

notes!

MR. SMITH GOES BACK TO AKRON

No one knows when something like this happens. It just does. You find yourself eyeballing neighboring vehicles at every light. Scanning car after car in a parking lot. Agreeing or quietly disagreeing with the tire choices made. Admiring the fastidious care of some, grumbling about the slipshod nature of others.

I don't know exactly when it started. And I certainly didn't expect it to happen. But I fell in love with tires and the tire industry. Sure, some thought I was nuts. To a degree, they're probably right. It doesn't matter. Because I enjoy wandering the tire universe, wondering at the miracle of well-mixed rubber, steel and carbon black, and experiencing the people, places and things that make the tire world tick.

Becoming editor of *Tire Review* brings me full circle in my little portion of the tire industry: four-plus years on the editorial staff of *Modern Tire Dealer*, four years in the public relations department of a major tire company, and the last eight years with an advertising agency specializing in the tire, trucking and automotive markets. Collective real-world experiences that have taught me more about people and business than any classroom or any single job. And, along the way, I've been privileged to know a varied collection of tremendous people who have alternately served as mentors and friends, colleagues and competitors.

To say I am honored and humbled to be in this seat is a gross understatement. And I'll work every day to earn your trust and help you succeed.

Our charge at *Tire Review* is not simply to put out a magazine. The process of mating paper and ink is relatively easy. Our real focus is to provide useful and timely information and insight that benefits your business — build sales, increase profits, prepare for the future, enjoy success. And to bring that to you in a vital, interesting fashion.

That's our commitment to you.

In the coming months — thanks in no small measure to the unique capabilities and focus of Babcox Publications — you'll see the results of our renewed pledge to being the industry's authority on tire dealer and retreader profitability.

This is your magazine. We're merely the caretakers. ●



JIM SMITH