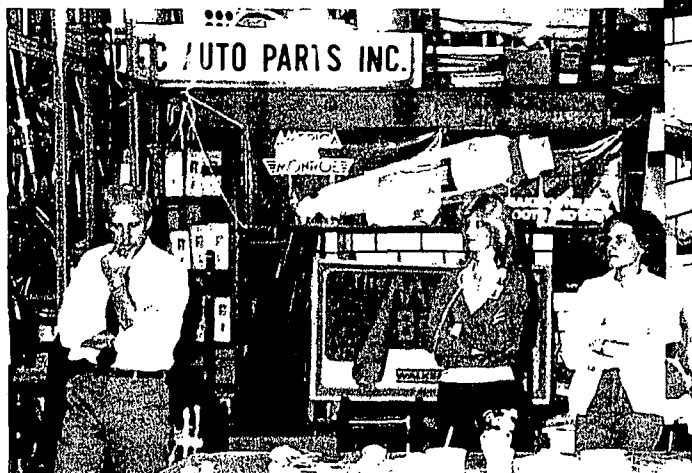


A CLINIC WITH A NEW TWIST

Proper Car Care is Everyone's Concern

John Harmon, owner of J&C Auto Parts with stores in Litchfield and Raymond, Illinois, is a remarkably enthusiastic and enterprising NAPA Jobber. He's also extremely service-oriented; in the true NAPA spirit, he feels that a part of his responsibility to his customers is to provide answers or solutions to their expressed needs. And that is exactly how Harmon began a program that has turned out to be



Due to the successful turnout, Harmon now plans to hold such clinics regularly — perhaps on a quarterly basis.

Eager to learn, those attending the clinic (ranging in age from 16 to 65) listened attentively.

an excellent way of building customer loyalty and sales.

Over the past year, Harmon began to notice an increasing number of women coming into his stores, "buying a lot of general maintenance items and asking a lot of questions about how to do this or that . . . how to change oil, replace air filters and the like.

"I thought it would be interesting to kind of informally keep tabs on this part of the business," Harmon continued, "so I asked my counterpeople to keep their eyes open and keep track of the number of women that come in, the types of items they buy and the kind of questions they ask. Pretty soon, we realized that a fairly sizeable number of women were coming into the store that were quite serious about learning more about taking care of their cars.

"Maybe it's because of the problems we've been seeing with the economy in general over the past few years, but it appears that many women have decided they should start handling a lot of their car's routine maintenance themselves. And this gave me an idea.

"I had my counterpeople start asking the women customers if they would be interested in car service clinics designed especially for them. They all said it would be a great idea and they would surely attend any such clinic. So we decided to give it a try."

"Since we held these two clinics, about 40 women have come in and asked if we'll be holding other clinics . . ."

As it was almost October, Harmon felt that it would be a good idea to base the clinic on the problems of winter driving and car maintenance. Called "Winter Emergency Prevention" clinics, Harmon planned two separate sessions, one to take place the even-

ing of October 6th and one to be held the following night.

He decided the clinics should cover the basic areas of concern he felt women would be interested in —

- what should be carried in the trunk of the car
- starting a car in cold weather
- the proper way to jump-start a car battery
- how to check belts, hoses, oil and correct fluid levels
- how to change spark plugs
- how to change a tire
- stopping a car in icy driving conditions
- what to do in case of a winter driving emergency

To help spread the word of the two clinics, Harmon printed flyers and had them distributed at locations that tend to be frequented by women — grocery stores, beauty salons, etc. In addition, he ran ads in the local newspapers explaining the "for women only" car care clinics. And although he feels that this advertising certainly played an important part in creating awareness of the clinics, he doesn't discount the value of word-of-mouth advertising. "I just know that the women who attended the first