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# THE MONROE TIMES

Thursday, Apr. 30, 2009



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**Front Page**

4/30/2009 11:00:00 AM

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**Lakeside's return a local economic success story**

Tere Dunlap

MONROE - Lakeside International Trucks is celebrating not only its 25th anniversary Thursday, but also its move back to Monroe.

In August 2007, the company shut its Monroe doors on County KK, and offered its 15 employees positions in other locations. They left one person, Matt Beckman, in the area to perform service out of a large truck.

The commercial truck company, with more than \$100 million in sales annually, has six medium- and heavy-duty truck dealerships in southern Wisconsin and provide parts, service and leasing.

Dennis Lewey, who was the acting service manager and warranty administrator at the time, didn't want to leave Monroe. He ended up driving to Janesville to work for the company, along with two others.

Today, he's back, behind the counter at Lakeside International Trucks' new Monroe location, 1020 3rd Ave.

Beckman still is servicing trucks, and they have added two other employees.

"It's a five-minute drive versus a 45-minute or an hour drive," Lewey said about working in Monroe. The bad winter weather of 2007-2008 was the worst of the time, he added.

Sporting a company jacket with the anniversary patch on the right shoulder, Lewey was busy Wednesday answering phone calls. He still had to wash a huge, red and silver International Lone Star truck for presentation at the grand opening event.

The business had to close in 2007, because it was not making money, Lewey said.

He credits Beckman for "knocking on doors" and building up the business in Monroe.

"We have all the (school) buses. Even Orangeville brings their buses up here," Lewey said.

Beckman worked out of his truck for about a year before Lakeside rented a bay at the new location.

That bay now is the new parts area, and three more bays have been rented next to it. Lewey said they'd like to have even more.

With the extra bays, Lewey and Beckman had to have a new doorway to the outside installed and a window cut out for the parts counter.

For a customer service area, Beckman cut off unused pipes sticking out of the ceiling; Lewey power sprayed the walls and floors and then went to work painting one night after business hours, even adding a couch.

Of course, it's not as fancy as a hotel lobby and the smell of grease and oil is obvious, but it's a sign of growing success in Monroe's economy, according to the new location employees.

The Monroe store will have a grand opening from noon to 1:30 p.m. today offering hot dogs with "all the fixings" in the parking lot, raffle prizes, and a tour of the new store.

The company's new general manager Bob Shannon and owners Bill Reilly Sr. and Bill Reilly Jr. are expected to attend.

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- NEW: Monroe Boys in State Title Game
- NEW: Monroe Boys Win State Semifinal
- NEW: Photos March 23-29
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