especially popular with local business people, who stay in their cars during servicing to read or use the car phone.

"I'm not here to show our employees how to do their work. My interest is in training, and that's what I'm emphasizing here," said Detjen, whose own on-the-job training will make him technician-certified in about two weeks.

Until then, even his work was double-checked by the assistant manager.

Besides pushing employee education, Valvoline stresses community involvement. This year, its 29 Detroit-area stores are toy collection centers for the Sarah Fisher Home in Farmington Hills. Customers who bring a new,



Under the hood: Larry Detjen, Valvoline Instant Oil Change president, visited local service outlets to emphasize the company's SuperPro training.

unwrapped toy to a center through Thursday, Dec. 23, get \$5 off an oil change and maintenance check.

Here's a list of the Valvoline toy collection centers in the Observer & Eccentric area: 29335 Six Mile, 28434 Joy, 32860 Plymouth, 31151 Five Mile, all in Livonia; 26835 Plymouth Road, 8827 Telegraph, both in Redford Township; 44076 Ford Road, Canton Township; 32405 Ford Road, Garden City; 31005 Greenfield, Beverly Hills; 4220 Orchard Lake Road, Orchard Lake; and 32686 Grand River, Farmington.



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