



## K & H MOTOR SPORTS CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF "MAKIN' LIFE FUN"

By Shannon Myers

**F**ROM HIS DISCREET BEGINNINGS IN 1968 with "two bikes and a basket of parts", K & H Motor Sports has undergone continuous change, merging customer service with technological advances to step forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Originally conceived by Mike Niswender at the age of 17, K & H Motor Sports was a family affair from the start. Mike's father, Ken, provided the space for the venture, and their family friend, Hank Halsted, assisted with financial support, thus the name "K & H" was coined.



The name of the venture has evolved along with the evolution of the industry itself, founded as "K & H Hodaka". The Hodaka franchise boasted the Enduro product line, which included off-road dirt bikes. From this, the name evolved into "K & H Kawasaki", and eventually landed on its current moniker, "K & H Motor Sports", the umbrella name which illustrates the extent to which the business has expanded to encompass more recreational vehicle styles.

In 1978, Mike married his wife, Joan, and brought her into the business around the same time that Kawasaki was brought into the enterprise. The beginning of Mike and Joan's relationship ran parallel to the beginnings of a 40-year relationship with Kawasaki recreational vehicles, including snowmobiles, street motorcycles, cruiser bikes, sport bikes, ATVs, and the Jet Ski, which was an original Kawasaki product. In the 1980s, K & H began a relationship with Polaris of Minnesota, their first in-house United States recreational vehicle company. Throughout the years to follow, Polaris became instrumental in expanding the motor sports industry.



Then in 1983, the Niswender's son, Jeff, grew up with the business. He did not initially intend to become involved with his parents' business. Around 2003, he and his father discovered that his education and experience with computer and internet technology would be a positive addition to the business. Jeff's career at K & H Motor Sports started with a



part-time position in the parts department. After becoming comfortable with that element of the business, he became more involved on the sales floor.

Another fortuitous change came with the appearance of Corey Mazzoni, a college intern who came in to work with the webpage and other internet avenues. His skills proved so valuable to the business that the Niswenders hired him as a permanent employee. Jeff and Corey became the new generation of K & H management that would solidify the union of front- and back-end sales with the partnership between computer/internet technology and the long-valued practice of extending warm and friendly customer service. This union, utilizing social media outreach and online marketing through platforms and websites such as Facebook, Craigslist, eBay, and other online outlets, assisted in ushering K & H Motorsports into the modern day, strengthening and broadening the business like never before.

Though online business can often have the effect of depersonalizing the relationship between business and customer, K & H Motor Sports has kept customer service a continued value throughout all of their business dealings, making sure to extend this value into all electronic communications - whether they are email inquiries or Facebook messages.

"We want to make sure that our customers get the vibe that we care about them, not that we are trying to push products," Jeff said.

Through the years, various economic shifts, some of which were impacted by world events, including natural disasters