

By Russ Pankonin

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With franchise termination letters going to 1,200 General Motors dealers across the country recently, Harchelroad Motors, Inc., in Imperial and Wauneta will not be among those receiving one.

Sid Harchelroad, president of Harchelroad Motors, said they did get an express letter from GM last week. However the letter was to inform them that they are one of GM's "key dealers" and a "top performer in the Chevy and Buick network."

That letter proved to be welcome news to Sid and his brother, Brian, who operates Harchelroad's store in Wauneta.

Sid Harchelroad said this insures the Harchelroad name will continue to be synonymous with the GM line of vehicles for years to come.

This year mark's Harchelroad Motors 74th year in business as a GM dealer.

The business was started by Sid and Brian's grandfather, Harvey Harchelroad in Wauneta. Harvey was later joined in the business by his son, Gene.

With the recent addition of Sid's son, Dillon, the business now spans four generations of Harchelroads.

Harchelroad noted that while General Motors has taken out Chapter 11 bankruptcy, he said a much better and stronger General Motors will emerge from the action.

He said there's no reason for customers to be alarmed by GM's action. He said all warranties are safe and will be honored in a business-as-usual manner.

"We are here to take care of our customers. For the last 74 years, we've had the reputation of taking care of our customers and recent events will not change that," he said. "We plan on being here a long time."

Customers the key

Harchelroad said their large customer base represents one of the key reasons that Harchelroad Motors wasn't targeted by GM.

"It's our customers who are keeping us here. We attribute our success directly to them," he said. "They are the greatest and most loyal customers."

He said General Motors realizes that even though Harchelroad is located in a rural area, a high volume of sales, comparable to metro dealers, is possible.

Harchelroads has quietly become one of the largest GM dealers in western Nebraska, northwest Kansas and northeast Colorado.

Of the 68 dealers in the Nebraska-Kansas region, Harchelroads has led sales for 15 of the last 17 years.

Their service satisfaction ratings have been among the highest in the region and the dealership maintains the highest training scores in the region for service, parts, mechanics and sales.

In addition to the Chevy and Buick lines, Harchelroads will continue to carry the Pontiac line through October, 2010.

As part of the GM bankruptcy, the company has sold off its Hummer and Saturn brands.