

Fresno County Farm Bureau

Friends of the Family Farm Sponsor

Hedrick's Chevrolet: Driving Fresno County farmers and ranchers since 1944

The Hedrick's Chevrolet dealership has been selling, servicing and repairing vehicles in the Fresno-Clovis area for almost 70 years and has developed deep roots in the Central Valley. The company's success has allowed them to become a big supporter of the local community, generously giving back whenever they have an opportunity.

General Manager Brett Hedrick knows how much his business and the local economy depend on the agriculture industry. Many of the vehicles that are purchased from the dealership are by farmers and ranchers for use on their farms and for their families.

Roughly 20 to 30 percent of the dealership's customers are tied to the agriculture community. This is one of the reasons Hedrick's Chevrolet became a *Friends of the Family Farm* sponsor.

"It has always been a big focus for us to continue connecting with industry businesses in the community because so much of our local business climate is reliant on agriculture," Brett said.

The Hedrick family has strong ties to the industry, as well. Brett's father, Bill, is a cattle rancher in the Fresno County foothills. Brett grew up very involved in 4-H and FFA and graduated from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo with a bachelor's degree in agriculture business.

Originally, the dealership opened its doors in 1944 as Hallowell Chevrolet in downtown Clovis. Bill Hedrick joined the Hallowell Chevrolet team in 1959 as a parts driver and began selling cars for the company in 1963. Bill became a partner with Mr. Hallowell in the late 1970's. In 2000, when Mr. Hallowell retired, Bill and Brett bought the business from him and changed the name to Hedrick's Hallowell Chevrolet. In 2005,

the Hallowell name was retired, making the business Hedrick's Chevrolet.

Bill has kept the cattle ranch business going on the side while running the dealership. Today, he still works at the dealership acting as the president of the corporation. Brett began working for the company in 1978 part-time while he was in high school and began full-time after graduating from Cal Poly in 1984.

Maintaining employee happiness remains to be a significant focus



Bill and Brett Hedrick

for the dealership. Hedrick's has a total of 98 employees, 12 of which have been with the company for over 25 years.

Hedrick's strives to continue to extend the longevity of employment for each employee; over half of their current staff have been with the dealership 10 years or longer.

"We have made it the company's priority to focus on its staff. When employees are happy, it comes as a natural response for each team member to focus on the customers," Brett said. He encourages his managers to be forward thinking and problem solvers, but wants them to feel comfortable to come into his office with any concern's they may have.

The company's mission for its customers is to always leave with a good last impression. Brett acknowledges that the first impression is very important, however, it is the last impression that will make the customer come back for service and to purchase another vehicle.

Hedrick's Chevrolet strives to have a return rate similar to Disneyland, which is 75 percent. His goal is for every customer to have such a great experience at their dealership and that they refer friends, family and colleagues to come do business with the company.

Going forward, Brett envisions Hedrick's Chevrolet continuing to connect with the agricultural businesses in the community. Agriculture continues to play a role in the Hedrick's family as well; Brett's two sons spend their time outside of school working on the cattle ranch with their grandpa Bill.

Hedrick's Chevrolet will celebrate its 70th anniversary this year. The company hopes to continue to service and sell to farmers and ranchers for many years to come.