

New auto dealership opens for business

Twenty-five years ago, Lee Motor Company opened up its first Hyundai dealership in Fayetteville to serve the city's military population.

After a quarter of a century of service, Lee Hyundai is the highest producing Hyundai dealer in the Carolinas, so in adding a new dealership, John Lee, the company's president, felt it was only natural to seek out another military community, bringing a new Hyundai dealership to Goldsboro.

Lee Hyundai of Goldsboro held its grand opening event Friday, but first began selling cars at its North Oak Forest Road location earlier this fall.

"It was a very natural move to come to this market," Lee said, noting that Seymour Johnson Air Force Base was a large draw for his company, which has sold 30,000 new Hyundai automobiles in its history.

And rather than allow unsure economic times to stagnate growth as it has with other businesses, Lee said his company was seizing the opportunity to expand while costs were low in hopes that those savings could be passed on to customers.

"The time that we're in is unprecedented as far as opportunities," he said. "Now is a great time to build."

The company also chose to build a car dealership with low overhead, he said, opting for a "green" build.

"It's built for efficiency. We didn't overbuild, therefore we can always charge less," he said.

The increased attention on fuel efficiency and cost savings are also reflected in the Hyundai line, Lee added.

"There is no other brand that, combined, gives better gas mileage across the line," Lee said. "Lee Motor Company's main cornerstone is efficiency and the other cornerstone is taking care of our customers.

"We strive to keep our overhead low. We think customers understand that fancy cappuccino bars and marble -- you've got to pay for that somehow."

Lee also said he wants to make car shopping more pleasant for customers through playing positive music in the showroom and utilizing the compact size of the dealership to maximize time spent with customers without hounding them. Gone are the days when dealers were pushy about selling cars, Lee said.

"We're eager to do business with you, but those were the old days. This is a new world," he said.

And the new world is based on customer satisfaction, he said.

If that's the case, Lee Hyundai got off to a good start, as the first car it sold -- a Hyundai Elantra -- will receive free routine maintenance for as long as the customer owns it as a special token of the company's appreciation.

And that customer can expect to bring his car in for many decades, Lee said, as the location should be a fixture for years to come.

"We plan to be here for a long time," he said. "We feel the future is great in Goldsboro."

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