

LAKELAND



Vaughn Wyant (left) had help from Ford Canada chief Dianne Craig and Michael Wyant to officially open the new store.



Wyant Group builds Ford's 'gateway to northern Saskatchewan'

▲ Lawrence Papoff

PRINCE ALBERT, SASK. – When the Wyant Group bought Lakeland Ford in 2009, the group made a commitment to Lakeland staff that it was going to replace the old store with a brand-new one.

On June 15, group head Vaughn Wyant and group COO Michael Wyant kept the promise when they joined Dianne Craig, Ford Canada CEO, to cut the blue ribbon to officially open the new Lakeland Ford.

Michael Wyant calls the store the “biggest, nicest dealership in northern Saskatchewan by a long shot.”

To prove his point, he lists features like 28 bays, including six detail bays, a three-lane indoor and heated drive-thru as well as a collision centre able to handle the F-150 and its aluminum body. Add to that a 15-car showroom and room for about 200 new and used and lots of parking.

The indoor drive-thru means customers can drop off

and pick up their cars inside – a feature he knows gives the dealership a competitive edge when the winter winds blow.

The 65,500 square-foot store set the group back \$18 million. But Wyant insists it was worth it.

“We built way bigger than we need today because we want to accommodate the growth we are going to have in the future. It’s a lot easier to build it now than add on.”

He says the money was also an investment in the community of Prince Albert.

Not only will 67 community members find work at Lakeland, he is proud to say that 80 per cent of the money spent building the dealership went to hire local tradespeople to do the work, so the money stayed in the community.

When *Canadian AutoWorld* wondered why the group spent that amount of cash to sell cars and trucks in a city of 35,000, he replies the investment isn’t about a 35,000-

person market.

“Prince Albert is the gateway to Northern Saskatchewan. It’s the hub. People come here to do business. The size of the market extends far beyond Prince Albert.”

Wyant says the sales goal for the first year is 800 new and 450 used. To reach out to remote northern communities, the store uses mobile sales people and mobile deliveries

“We are there for anyone who needs us in places that are a little more difficult to get to.” **CAW**

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DealerPILOT reduces pain and paperwork within the dealership programs such as occupational health and safety ... time sheets, scheduling and vacation planning.

“If it touches a person or involves the day-to-day operations around people and resources in the dealership, our software manages that.”

He explains that all the policies and procedures, checklist, etc. of the program will be in his company’s software and accessible subject to security considerations wherever the user has Internet access.

So, for example, armed with a mobile device containing procedures and checklists, the dealership safety committee member could do a safety walkaround of the service department.

The member knows what to do because they have to fill out checklist as they go.

Should a hoist need work, for example, the member makes an entry.

“Once there’s a need to do something – an item of concern is registered – say something is broken on the hoist – then we track the event, initiate action items to resolve it,” he

says.

Once the work is done, the necessary facility maintenance document showing it has been done can be inputted to prove compliance.

Stassen says that when a new employee comes on staff, safety training is available as are the acknowledgement forms that prove the new employee has had the benefit of it.

“DealerPILOT is also a learning management system. If the employee has any instructor-lead certificates, we can enter those records for that employer so they will know

who has taken the course. And we can send notifications to the manager or employer so that they will know when training is needed.”

For more information about DealerPILOT, visit www.dealerpilot.ca. **CAW**

For more information about the Motor Vehicle Safety Association of Manitoba visit www.mvsam.ca.

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