

Spirit letter



Spirit® Brand Marketer and Dealer News

Nancy Beckwith: Front and Center

It's very important to us to put our best foot forward when it comes to spreading the word about Spirit® Petroleum and what the brand can do for marketers. Nancy Beckwith, our Spirit® representative at conferences and trade shows, is a key part of the brand strategy. For the past few years Nancy has done a brilliant job of serving as the public face of Spirit®. And, with her long experience in the petroleum marketing business, she is a valuable asset to the Spirit® team.

Nancy's roots in the industry run deep. Her dad, Wallace R. Blodgett, started his career as a salesman for Gulf Oil in Bay City, MI, then acquired a jobbership in nearby Mt. Pleasant in 1958. Nancy began working at Blodgett Oil as a receptionist in the mid-1980s, and has continued with the company (her oldest brother is now President, and Nancy is Vice President) ever since, doing whatever needs to be done from banking, report preparation and office management to marketing and event planning at the company's stores. "I even cleaned the bathrooms at one of our sites the

other day," she reports. "If it needs handling, I'll handle it!"

That "will-do" spirit fortunately extends to the petroleum marketing industry where Nancy is an active volunteer at both the state and national levels. For a time she worked as director of marketing for the Michigan Petroleum Association, and also served as the first—and so far, only—female chairman of the MPA/MACS Board of Directors. She continues to be active at MPA/MACS and currently sits on the government affairs and convention committees of MPA/MACS as well.

Nancy enjoys the industry to such an extent that work feels like play to her most days, she reports. "I really love the travel and meeting marketers, and could talk our business all day long," she says. She does play for real however; she enjoys an occasional round on the links, and for six years skated in a senior women's hockey league



Nancy Beckwith

(her team's name was "Chicks with Sticks"). She also enjoys spending time with her grandchildren, and fishing for walleye on Saginaw Bay with her husband Richard, a retired Michigan state trooper.

"I love everything about my role at Spirit®," enthuses Nancy. "The longer I do these trade shows, the

more impressed I am with the brand and with the variety of options it offers marketers. The Spirit® brand really lets you make your own decisions and be your own businessperson; marketers just have so many more options and so much more flexibility with Spirit®. There's so much you can do with signage, with retail spaces, with credit cards, with all those different choices the brand offers you."

"It's such a great tool," Nancy goes on. "I wish more marketers knew about it and I'm really glad to be helping make sure they do."

State Executive Profile

Gary Harris — North Carolina Petroleum and Convenience Marketers

"It's definitely not like a lot of other jobs," muses Gary Harris of his role as Executive Director of the North Carolina Petroleum and Convenience Marketers. "Every day is different, with new issues, new problems to tackle. It can get overwhelming at times, but it is most definitely never boring."



Gary Harris

Harris' route into the Executive Director spot wasn't very glamorous, he admits. After graduating from North Carolina State University, he went to work as a purchasing agent for the U.S. Department of

Agriculture's veterinary services division. Through a contact there he learned of a promising opening as a field services representative with NCPCM, so he applied for it and came aboard the organization in 1988. Within a year he was promoted to Assistant Director, and moved into the Executive Director position in 1997.

Established in 1927, the NCPCM today represents approximately 300 marketers, and about that many additional members affiliated with the industry in some capacity. Altogether Harris notes

that anywhere from ninety to ninety-four percent of the retail fuel in the state is sold through one of his organization's members.

Now closing in on thirty years in the industry, Harris has seen many changes and a wide variety of issues come across his desk. "When I started here, issues related to underground storage tanks were a big priority for us," he recalls. The EPA had established myriad new regulations and requirements related to cleanup and infrastructure that called for major investments from marketers, and making sure members were protected was a principal focus.

Environmental issues are constantly on the agenda, it seems. "This past year a big concern has been the requirement by the EPA to change over to fuel with a lower RVP during the summer months to comply with the national ozone standard," Harris says. For a time it wasn't a big deal, but once the price of the summertime gas crept to 10–12 cents higher than regular gas, North Carolina marketers had to pay that higher price and pass it along to their customers and eventually consumers as well. "It was really hurting the industry here in North Carolina," he asserts. "But with our support, the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources was able to demonstrate through modeling that multiple improvements to fuel delivery methods, on-board canisters and stationary source improvements have reduced ozone levels. Since we had that science to back us up, we've successfully petitioned the EPA to allow retailers in 6 counties to forego

the switch to the lower RVP gas. It's a win we're really proud of here because it saves North Carolina customers on average about 30 million dollars a year."

