



By *Chuck Andrews*

Disappearing Dealers

Before I relate the success of our sludge tests, I want to explain a little about the disappearing local car dealers. I find that very few consumers understand what is really going on. It has a lot to do with floor plans. The car manufacturers are in difficult times and as I write this, the Big Three auto makers have just been rebuffed by Congress for a bail out. I know they may return in December with a bail out plan and be successful, but whether the plan is good or bad, it is anybody's guess at this point. By the time you read this, I would hope there are some solutions on the way.

Let me explain how this crisis plays out at the local level and with your local dealers. When a dealer (NCD-new car dealer) orders a car or cars from a manufacturer whom they are affiliated with, the car is produced and shipped to the local dealer. The dealer typically does not own the cars you see displayed on their lot. The cars are financed with a line-of-credit called a Floor Plan. Many dealers are floor planned by the manufacturer with which the NCD has a franchise agreement. So, the NCD ordered the car and it arrived, but he is only required and is only charged for the interest on the price of the car starting when he received it. That interest may have to be paid or is due every 30, 60, 90 days or some other time frame depending on the state and franchise agreement or floor plan terms. The total cost of the car will probably not be due until it is sold.

So, the manufacturer has bought and paid for the parts and labor to build the car but does not get paid until the car is sold. Multiply this times hundreds of thousands of cars and what do you have? If the cars don't sell, the manufacturer goes broke. The recourse is that the manufacturer can cancel the floor plan agreements with select dealers who may or may not be performing to their satisfaction. If the manufacturer cancels the floor plan agreement, (call the loan), the NCD must find another source of financing for his inventory. Can you imagine a local bank agreeing to finance several million dollars in new cars that are not selling? If the NCD is successful in getting credit, the manufacturer gets their money and the NCD stays in business with a new source of credit. If the NCD fails to get a new source of capital, the manufacturer may repossess the cars within the scope of the floor plan and move them to another dealer or to a point where they think they can get them sold to generate the cash they need to build more cars.

The situation is that GM, for instance, is purported to have 6,000 dealers while Toyota has about 1200. GM has many more than they really need to be competitive with

Toyota. All the manufacturers are pairing down the number of dealerships that they have but this will probably not hurt them in the longer run. The news media has reported that 700 new car dealerships have failed so far in 2008 and 1200 more are expected to fail in 2009. If your local dealer disappears virtually overnight, it is not because he is a crook, but he may be the victim of the current fiscal policies of the manufacturers.

Many used car dealers also are floor planned but normally by a local bank or auction company. As long as the used car dealer can make his interest payments, he will survive. Most used car floor plans require the dealer to pay for the car in full after a specified time period. This means that they also have to keep selling the cars or the floor plan can be in trouble. These are hard times in the car business.

Progress Report:

On a brighter note, you will see the pictures proving the value of our oil de-sludging plan. In April of 2005, we purchased our 2001 Aero wagon and soon discovered that it was beginning to sludge. We used Mobil 1 - 10w30 synthetic oil until we found the sludge and knew we had to make some changes to save our engine. Subsequently, we made many changes and experimented with many combinations of products and parts. We used Mobil 1 0w40 synthetic oil and eventually switched to Amsoil 5w40 Euro-Tech oil. Also, along the way, we have experimented with a new out-of-specification oil pump that was being sent through the Saab parts system. We've put in a custom built gear-type oil pump that we are currently running. We are using the latest crank case vent kit, a debris-accumulator oil pan, catalytic converter exhaust shield, and experimented with several different oil cooler thermostats.



Internal side of the out-of-spec oil pump. There is no evidence of oil sludge or varnish deposits. All photographs by the author.

After running tests and oil analysis for over 37,000 miles, changing parts and making adjustments based on the oil analysis and results obtained from controlled driving regiments, we feel we have successfully dialed in the needs of the low-friction engines. These engines, with the process that we use and recommend, enable these low-friction engines



This is the gear cavity and cover of the out-of-spec oil pump that we installed at 89,000 miles and removed at 122,000 miles on my 2001 9-5 Aero. The publicity about the out-of-spec pumps and some e-mails got GM to correct the poor quality control. The current oil pumps available through Saab are excellent. This pump shows wear in the pump housing and pump cover. The oil pressure produced by this pump remained okay throughout the testing period of 33,000 miles. It was removed not because of any failure, but so we could move on to testing a custom built gear pump for a longer term. The pictured pump did a fine job during the testing timemile period, but could not have sustained the ultimate long life that we were looking for. It started with too much clearance, which with enough miles would have allowed it to produce less pressure.

to successfully last as long as previous Saab engines. The process is easily followed with our Flow Chart that is FREE for the taking on our Web site. Go to www.saabpros.com to get the latest edition of the chart. The proof is in the pictures that we have provided. This is only one car but we have results in our customer base that proves continually that the Flow Chart works. I can guarantee that this problem has not gone away and we see these sludged cars continually. If you own one of the affected vehicles: 1999 to 2002 9/3, and 2003 9/3 convertibles, and 1999 to 2003 9/5s are all suspect vehicles and you should consider preventative measures.



The oil pan is from a 2000 9-5 Aero at 72,000 miles. You can see the varnish and sludge baked on the surface. This residue will eventually end up in the oil pickup screen. The pan shown was removed in August 2008. The engine was so badly sludged that it had to be replaced.



The way to measure engine bearing wear is by the use of plasti-gage on the crank shaft bearings. The picture shows a connecting rod bearing cap has been removed. A strip of plasti-gage laid on the crank shaft surface and the bearing cap is then installed and torqued to crush to the plasti-gage. The cap is then removed and the compressed plasti-gage is measured. The measurement in this case was .038mm. That is near perfect for this engine. Our system not only saved this engine from further damage (when we discovered the sludge) to making it possible to last a long, long time. How long will these low-friction engines go? In our customer base, we have half a dozen with cars in the 230,000 mile range, a 1999 9-5 wagon with 268,000 and a 2000 wagon with 286,000. They have used our de-sludge and maintenance recommendations. It works! These are great engines that will go the distance if they are internally clean and maintained. My controlled 33,000 mile test is just the start. I guess I'm going to have to keep my car forever to prove how long they will go with controlled care and maintenance.



On the left is the debris-accumulator oil pan installed at 89,000 miles and removed at 122,000 miles when we changed oil pumps. Notice that there is not varnish or sludge deposits baked on the surface. 33,000 miles of service and all you see is the oil on the surface. I didn't wipe the oil out so you can see that there were no deposits baked or otherwise on the surface of the pan. The catalytic converter shield used on this car is one of the keys to this condition. The heat is shielded from the oil pan so the oil is not baked in this area.