



SALEM CITY CLUB

Celebrating 42 years of exceptional civic discourse

THE AUTO INDUSTRY AND THE GREAT RECESSION: HOW ARE WE ROLLING IN SALEM?

Guest speaker: David Withnell, President Withnell Motor Company

Most of us grew up in an era when The Big Three of the automobile industry – GM, Chrysler, and Ford - were powerful engines of American industrial power. They seemed invincible. The **importance of the auto industry** to our national and **local economy** cannot be overemphasized:

- In 2007, auto sales accounted for 20% of U.S. retail sales and generated more than \$10 billion in tax revenues.
- By 2008, the automotive industry accounted for nearly one of every ten jobs in the United States, or 2.2 million jobs. 50% of those jobs were in new car dealerships.
- In Oregon, 21,000 people worked in auto industry jobs in 2008, with 66% of those jobs in new car dealerships.

By late 2008, the automobile industry had sunk into a depression. In September, 1,000 auto dealers in the U.S. closed their doors. By November, sales of new cars were down 32% from the previous year. Since then the headlines and lead stories have often described the difficulties of the Big Three and other auto companies and how they are adapting. **Missing from the reporting**, though, are the stories of **our local dealers**.

What has it been like to be an auto dealer in today's economic crisis? Our speaker, **David Withnell**, President of Withnell Motor Company, will give us a **local perspective** on doing business in an era of high fuel prices, foreign competition, bailouts, "cash for clunkers", and rapidly evolving automotive technology.

With 27 years of experience in the auto industry, David has worked at every level of a dealership, from his first job as a lot attendant in 1982 to becoming President in 2001. He has served on the Boards of Directors of the Oregon Dealer Advisory Committee, the Dodge Dealer Ad Association, and the Salem Automobile Dealers Association. He serves on the Board of Directors of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and volunteers as a Little League/Babe Ruth baseball and youth basketball coach in Salem.



Please join us, **Friday, September 25 at noon**, for an informative presentation about a key element of our local economy. For lunch reservations email RSVP@SalemCityClub.com or call 503.370.2808 before noon Tuesday, September 22, 2009. The community is welcomed and encouraged to join us! There is no charge to attend the program at noon. Parking is free. Doors open at 11:30 AM. For more information on this program, and directions to the event, please go to www.salemcityclub.com.