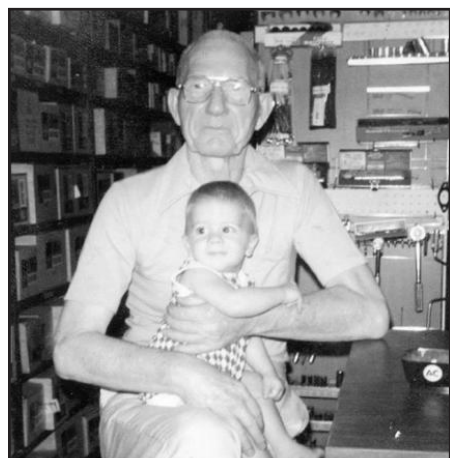


Maintaining excellence: Dale Auto Parts thriving in fourth decade

BY CASEY UEBELHOR

On the busy morning of Thursday, August 2, Mark Toy is doing what he does best



Clyde Gaines, the original founder of Dale Auto Parts, holds toddler Mark Toy, the store's current owner (photo circa the late 70s). This image was captured at the original store location (now a vacant lot), only a few blocks north of its current address at 22 S. Washington Street.

— working with a customer. “I like to help people solve problems and get things fixed,” the shop owner nods.

Since 1977, Dale Auto Parts has belonged to the Toy family. Mark's grandfather, Bob Toy, purchased it from founder, Clyde Gaines. The Toys were already proprietors of Toy Auto Parts, Loogootee. Expansion to Dale proved an excellent business decision, and later, Mike Toy, Mark's dad, purchased the business from Bob. In 2007, Mark bought it.

“When I was about a freshman in high school,” tells Mark, “I kind of knew I wanted to get in the business. I just enjoyed being around the store and just doing things around it. Seeing people. Dealing with the customers.”

He grins, remembering carrying out store chores as a youngster, including cleaning shelves, sweeping floors, “just helping dad out. That kind of thing.”

Customers come from all around to do business with Mark. He helps out farmers and agriculture workers, coal workers, loggers and those in the mechanic and automotive industries from Warrick to Spencer to Dubois Counties. And Mark has a friendly and helpful approach to homeowners and community members stopping by in need of ‘that one’



auto part, accessory or tool.

Currently Mark and his wife, Andrea, reside in Dale, happily raising their three children. Mark's parents, Mike and Carol, also reside in the special southern Indiana town, now celebrating its 175th year! Mark's father is still active in the Toy Auto Parts business, and may be found solving customer's problems at the Ferdinand location, 630 Main Street.

Stop in Dale Auto Parts, 22 S. Washington Street, with your automotive questions Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., or on Saturdays 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Contact via



A good listener and solid thinker, Mark Toy assists a customer surrounded by a wide selection of tools and parts at the Dale Auto Parts counter.

— Photos by Casey Uebelhor

phone at 812-937-2566.

“We wouldn't be here without the loyal customers and the good following from our community,” affirms Toy. “And our good employees. We appreciate all our good employees and all the hard work they do — and appreciate that they're here to help people whenever they can.”

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