

The National Oil & Lube News

"America's Newspaper for the Fast Lube Industry"

Ellis Builds & Sells Shops, Sisk Proves Women Can Run Them

Kwik Kar Features Dad/Daughter Team

Ray Ellis began construction of his first Kwik Kar Lube & Tune facility in 1985.

Today, there are 68 stores in operation mainly in Texas, plus two in Oklahoma and one each in Arkansas and Minnesota.

Of this number, 66 have been sold and are owned and operated by others. Ellis builds the facilities, equips

them and sells them to an owner/operator who has been taught the operation by Ellis and his staff. The remaining two facilities are successfully operated as company stores by his daughter Raynette Sisk, who utilizes her own unique operational methods.

Her story begins at the bottom, right-hand corner of this page, also.

Following is an interview recently conducted with Ray Ellis.



Ray Ellis

Are you building new stores in any particular part of Texas?

No, we're spread pretty much over the state. We have several under construction in the metroplex right now, more than we have had in a long time.

You're building them, outfitting them, completely stocking them and then selling them?

Our plans are to build and sell them. Most of them have sold before we get them built.

Do you sell them yourself?
Yes.

Do you think the lube business is reaching a saturation point?

Some areas are saturated, some are still open.

Do you have any guidelines on the size of a town in which you'll

build?

We started out at 25,000. Then went to 15,000 and then 10,000. Now we're in some towns of 7,500 that are doing great.

How does a person buy a store

from you?

We normally arrange the loans for them. We try to do the whole package, secure the land, build it, then sell it to them and teach them how to operate it.

See Ellis, page 7B

Raynette Sisk Says Females' Industry Performance Top-Notch



Raynette Sisk

When asked how she got into the fast lube and tune business, Raynette Sisk says, "We had a location needing an operator and my father jokingly asked, 'Who's going to run it?' I said, 'I will,' and now they can't get me out."

Raynette's father is Ray Ellis of Dallas, Texas. He builds and sells fully-equipped lube & tune facilities, primarily in Texas. An interview with Raynette Sisk follows.

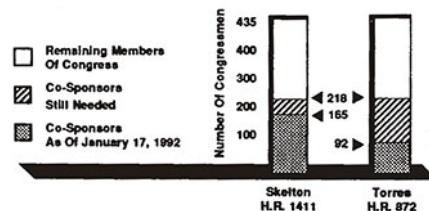
Who are your typical customers?

Women. I would say our customer base is 60 percent women.

See Sisk, page 12B

Search For Support Slows During Congressional Recess

Now that the holidays are over and Congress is back in session, operators need to resume soliciting support from their Congressmen for the two used oil bills — so the bills don't get shoved to the back burner. If more operators don't take action soon, the fate of used oil may be left to the Environmental Protection Agency to decide.



NAIL, from page 3B

Show will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana from March 28-31.

One of the highlighted events during the convention will, of course, be the NAIL/Sage Microsystems Annual Golf Tournament.

This year's tournament will offer more challenge holes and more prizes. It will be played in scramble format, which means four players per team.

Each player will tee off on every

hole, and following shots will be hit by team members from the spot where their team's best shot landed.

This format allows for more evenly-matched teams.

The tournament is open to golfers of all levels and will be held on Sunday morning of the convention.

Among this year's prizes are golf clubs, bags and clothing. Beverage carts will be fully-sponsored and stocked with beer, soft drinks and food, all compliments of Citgo Petroleum.

The following is the agenda for this year's convention. ■

1992 NAIL Convention & Trade Show Schedule Of Events

Saturday, March 28

9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Board Meeting

4 p.m. to 5 p.m.
Pre-registration

8 p.m.
Dinner/Cruise on the
Creole Queen

Sunday, March 29

7:30 a.m.
Golf Tournament, Bayou
Barriere

1 p.m. to 2 p.m.
State Meetings
Texas Operators Meeting
California Operators
Meeting
Member Registration

2 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Exhibitor Registration

2 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Membership Meeting

3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
General Registration

4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Trade Show Open

6 p.m.
Exhibitor Reception

Monday, March 30

8 a.m. to 9:50 p.m.
Registration
Trade Show

10 a.m. to 12 noon
General Session
Keynote Speaker

12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Associate Brand Meetings

(March 30 Cont.)

