



Pontiac Service Excellence Award

by Tim Dye

When you think of 8-lug wheels you automatically think of big Pontiacs, because that's the only models they were available on. And in many cases you may also connect the 8-lug wheel even more closely to the Grand Prix because it was the sporty big car, and 8-lug wheels are certainly sporty looking. Also this wheel was purely Pontiac, no other car manufacturer had anything like it, not even the other GM divisions. So it is no surprise that when Pontiac introduced an award program for service managers, they picked the 8-lug wheel as the symbol of that program.

The "Pontiac Service Excellence Award" program was announced in a letter dated April 3, 1963. The program was designed to recognize and upgrade the performance of service managers. The service manager would qualify for the award based on these areas, 1) Customer Labor Sales 2) Repair Orders Written 3) Customer Relations 4) Training 5) Promotion 6) Facilities, Equipment & Training 7) Quality Management. Each of these areas were worth various points and if you achieved 100 points you would earn the award, a sterling silver belt buckle in the likeness of an 8-lug wheel. If you were the top sales manager in your zone as determined by a dealer committee appointed by the zone manager you would get to attend a service managers business meeting and meet officials of Pontiac Motor Division's central office. You would



This is the belt buckle award. It originally came in a box with a belt.

Shown here is the lapel pin award, the 2 indicates the recipient won this award for a second time.



also be awarded the same sterling silver belt buckle in the likeness of an 8-lug wheel only yours would have a diamond affixed to it.

Because it was felt that the service manager could not achieve this level of service alone, if he won, the service salesman, shop foreman, and body shop foreman would also earn an award. Theirs would be a lapel pin also a replica of an 8-lug wheel. If the service manager won again a ruby would be added to his belt buckle and the other personnel would get another lapel pin with a number in the middle reflecting the number of years they had won. With the letter came a brochure explaining in greater detail the program.

It is things like this that makes collecting Pontiac memorabilia so much fun. All of the information I have just shared with you and the items shown took me years to gather since I was not there to see and find out about this first hand. It started first with Doug Klein who gave me the lapel pin. He knew I would like it since I collected memorabilia. I did not know at the time it was just part of a bigger group of items. I showed this to my friend Steve Phillips whose dad Roy was a service manager at the time the program was active and he said it looked like a belt buckle that his father has.

1963 brochure explaining the Pontiac Service Excellence program.

Later I got to see it and it was brand new in the box and included the belt. I thought to myself, I have to have one of those to go with my lapel pin. Being curious as I am as to how all things relating to Pontiac works, I wanted to know more about this and what else may go with it. I would not find out until years later when mixed in with a batch of Pontiac

paper items I bought from a former zone office employee, I found the letter and brochure that explained the program. Then it was not until a couple of years after that, I found a belt buckle. So now I think I have everything relating to this program, but that's what makes it so interesting and fun, you never know what may pop up at the next swap meet or on ebay. You may think you have every piece of the puzzle, when another one pops up.

