

First Class Facility in Saskatchewan

No Stress for Customers

Billy and Dinnette Bentley's Clavet Service Station-Tirecraft Centre is located in Clavet, just twelve miles from Saskatoon. Although Clavet has a modest population of 250 families, Clavet Service has more than 1,800 active customers.

While attending high school, Billy hadn't quite figured out what he wanted as a career, so he started working with his father, Tom, owner of the Clavet Service Station since 1958. Billy enjoyed working on vehicles so much that he decided to become a technician and join the family business. He went on to get his license and Interprovincial Technician status and in 1993, he and his wife Dinnette took over the business as equal partners. "Our location has room for 9 vehicles at a time—we have 6 hoists in the 5,000 sq. ft. facility manned by 4 licensed technicians and 2 apprentices, which allows us to properly inspect vehicles on the hoist and advise the customers on the required maintenance.

"We recently joined with Tirecraft because we wanted to expand our tire business and Tirecraft allows us to finance customers or offer a deferred payment plan."

First class facility

"We're fully computerized—the Internet is right on the hoists! We've been told our facility ranks highly for service efficiency: it's designed by a technician for working technicians. Our diagnostics skills are very strong: all our technicians have been thoroughly trained and they keep up that training. The guys are truly motivated and pride themselves on continuing to upgrade their skills—sometimes on their own, above and beyond the monthly

training courses we all attend. We're a general repair shop and our strengths are electronics and wiring. The staff here is fairly young, so the guys are still eager to learn and solve problems," Billy states proudly. Bentley tells us that Clavet Service has dealt with Bumper to Bumper since his Dad's days in business. Sutherland Automotive (Bumper to Bumper) is a very professional auto parts supplier and the owner has made very good business decisions, which in turn helped Clavet Service develop and grow. "Our main connection in the automotive parts business is the One-Stop Bumper to Bumper program and Sutherland Automotive is our jobber of choice. Sutherland is amazing—they carry so much stock we usually never have to wait for parts."

Billy explains that he has a very strong clientele rather than a 'customer base.' His clientele wants to be treated fairly and to be provided with top quality service. They trust Clavet Service to meet their needs with quality parts and that's why Billy uses only brand name products.

Our job

"Our job in the service industry is to work for the customer—that's the person



Dinnette & Billy Bentley



Tammi Driedger and Jason Ollenberger are ready to take phone calls and help customers.

who puts food on our table. We have to look after their needs and provide them with a quality component, exceptional service—that makes the difference. I believe we're successful because about 65% of our clientele drives from Saskatoon to Clavet for service work. We feel they come here because our staff—all of them—genuinely cares and takes that vehicle from start to finish better than anyone else in the service industry!"

Our service

"When a customer calls us and tells us they're broken down by the side of the road, our customer relations person gets

into the courtesy car and gets to the customer before the tow truck. The customer gets a courtesy car and our staff person rides back in the tow truck with their car. We take away the customer's stress—it's now our problem! We truly go out of our way to cater to the customer. We have a great relationship with them.

that identifies to the technician, the service writer and to their customer what is OK with their vehicle, what work is recommended and what work is required. Of course, Clavet Service prioritizes work that is 'required' and so informs their customer of anything that needs fixing based on manufacturer's recommended schedules or safety related items. This is their way of educating their clientele on

it pays off by bringing them new customers, but word of mouth plays an even larger part in providing new customers.

The Future

"Even though I find the Right to Repair Act a challenge right now, our business is going to be here a long way down the road because we treat our customers well." Bentley believes the future of the aftermarket is sound. He says business is far more profitable today and more people are running their business from a management standpoint than ever before. There's absolutely no reason why a properly managed shop can't generate a good bottom line. If shops are closing, Billy believes it's because today's business is no longer the 'grab a set of tools and fix the car' scenario, it's a very sophisticated business that needs a lot of thought in order to run profitably and efficiently.

It sounds like the Bentleys have their act together, a first class facility and a great staff to make their business run as well as your car will after they've repaired it.

CASP

SNAPSHOT...

BUSINESS Clavet Service Station & Tirecraft Centre

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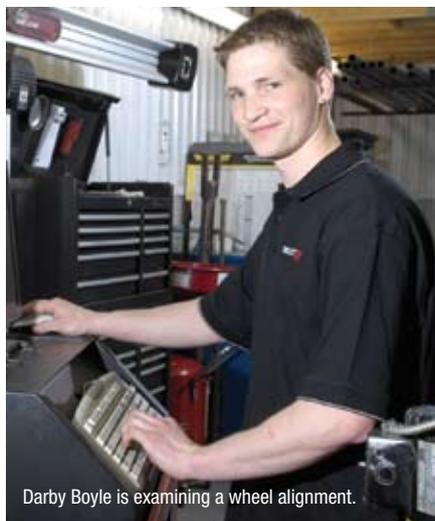
EMAIL clavetservice@sasktel.net

EMPLOYEES 11 – 4 licensed technicians, 2 apprentices, 1 Service Writer, 1 Customer Quality Controller

FACILITY 5,000 sq. ft. with 6 hoists and room for 9 vehicles at a time. General repair with strong electronics and wiring strengths.



Graham Gregoire checking the scan tool.



Darby Boyle is examining a wheel alignment.

"As far as maintenance and customer relations are concerned, one staff member takes care of customer retention, customer follow up, scheduling, educating and marketing. She phones all our customers after the invoice has been completed about the work that was performed, future work that was identified and needed as far as preventive maintenance goes, scheduling them for that appointment, calling them to remind them of it, plus marketing and sales. No one else does this in our area."

Preventive maintenance

Bentley's facility has a program in place

the benefits of preventive maintenance: the customer has the information right in their hands from their in-house program. "We tell our customer what repairs are recommended for the future, to be scheduled... to bring us their vehicle in order to keep it safely on the road, keep the new car feel, and retain its long term salability and reliability."

Clavet Service advertises aggressively—they distribute 5,000 direct mailers per month and twice a year they mail newsletters to their existing clientele. They do national advertising through the Bumper to Bumper and Tirecraft programs. And

PHOTOS: GORD WALDNER