Computer Workshop
ISI/Lube Soft, Pennzoil
QMI, Quaker State,
Service Champ/ANCO
Texaco

3 p.m. to 4 p.m.
One-Hour Workshops,
Trade Marks, Patents, Etc.
Employee Programs
Training Programs

4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Discriminatory Retirement
Program, Marketing & Ad-
vertising
Building Blocks for Business

5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Trade Show

7:30 p.m.
Annual Awards Banquet

Tuesday, March 31

7 a.m. to 8 a.m.
Prayer Breakfast

7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m.
Associate Member Breakfast

8 a.m. to 9 a.m.
Round-Table Workshops
Employee Incentives
In-store Management
Customer Service
Operations

9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Trade Show

9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Swamp Tour

1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Membership Meeting

4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Future Forum Panel

SISK, from page 1B**Why is that?**

I think it's because there's another woman on the premises. If I'm not there, I try to keep a female employee there.

Good point. Let's talk about women in the oil change business. Are you saying it's a good place to be from a management standpoint?

One of the best employees I had was a woman. She did everything, cashiering, she was doing the top, state inspections, etc.

The only thing she didn't do was work in the pits and that was because I liked to keep her on top to work the register.

Other than that, she could do anything any of the other employees could do.

Do you think she did it better?

Maybe in customer service. She probably had a little better rapport with the customers.

Because the customers are mostly female?

Right. And a lot of our customers are retired. She did very well with the retirees. If a woman has the interest and wants to do it, I believe she can do as good a job.

I've only had one other woman; she was a tune-up tech and she was outstanding.

My customers hated it when she left. They felt like she did an excellent job of explaining things.

That's something we try to do with our customers — we try to explain to them what we're doing.

We do allow them to watch. We ask them to stand in a special place while they watch for their own safety.

I think they enjoy that. If they want to see the pit, we'll have one of the techs go down with them, and we'll show it to them.

We do allow people in the pit. We like to point it out so they can actually see what's happening.

How many of your stores are operated by women?

We have 12 stores operated by women. My father says he loves to show a store to a prospective buyer that is operated by a woman because it's always cleaner.

What's an average ticket on a tune-up?

From \$65 to \$75.

If you were doing 50 cars a day, how many tune-ups would you do?
An average of three or four.

Have you always offered tune-ups with your stores?

Not at all locations.

What kind of tune-up equipment do you use?

Allen.

Is it very expensive?

I'm on a lease-to-purchase option on my equipment. ■

What would the investment be for just tune-up equipment?

It depends on what you do. We do very limited tune-ups, what we call basic tune-ups.

I think a person could pretty well get into that business for around \$30,000 per bay. I only use half a bay for tune-ups. I can put two cars in one bay.

Is there any other competition around you?

Yes, I have six competitors within about a mile and a half.

How long have you been there?

Two years.

How is your operation doing?

We increased about 6,400 cars last year.

Do you use a computer?

Yes, Sage Microsystems.

Tell me a little bit more about your customer service. Do you do anything else besides what you have already mentioned?

First, we use a computer so that we can keep up with the vehicle's history. Therefore, we can help our customers meet the recommended requirements pertaining to the air filter, transmission, gearboxes, etc.

How much do you discount?

Up to \$5 off.

What's your base price?

My base price is \$23.95 with either Quaker State or Pennzoil 10W-30. If they want a different oil, it's an additional \$2.

Do you have to pay a tune-up technician more?

It would take between 30 and 40 percent of the labor to get a good tune-up person.

I've tried several ways and I've found the most successful way is to hire someone who is wanting to work on a percentage basis because they will run it more like it's their own business, and that's what you want.

What attracted you to the lube and tune business?

I enjoy customer service. I think that is what has built this store, trying to build a rapport with our customers.

I try to keep the place clean. We try to keep newspapers, magazines and gifts for the kids — I always try to have some bubble gum or candy in case they become bored while they're waiting. We always have plenty of free coffee and try to hire courteous, friendly employees so the customer feels very confident that his car is as important to our employees as it is to him. ■