

Conner Motors/Sternberg Ford

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retirement age, the family began letting go of their dealerships. The Chevy dealership was the first to go, around the year 2000.

Boonville was also sold in 2000 and Conner Ford, which had moved from Rockport to Reo, in 2002.

Conner Motors in Dale was the first established and the last to go. When Conner Motors was sold, it was with Narl's blessing.

The Sternberg Group purchased Conner Motors in 2010.

At the time, the late Tom Sternberg pledged to carry on the tradition of community involvement. "[Narl] and Dad [Jack Sternberg] shared the same philosophies when it came to business and they kind of fought the war together. Conner Ford was always a supporter of the Dale community, and we want to continue that. I feel the community is supportive of us, too, and we value that highly."

Keith Conner says the Sternberg family

has been true to their word. "They're good people."

Ford Motor Company bestows awards to its dealerships around the world. Conner Motors and Conner Ford have received the Distinguished Achievement Award several times, as well as the Presidential Award, which recognizes profitability, customer satisfaction and service. The Presidential Award is still being received by Sternberg Ford and the Ford dealership in Rockport, Keith says.

And, in an age when Ford Motor Company has been closing many small dealerships, Conner Motors, now Sternberg Ford, has never been at risk.

"Those were wonderful years," Keith reminisces. "Working as a family was a blessing. And many who worked for us over the years worked as a family — fathers and sons..."

"Through the years, our motto was always, 'We treat you like family'. And it was a big family."

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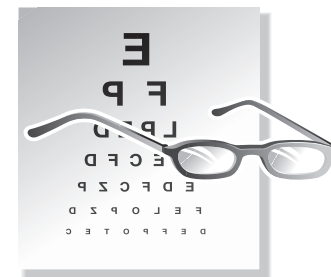
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