

DEALERS IN ACTION!

AMSOIL Direct Jobber Earns Leadership Award

Running an AMSOIL business offers challenges that translate into rewards. That's why it's called the AMSOIL "opportunity." Along with the independence of owning your own business comes the freedom to build it the way that best suits you.

One AMSOIL Direct Jobber has earned recognition for the way she grows her business.

Shirley Alquist, Tampa, Fla., received the 2003 Pioneer Leadership Award from the Tampa Bay Chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO). Alquist is a member of the Tampa Bay Chapter and sits on its membership committee.

The national organization has 8,000 members in the United States in 80 local chapters.

The Pioneer Award is given to women business owners who enter uncharted waters, have a pioneering spirit, are innovative, creative and inspiring.

"It's kind of exciting to get the award," Alquist said. "Some days I feel like a pioneer – a woman in a man's world of lubrication."

Her ancestors were among the first settlers in western Pennsylvania. She believes their hardy determination to face hardships and keep their eyes on a goal also are a part of her nature. "I'm proud of that heritage," she said. "For me to get an award with this title . . . it brings tears to my eyes."

She first became affiliated with AMSOIL in 1976 with her late husband Leland Sundstrom. In those years, she was a full-time teacher with a lot of papers to grade in the evening. Her husband also worked a full-time job and took care of the AMSOIL books and business in the evenings. It was a happy and comfortable fit for the two of them, Alquist said.

As Leland got close to retirement, he began to really build their AMSOIL business. The Sundstroms became Executive Direct Jobbers in October of 2000. Leland died in January of the next year, leaving Shirley with the remnants of their dream and little understanding of running the AMSOIL business.

She talked of harried days spent teaching and trying to sell AMSOIL at the same time. She constantly delivered product to customers in between classes and during lunch hours. Nights were spent pouring over AMSOIL manuals



PIONEER AWARD WINNER – Shirley Alquist, right, receives the 2003 Pioneer Leadership Award certificate from Amy Burcaw, owner of Burcaw Properties and president of the Tampa Bay Chapter of NAWBO, at the group's August meeting.

trying to understand the products and how to market them.

The workload was overwhelming and before long she made a decision. "I just decided that building our AMSOIL business was our dream and I was going to grab the bull by the horns and run with it," she said.

She started researching on the Internet, looking for tips to further her newly-inherited business. She found John Alquist, whose biography said he built websites that would help individuals sell their products. He is an ex-corporate marketing specialist and teaches public speaking and marketing skills. It wasn't long before Shirley and John got to know one another, married and began working their businesses together. They can

be found at www.tell-it-well.com or www.train-them-well.com on the Internet. The train-them-well site, although still under construction, trains AMSOIL Dealers marketing and business skills. "We have three Dealers from it and it's not even finished yet," Shirley Alquist said.

"After being with AMSOIL for 27 years, I see that the Internet changed the company and the way it does business. We're no longer in the milkman business. We don't deliver. We teach our customers to order online," she said. That includes retail accounts and Preferred Customers – everyone is referred to the AMSOIL website.

"The site is informational and well done," Alquist said. "We're just real pleased to be connected with AMSOIL."

Talking with Alquist, one has the sense of a woman who cares deeply about what she does. She's exuberant, excited about the AMSOIL business and the opportunities it presents to Dealers.

She expressed concern for some of the Dealers who have slowed down in the downline group built before Leland died. "I not only have a passion for AMSOIL, I just feel a real passion to help these people succeed. They need this business. I just want to resuscitate, reignite them to the opportunity they have to make the money they need."

Alquist is a member of four women's networking groups and together she and John are members of four chambers of commerce.

"They call me the 'oil lady,'" she said, a role in which she's more than comfortable.