

# TIRE BUSINESS

©Crain Communications Copyright 2007 by Crain Communications Inc. All rights reserved.

May 21, 2007

THE TIRE DEALER'S NEWSPAPER SINCE 1983

\$79 per year, \$4 per copy

## 'Customer-centric'

### Sandone Tire catches some retail mo(mentum)

By Bruce Davis

Tire Business staff

SCRANTON, Pa.—Sandone Tire Co., primarily known up to now as a wholesaler in Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey, has opened a "customer-centric" retail store in Scranton and doubled its wholesale warehousing capacity.

The 55-year-old, family-owned dealership had been considering adding a second retail store in the



Sandone Tire is a family business. Pictured (left to right) are Vice President Mike Sandone, company founder Patrick W. Sandone Sr., President Patrick W. Sandone Jr. and Patrick W. Sandone III, business development. Mike and Patrick Jr. are brothers.

Scranton area for some time, but the project gained momentum a few years ago when Patrick Sandone III, grandson of founder Patrick Sandone Sr., joined the company after 10 years in the commercial business sector.

Drawing on experiences he gathered while working in Europe, Patrick III suggested to his family that the tire retail marketplace was ready for a new style of store and shopping experience.

The result of that exercise is the company's 8,000-sq.-



ft., eight-bay retail store in Taylor, a community of about 7,000 on the southeast side of Scranton. The store opened for business provisionally in February. The Sandones staged a grand opening April 16 with local dignitaries and media. The senior Mr.

See Sandone, page 20

## Sandone Tire's on the grow, got a retail itch

Continued from page 1  
Sandone cut the ribbon.

Prior to the April 16 event, they invited 200 local business owners to a

### Wal-Mart

Continued from page 1  
fault."

"We disagree with the decision, but we respect it," a Wal-Mart spokesman told *Tire Business*. He declined to discuss why the Bentonville, Ark.-based retailer decided not to appeal, saying the company never discusses its legal strategies publicly.

However, a story in the *Montgomery (Ala.) Advertiser* newspaper quoted a spokesman for the retailer who said the company was going to examine its tire practices.

Ford Motor Co. and Continental Tire settled with Ms. Thorne before the case went to trial. A Ford spokeswoman said the auto maker feels it is not at fault in the accident but found settling the case more economical than taking it to court.

chamber of commerce open house and scheduled an evening reception in May for the local Young Professionals Society, according to Patrick Sandone III, who is in charge of business development for the dealership.

The new store is an open atrium design, with 15- to 20-foot ceilings and floor-to-ceiling glass on three of the showrooms' four walls, a design that provides enough natural light that most days the store can function without interior lights during daylight hours, Mr. Sandone said.

The Sandones also have equipped the store with a range of customer-focused amenities, such as Internet stations, a high-definition flatscreen TV, an upscale waiting area, gourmet coffee bar, WiFi and covered parking.

The company's service offerings cover most tire and under-car services, Mr. Sandone said. The building is equipped to use waste oil from oil changes for heating.

In local advertising and on the company's Web site, the store is referred to as the "car care comfort zone." The one-acre property previously was the site of an automotive service business, which the Sandones tore down to make room for

their new store.

The design is the work of local architect Joseph G. Rominski.

Not standing still, Mr. Sandone has secured a two-acre site in the Scranton area for another new retail store, which would be the dealership's third. The decision to go ahead with that location likely will come next year, he said.

Sandone Tire's original location, in downtown Scranton, is home to the firm's warehouse, retail store and retread plant.

On the wholesale front, the company has purchased 120,000 square feet of warehouse space adjacent to its downtown Scranton location, pushing warehousing space to 200,000 square feet to support the firm's expansion of daily delivery service to Harrisburg, Lancaster, Reading, Lebanon and other markets in southeastern Pennsylvania.

In addition, the company has launched sbtiresonline.com, an e-commerce-enabled Web portal targeted at wholesale customers. The site al-



Sandone Tire's new retail store is open and airy, using lots of natural light thanks to architect Joseph Rominski's design.

lows customers to view tire pictures and information, create and print customer quotes, view inventory, wholesale pricing and suggested retail pricing and place orders online.

About 30 percent of the firm's wholesale business is made through this channel, Mr. Sandone said.

He declined to say what the dealership spent on the new store or its overall sales, but said he expects the retail store to approach \$1 million in

sales a year.

The dealership was founded in 1952 by Mr. Sandone's grandfather, primarily as a retail location. The firm later expanded into wholesaling and retreading. Mr. Sandone's father, Patrick Sandone Jr., is president of the dealership and his uncle Michael Sandone is vice president.

Last year the dealership won a Better Business Bureau Torch Award, given for ethical business practices.