

Business of the Week

Downtown GM



By Dan Rankin

Our Business of the Week is Downtown GM, located at 449 Queen Street West in St. Marys and co-owned by the father-and-son duo of Chris and Phil West.

The dealership has been operating in St. Marys since 1983, when it was located downtown in the space currently occupied by Tim Hortons.

Chris West said he appreciated the history of the old dealership location, as it was once a Chrysler dealership and gas station owned by Peter Newton. "There's a lot of history in that area," he said. "It was very, very central. I think it was important for the town because there was a lot of spinoff business created. People would come in for service and then walk around downtown and spend their money. So, it did have some benefits for St. Marys when it was downtown, as Tim Horton's does now."

The dealership moved to its current home, two-and-

a-half acres on the west side of town, in 1996. "We shut down on a Friday at 5:00 pm and started up Monday at 8:00 am at the new location," West recalled. "It was a pretty smooth transition."

Downtown GM currently employs 19 full-time and 12 part-time staff inside the 12,000 square foot facility, West said.

On the sales side of things, they offer a range of vehicles, new and pre-owned, from full-size to smaller pickup trucks, to sports utility vehicles and crossover utility vehicles, to small, mid-size and full-size cars, he said. "We really offer a full gamut of vehicles," said West. "We specialize in GMC and Buick, but also lease Chevrolets and lease other makes as well."

As for vehicle service, they offer "basically anything to do with repair and maintenance on a vehicle," including all makes and models, foreign and domestic. "Whether it's mechanical, body, detail-

ing, and of course any advice we can offer, in terms of what should a customer do when they have a problem with their vehicle."

He estimated that they service around 6,000 vehicles per year and, since they started, have had close to 100,000 sales and service customer interactions.

"The important thing for us is to keep somebody on the road," West said. "We're in the transportation business. That's one of the reasons we've supported VIA. 20 percent of the driving-age population don't drive, and of course anybody basically under 16 doesn't drive. That's a

large percent of the population that doesn't drive, so that's we're helping out with the Save VIA organization, so those folks can have a way of getting from A to B."

In order to help out drivers whose vehicles need to spend some time in the shop, they also have a business relationship with Enterprise Rentals, West said.

Downtown GM's hours (excluding holidays) are 8:00 am to 8:00 pm Monday to Thursday, 8:00 am to 6:00 pm Fridays, and 9:00 am to 4:00 pm Saturdays.

To contact Downtown GM, call 519-284-3310 or visit DowntownGMC.com.

Independent Shorts

- The big new film in theatres this weekend is "Batman V Superman: Dawn of Justice," which promised to be a sort of "Avengers" for the DC Comics Universe, featuring titular characters Batman (Ben Affleck) and Superman (Henry Cavill), as well as Wonder Woman (Gal Gadot), Lex Luthor (Jesse Eisenberg) and more. However, critics have been mixed on the Zack Snyder-directed blockbuster, with the film currently sitting with a 41 percent rating on RottenTomatoes.com. Also new this weekend is My Big Fat Greek Wedding 2, the sequel to the 2002 romantic comedy, which is being dealt an even more harsh 24 percent rating by critics online.

- The Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame are holding their annual baseball season pool again this year. Look for it along with next week's Independent or sign up for it online at BaseballHallofFame.ca. The 2016 pool is offering more than \$1,100 worth of prizes, including a very unique prize to the champion – a limited edition induction bat created by the Hall of Fame bearing the signature of Inductee Matt Stairs. At the All-Star Break (July 14-16), two players (1 pitcher & 1 position player) can be traded for another player in the same original pool of five players as the player you are disposing. Deadline for entry is Friday, April 8 at 11:59 pm. Forms can be emailed to baseball@baseballhalloffame.ca, faxed to 519-284-1234 or mailed to CBHFM Fantasy Pool, P.O. Box 1838, St. Marys, ON, N4X 1C2. There is a ten dollar entry fee by cash, cheque (payable to "CBHFM") or credit card.

<p>DVD RENTALS \$3.49 / 2 Days NEW RELEASES WEEKLY!</p>	<p>M&M Variety Movie Rental of the week: The Danish Girl 14A</p>	
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