

## Terry Lopez. . . continued

at Parent as a lube driver after moving to Illinois. A couple of years later, Terry, who accompanied Rubin to the office one Saturday afternoon, ended up being the right person with the right skills at the right place at the right time to fill a position in the office. It didn't take long for Terry to prove herself an asset to the company.

Today, Terry is among the top three employees in terms of years of service and has earned a reputation as being one of the company's most knowledgeable and loyal employees.

As Office Manager of the Fuels Department, Terry is responsible for the administrative and support activities of the department. She has a multitude of daily tasks that are necessary to keep the office on track and running smoothly. She best describes her role as being a "catch all" for questions and concerns from customers and co-workers alike.

Terry enjoys her job and it shows. Her friendly demeanor, pleasant disposition, and solid work ethic have enabled her to excel in her role and be an important part of the Parent Petroleum team.

## Brand News

By Joe Aliperta

### **CITGO: Citgo Summer Promo**

*It's bigger...much bigger! The 2005 Citgo Great Gas Giveaway!*

This program turns you into a hero by providing your consumers with Gas Money so they can get to where they need to go this summer! Kicking off shortly before July 4 and winding down just after Labor Day, the Prize Patrol crews will distribute \$1,000 of Citgo Cash Cards per stop at over 1,000 Citgo locations and at approximately 40 roadside attractions, fairs and amusement parks. With even more media coverage than last year, you can bet that consumers will be driving to your store more often to up their chances of winning some FREE Gas Money from Citgo! One important note: Make sure your program point of sale is posted, as the prize van will drive right by your store in its absence.

### **CLARK: Credit Card Update**

Clark Brands is pleased to announce three major changes to its credit card and satellite lease programs. First, effective May 16, they implemented a lower blended rate of 1.8% and \$.15 transaction fee when processing Visa/MasterCard. Secondly, they have reduced their monthly satellite fee from \$160 per month down to \$135. Finally, Clark will absorb up to \$500 per year in CRIND charge backs. Watch for Clark's Rolls and Ribbons program coming soon.

### **MARATHON: Promote Your New Image**

Marathon Petroleum Company is "Fueling the American Spirit." Help promote your brand's new image by improving your facility's interior and exterior consumer appeal. Be on the look out beginning August 8 through the 12 for the arrival of cleaning tips and coupons that will help improve your station's appearance. In addition, P.O.S material promoting the new campaign will arrive on August 26 and needs to be posted by September 12, just in time for this year's Fall television campaign.

### **Newest Innovation in EPOS**

**Datawire** -Both Marathon and Clark are now offering High Speed Network Communication-the latest innovation in Electronic Point of Sale. Thanks to a partnership with Alliance Data Systems, Datawire brings customers one of the fastest and most secure forms of payment card communication on the market today. Datawire features:

- 3-5 seconds response time inside and at the pump
- Equivalent to having another pump at your location
- Customer convenience
- Less traffic build up at peak times

Datawire is currently available for Verifone Rudy, Gilbarco G-Site, and even the Verifone 3750 non-intergrated POS rental unit. You will be receiving additional information on this new technology in the near future.

### **MOBIL: SpeedPass Promo**

Summer is the time for a great Speedpass promotion! Running through August 31, Exxon-Mobil will offer any newly acquired Speedpass consumer a \$.05 per gallon discount up to a maximum \$20 just for using their new Speedpass transponder. Participating retailers are required to give away a bottle of Desani water to any consumer who uses a SpeedPass inside to purchase \$3 or more of non-fuel items. There is a Coke/Desani hotline 800.203.9610 for additional information. Also, please ensure that you have the correct "Take One Applications" on display; the old ones have an incorrect phone number of 877.733.2727. Don't miss out on this opportunity to enhance both your retail sales and customer loyalty!

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# PARENT ADVANTAGE

*"Consumers are statistics. Customers are people."*

- Stanley Marcus

## Dear Valued Customer:

It's that time of the year for us to ask for your help in our efforts to give something back to the community. Over the Labor Day Weekend, we will be sponsoring our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Parent Petroleum Labor Day Pumpathon to benefit the Foundation Fighting Blindness.

We urge you to join us in this special event established to generate research money for the doctors and scientists working for the Foundation toward finding a cure for blindness.

Recent advances have resulted from their research in a variety of areas, from gene therapy to surgical implantation of artificial retinas



*continued >*

August 2005



## Up Close & Personal with Max Mahkri

**M**ajid "Max" Mahkri was born in India and lived in the Middle East and England.

He comes from a family of entrepreneurs starting with his father, who retired as an automobile engineer and entrepreneur. He credits his father as being the inspiration to become an independent businessman.

Max currently operates four stations, after having sold a couple recently. His brands are CITGO and BP. His operating company is called TB Petroleum and customer satisfaction is at the core of everything he does. Here are his responses to some questions regarding his approach to remaining profitable in our increasingly competitive marketplace.