The NCPCM has also signed on as co-defendant with the state of North Carolina in a lawsuit brought by the API and the NPRA regarding North Carolina's blending law, which requires refiners to offer unblended fuel for sale to marketers. Federal and circuit courts have so far ruled in favor of the state and the NCPCM, and appeals have been for the most part unsuccessful. Harris is delighted with the success of the organization's efforts regarding the case, because it enables North Carolina marketers to qualify, if they wish, for tax credits available to ethanol blenders.

Going to bat for members on the governmental and legislative front is one of his favorite parts of his job, Harris admits. "I like the governmental affairs work, the conversations at the capitol in Raleigh and the occasional trips to Washington to work with lobbyists. Most people think I'm nuts but it hasn't grown old for me. It's interesting every day. And I get to work with so many great people."

Harris and the NCPCM have always been extremely supportive of the Spirit® brand, he says. "It's a wonderful concept, and a great tool for our members to have in the lineup of options for customers. The folks at Spirit® are very kind and easy to work with too; we just think very highly of the whole organization."

Licensee Profile

Ullman Oil, Inc. — Chagrin Falls, OH

“I’m blessed to have such great business partners,” says Kim Ullman of his siblings Ken Ullman and Karen Ullman-Murray. “For the most part we’ve gotten along great. Not one of us has won every argument and not one of us has made every decision. For thirty years now we’ve been focused on the big picture.”

That focus has been a recipe for success for Ullman Oil, Inc., founded in 1966 when Ullman’s father Bob, then a division manager for Sinclair Oil, bought out one of his customers, a one-truck commission agent for heating oil in Chagrin Falls. Bob Ullman and his wife Marilyn grew and maintained the business (then known as Bob Ullman, Inc.) for twenty years, keeping the product offering to heating oil and covering Ohio’s northeast quadrant.

Kim and Ken worked for the company as teenagers, and both eventually came aboard as truck drivers. In the mid-1980s, with Karen, they acquired the business from their parents, changed the name to Ullman Oil and expanded the product line to include branded motor fuels, bio-diesel and lubricants in addition to heating oil.

Today Ullman Oil serves some 5,000 customers throughout most of northeastern Ohio. The company carries the Chevron, BP, Marathon and Clark brands in addition to Spirit®. Kim Ullman takes care of fuels, Ken handles lubricants, and Karen is in charge of accounting and electronic work.

Kim Ullman is a big fan of the Spirit® brand and the way it has helped his business. “I really

love the image,” he says. “It’s so striking and inviting from the street; it really is a big selling point. And the brand itself is such a good option for the smaller sites that don’t meet the volume standards of our other brands. It’s been a good match for our rural locations. And from a pricing standpoint, it really helps us compete with some of the big box retailers. It’s worked very well for our business.”



An Ullman transport loads up before making its rounds.

Partner Spotlight

Gilbarco Veeder-Root

Spirit® Petroleum is proud of its relationship with partner Gilbarco Veeder-Root. Headquartered in Greensboro, NC, the company is a worldwide technology leader for retail and commercial fueling operations, offering a broad range of fuel dispensers and systems for payment processing, point of sale, forecourt merchandising, tank gauging and fuel management. Spirit® licensees in need of integrated solutions for business operations from the forecourt to the convenience store and head office can depend on Gilbarco’s long history of uncompromising support, technological innovation and proven reliability to clients all over the world.



Gilbarco’s menu of products is designed to streamline day-to-day operations and boost profits for its marketer and dealer clients. Products include: Encore® retail fuel dispensers for traditional and alternative fuels, Applause™ TV digital merchandising, Passport® POS, FlexPay™ II PCI and EMV-compliant payment systems, Play At The Pump ability to play lottery at the pump (in approved states), Express Ordering™ self-service foodservice kiosks, Gasboy® commercial dispensers and fleet management systems, Veeder-Root® tank gauges, and Red Jacket® submersible turbine pumps.

As part of Spirit®’s partnership agreement with Gilbarco, Spirit® licensees benefit from national account pricing, which translates to significant savings. And as an added benefit, Gilbarco makes its equipment available pre-imaged with the Spirit® logo, further demonstrating Gilbarco’s commitment to lowering costs and providing outstanding service for its clients.

For more information or to place an order, please contact your Gilbarco Veeder-Root regional distributor. Find your local distributor here:

<http://www.gilbarco.com/Support/contactaRep.cfm>