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Dan Wilder Named 2009 ‘Dealer of the Year’

May 26 – **Dan Wilder, Sr., Port Angeles**, received the “Robert P. Mallon Dealer of the Year” award on May 14 at the Washington State Auto Dealers Association (WSADA) annual convention. Selected by a committee of his peers, the award recognizes Dan’s contributions to the auto industry, quality dealership operations and outstanding community service.

Dan began his career in the automobile industry in 1966 as parts delivery person for a Volkswagen dealer in California. In 1977, he moved to Port Angeles to buy a dealership of his own and at age 27, became the second youngest Volkswagen dealer in the United States. Since then, Dan’s two dealerships, Wilder Auto Center and Wilder Toyota-Scion, have grown to a staff of one hundred employees.

Together with Sally, his wife of 44 years, Dan strives to “create an atmosphere where employees feel like family and customers are treated as we would want to be treated.” Joining in the family business are son, Dan Wilder Jr., as the general manager, and daughter, Tami Rose, as the employee and customer relations manager. Three grandchildren also help out, whether its washing cars on the lot or answering phones.

A firm believer in community involvement, Dan has served on the Olympic Hospital Memorial Foundation Board for 20 years and has sponsored the foundation’s well-known fundraiser, the Great Olympic Duck Derby, since 1989. He has been on the Independent Bible Church Elder Board for 28 years, and actively supports numerous organizations including the Olympic Kidney Center Board, the Peninsula College Foundation, Young Life, and United Way.

Governor Mike Lowry appointed Dan to the Peninsula College Board of Trustees in 1995, and he was later reappointed by Governor Gary Locke. As testament to the Wilder’s commitment to education and their employees, part of the dealership’s benefit package allows employees to send their children to Peninsula College for two years with paid tuition.

“In recognition of Dan’s receipt of the Association’s most prestigious award and to honor his belief in the importance of higher education and community support, WSADA was pleased to make a contribution in his name to Peninsula College,” said WSADA Executive Vice President Vicki Giles Fabr . Dan has been a WSADA member for 30 years, and a member of the Board of Directors for 8. He was recently elected to the Executive Committee, and will serve as WSADA President in 2012.

Son Dan described his father as a loyal, generous, hard-working godly man. “Those who know him, know that his enthusiasm about life even makes him a little hard to keep up with.”

The award is named for former Tacoma dealer **Robert P. Mallon** who was WSADA President in 1966/67, is a past President of the National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA), served 30 years as Washington State’s NADA Director, and is founder and Chairman of the National Automobile Dealers Charitable Foundation.

WSADA’s 312 dealer members serve 75 communities in Washington and are responsible for annual sales volume in excess of \$13 billion. Together, they employ over 22,000 people with a combined payroll of more than \$1 billion. Their dealership sales total 15% of the state’s retail sales, generating hundreds of millions of dollars of tax revenue for state and local governments through sales, corporate, and payroll tax revenue.

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