### *What do you consider to be the most important consideration in your operation?*

Implementation of a sophisticated back office management system. The system we've developed enables us to handle day-to-day accounting, fuel inventory management, price control, and C-store inventory control of every location. We track store performance and profitability on a weekly basis, and produce a store report of sales with a breakdown between gasoline and merchandise sales. Additionally, the report will indicate any major overage or shortage problems along with excessive voids and over-rings. Once all this information is amassed, a profit/loss statement can be developed, which provides the weekly overview.

### *What do you consider to be the keys to success?*

We strive to build a strong, long-lasting relationship based on integrity and mutual respect, with customers, suppliers, colleagues, community, and employees. In today's rapidly changing business, we like to think of ourselves as both challenged and fortunate to be able to serve a community in ways they have grown to trust.

Consumers are naturally attracted to a neat, clean, properly illuminated and well-merchandised store. The manner in which they're treated after they enter the facility will determine whether or not they will return. A friendly and courteous attitude on the part of the operational team is a fundamental requirement. Here are the seven performance objectives I promote at my stores that have made a big difference over the years:

1. Friendliness - everyone deserves a smile
2. Warm greeting for all
3. Prompt attention
4. Suggestive selling
5. Product knowledge
6. Prompt and cheerful adjustments and exchanges
7. Know regular customers special needs and requirements

### *Any secrets you can share with colleagues in the industry?*

Yes. I think independent dealers should not try to compete directly with the industry giants on price alone. It is better to be a follower, and give them some space. Instead, independents must carve out their own niche in the community and overkill on cleanliness and service.

## Diversification Adds to Your Bottom Line

By Jim Hockemeyer

**A**s the downward pressure on fuel margins continues to increase, facilities that accommodate automotive repair and preventive maintenance services become more resilient due to their ability to generate additional revenue streams above and beyond the traditional fuel and C-store business model. If this applies to your facility, you may want to consider a Quick Lube franchise as a part of your business plan.

Throughout the U.S., fast lubes are growing and going through a transition with the addition of services that go beyond the traditional lube, oil, and filter (LOF) service. Fast lubes now offer services such as fuel injection cleaning, tire rotation, battery replacement, transmission flush, and more in addition to LOF's.

While LOFs bring customers through the doors, there are additional profits to be made on other high-margin services. For example, one popular total car care trend has been to combine the standard quick lube with a full service tunnel wash along with a C-store and fuel station.

It is no longer enough to have great customer service, convenient hours, and smiling, trained employees; these elements are just part of the recipe for success. Businesses have to look outside their core to develop new service areas to offer their customers. The idea is simple: Get more business out of the customers you already have... especially the loyal ones.

Adding multiple revenue sources, especially those that create more traffic demand, ultimately secure your site as a "destination point" for customers as well as help secure your future in the industry.

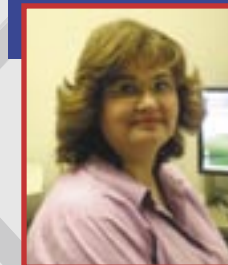
Parent Petroleum is the Midwest area distributor for Castrol, a name with worldwide recognition in the lubricant industry. Programs available include up-front money to help with equipment or infrastructure improvements, extensive advertising and customer loyalty campaigns, signage allowances, cooperative advertising, and training and certification for your crew. We can arrange for you to have a Castrol Marketing Consultant visit your site and discuss the possibilities. For more information, contact your Marketing Representative.

## Pumpathon... continued

to ribozyme therapy. The research continues, but the Foundation needs our help. Your participation in this event will be very important in helping us to meet our 2005 Research Funding goal. Here's how it works:

On Friday, September 3, 2005, we will ask you to post our pump toppers which detail the fact that one penny from each gallon purchased over the Labor Day weekend will be donated to the Foundation Fighting Blindness. You will also receive a generous supply of counter top fliers. At the conclusion of the weekend, we ask that you tally up your gallons for the three days and contribute an amount equal to your sales gallons over the weekend multiplied by one penny. For our part, Parent Petroleum will match your contribution. Please make your check payable to the Foundation Fighting Blindness and mail to Parent Petroleum or give it to your Marketing Representative.

This charitable contribution is fully tax-deductible. We provide press release information to your local newspaper and radio station in order to generate awareness of the event, so in addition to helping to find a cure for many types of blindness, you'll also enjoy a degree of publicity for your generosity.



## At Work With Terry Lopez

**T**erry Lopez has been an integral component of Parent Petroleum almost from the company's inception. What started out as just a job in the office has evolved into a

worthwhile and rewarding career in a role that has grown in size and scope during Terry's nearly 20-year tenure.

Terry, born in California and raised in Texas, traveled to Illinois with her husband, Ruben, in search of a better life. It was Ruben who first landed a position

## Did You Know...

**There are approximately 90,000 fuel pumps in the State of Illinois.**

Source: Bureau of Weights of Measures, Department of Agriculture, State of Illinois