

Knight Chev Olds Cadillac

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By Henry Bury P.2
THE INTELLIGENCER

A new man has driven onto the Belleville automotive scene.

He is Peter Smith, who now owns and operates the former Knight Chev Olds Cadillac dealership on Station Street, but will be relocating the car store within the year to Highway 62, just north of Highway 401.

This is Smith's first General Motors dealership and he said he is thrilled with the prospects of running his own operation.

"This has been a 13-year venture of gaining the experience and necessary skills to run a General Motors franchise so I'm very excited about the venture," said the 42-year-old dealer who spent the past 11 years as a general manager and minority partner of a GM dealership in Milton.

"My goal is to sell and service as many new and used vehicles as we possibly can and to provide an extremely pleasant buying and service experience with each and every customer."

The Saint John, N.B. native said he also intends to be "personally involved" with customers on a day-to-day basis.

Randy Knight, who owned the downtown GM dealership for the past seven years, sold the franchise to Smith and business partner Michael Boyer. The deal closed last weekend. The Station Street property is being leased from John and Jamie Trudeau, whose family had owned and operated a car dealership there for a half century.

Knight also sold five acres of land beside his Belleville Hyundai location on Town Center Drive off Highway 62 north of Highway 401 — and directly across the road from Bob Clute Pontiac/GMC — that will be home to Smith's new dealership. Another three acres of land on Mineral Drive, just north of Wal-Mart, that will serve as the home of Smith's new Car Star Collision Centre (auto body shop).

Knight continues to own the Belleville Hyundai dealership that he opened on Highway 62 last November, but added, "I am going to pursue other automotive interests.

"It was a business decision to sell the GM franchise and Peter Smith is an outstanding gentleman and he will do exceptionally well in the Quinte area... I feel great

about my decision to sell."

Knight said he is buoyed by the fact that the new owners will retain all the existing staff at the Station Street facility.

Smith and Boyer have known each other since 1987 and they entered a partnership agreement which allowed them to purchase Knight Chev Olds Cadillac Ltd.

"I will be the dealer principal and will be active in the day-to-day operations of the dealership," Smith said.

Boyer owns several other GM franchises in Pickering, Alliston and Apsley, as well as the Belleville Mazda dealership.

Smith has almost 20 years' experience with General Motors.

For 1985-91, he was district sales manager for GM dealers in

Eastern Ontario, including Belleville and Peterborough. He then went into the retail car business in pursuit of someday owning his own GM franchise.

Smith collected most of his skills as general manager and minority partner of the GM dealership in Milton.

"So when GM presented an opportunity to purchase Knight Chev Olds in Belleville, I jumped at the opportunity. I like the area, was familiar with it and I thought it would be a great place to raise my family," he said.

Smith is married to Vicki, and they have three children, Darcy, 13, Carly, 11, and seven-year-old Matthew.

Smith said it is their intent to build a new image facility GM deal-

ership on Highway 62 next to Belleville Hyundai within the next 12 months "to provide the Belleville area with a convenient service-friendly environment."

The existing Car Star Collision Centre (auto body shop) will also be moving at that same time to a 10,000 square foot facility on Mineral Road.

The only change for now, said Smith, is in the name of the GM dealership.

"We will be changing the name to Peter Smith Chev Olds Cadillac over the next couple of weeks," he said.

"There is lots of talent and experience in this dealership. We are also selling all new Chevrolet and Cadillac products so that is part of the excitement as well," said Smith.

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