

**The Price at the Pump** *continued from page 10*

cost of fuel prices," said Steve Coe, C2 Motorsports, San Diego, Calif. "We still had some people coming from Arizona and San Francisco, though; we always get the diehards that come from WAY out of town.

"Whenever times are tough, it just makes me more aggressive about getting out there, seeing people and shaking their hands, and saying, 'Yes, I'm still here and I will be here.'

"I'm definitely seeing that people are hearing you now when they're wanting to buy cheap tires and you tell them they might get better gas mileage with this other brand. They used to say they just want something round and black and they didn't care if they lost two miles a gallon. Well, today, two miles a gallon equals a lot of dollars at the end of a tankful.

"I also see opportunities to make sure the customers have fresh air filters, good spark plugs and a tire pressure gauge. Tire pressure gauges really are selling just for that reason now, because people are a bit more conscious of proper tire pressure. We're selling a few more Green filters, too, because people are just looking for that little extra edge on their daily drivers.

"There's an opportunity to take a piece that you're selling for horsepower that also offers gas mileage and re-market it as gas mileage AND horsepower.

"With the price of gas now, I'm getting additional charges on EVERYTHING. If they deliver, there is a fuel surcharge. It's affecting everything.

"We order the parts in a stock order and see if they'll pay for the freight. I had one vendor say, 'no more free freight, but we'll give you an allowance if you put in so much.' The best way I can think of to save money for yourself and the customer is to just be a little smarter about keeping the special orders to a minimum or seeing if the customer will wait for you to put it on a stock order. If they want it right away, you may just have to charge them a 'right away' fee, which is just whatever the freight charges were to get it.

"One vendor wants to charge me to have an online service, because they spend so much money trying to keep it current. I had an issue with that because there's multiple other vendors out there that don't charge you for that. But I can appreciate the demand of their having to keep current and having a guy who's just doing nothing but price increases; that's got to be frustrating for a major WD. They're probably getting price increase CDs or e-mails or whatever on a daily basis from all the manufacturers they're dealing with and then they have to reload them. I do appreciate the frustration.

*Source: Specialty Automotive Magazine.  
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