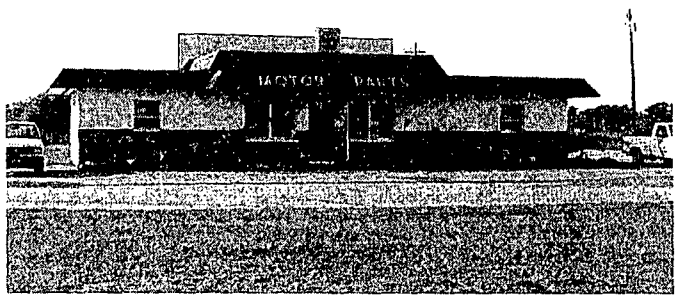
NAPA JOBBER BILL READ STAYS

ON TOP OF BUSINESS TO FIND NEW CUSTOMERS



Motor Parts' new Arcadia store has been enjoying significant sales increases since taking a bird's eye approach to finding new customers.



With her knowledge of the area, pilot Hariette Hamilton proved to be an invaluable help to Tony Vanzant, sales manager and a vice president of Motor Parts (left), and helped find a lot of new business for Keith Hazelwood, sales manager of Motor Part's Arcadia store.

With ten Motor Parts stores located throughout central Florida, NAPA Jobber Bill Read is an aggressive businessman who strongly believes in staying on top of his business — quite literally, in fact.

The Motor Parts store group (serviced by the NAPA Tampa Distribution Center) was started in 1960, with one store located in Mulberry, Florida. As the business continued to grow, Read realized that other nearby areas could support new Motor Parts Stores, and began investigating potential branch store locations. In doing so, he discovered that aerial surveys proved extremely helpful in finding suitable locations for his planned new stores.

This past December, Bill Read decided to purchase an existing store located in Arcadia, Florida. He knew that the Arcadia store had been in operation for approximately thirty years, and that it had changed ownership two or three times. However, he also knew that the store had never performed particularly well, which surprised him. The town of Arcadia is a rural area with a high concentration of orange groves, and Read figured that there should be a considerable amount of agricultural business to be had. However, as the Arcadia area was one that the Motor Parts group was relatively unfamiliar with, it was now up to Motor Parts' sales force to *find* that business. At this point, Bill Read decided to play a hunch: as taking to the air had proven so successful for pinpointing new store locations, he decided that the same approach might work equally well for finding new customers. He was right.

Tony Vanzant, sales manager and a vice president of Motor Parts, traveled with Keith Hazelwood, the new Arcadia store's salesperson, to visit Arcadia's Lennox Flight School, where they met Hariette Hamilton, owner of the flight school and a longtime resident of Arcadia. They explained what they were looking for and signed up for a one-hour flight over the Arcadia area. With Hariette Hamilton as pilot, they found they had a superb narrator.

From the air, numerous small industries were sighted. Potential agricultural accounts were easily spotted — farms virtually invisible from the ground as the barns and outbuildings are hidden deep within the orange groves. Whenever Vanzant or Hazelwood spotted an interesting cluster of buildings with vehicles parked outside, all they had to do was ask their pilot, who could automatically tell them the name of the particular grove, where it was located and who ran the business.

Back on the ground the Motor Parts sales force wasted no time in calling upon their newfound customer prospects. At the same time, they went to work on the store itself, enlarging the sales area, cleaning up the exterior of the building and hanging new signage. Bill Read immediately purchased two new delivery trucks for the store to get the service aspect of his business started on the right track.

Bill Read's hunch was right — if you can find potential store locations from the air, you can find potential customers from the air. The ingenious idea of an aerial customer search, combined with Motor Parts' aggressive remodeling effort both inside and outside the store, have turned the Arcadia store around and set it back on a profitable course. Within one month after Read purchased the store, monthly sales had almost doubled, and the store has been enjoying steady sales increases each month since.

AND ON ANOTHER PLANE...

NOW THAT'S SERVICE!



NAPA Jobber Bill Summers (pictured with his aircraft) will go to great lengths — or heights — to provide his customers with the service they've come to expect. (Quality Parts is serviced by the NAPA Spokane Distribution Center.)

When it comes to customer service, Quality Parts of Council, Idaho, is one NAPA store that really delivers.

Not long ago, store owner Bill Summers, a pilot in addition to a businessman, was already planning a flight to Boise to pick up a special part for Darrel Brown, one of his dealer customers, when a second call came. It seemed that Jim Bumgarner, a farm customer located in Cambridge, Idaho, had experienced an equipment breakdown in the field and immediately needed a straight radiator hose for his tractor. So Summers decided to combine efforts and, on his flight to Boise, air-dropped the new hose to Jim Bumgarner, who was still in the field. Within one hour, Bumgarner's tractor was up and running!