

Lawrence business has diesel covered

BY MARY WINDER

Honest, friendly, and knowledgeable people are eager to serve the customers at Don's Diesel in Lawrence, Kan. The business is located at 2500 North Seventh St. in the northeast part of town. It's on the west side of the Lawrence Airport and just one-quarter mile off Highway 24 East.

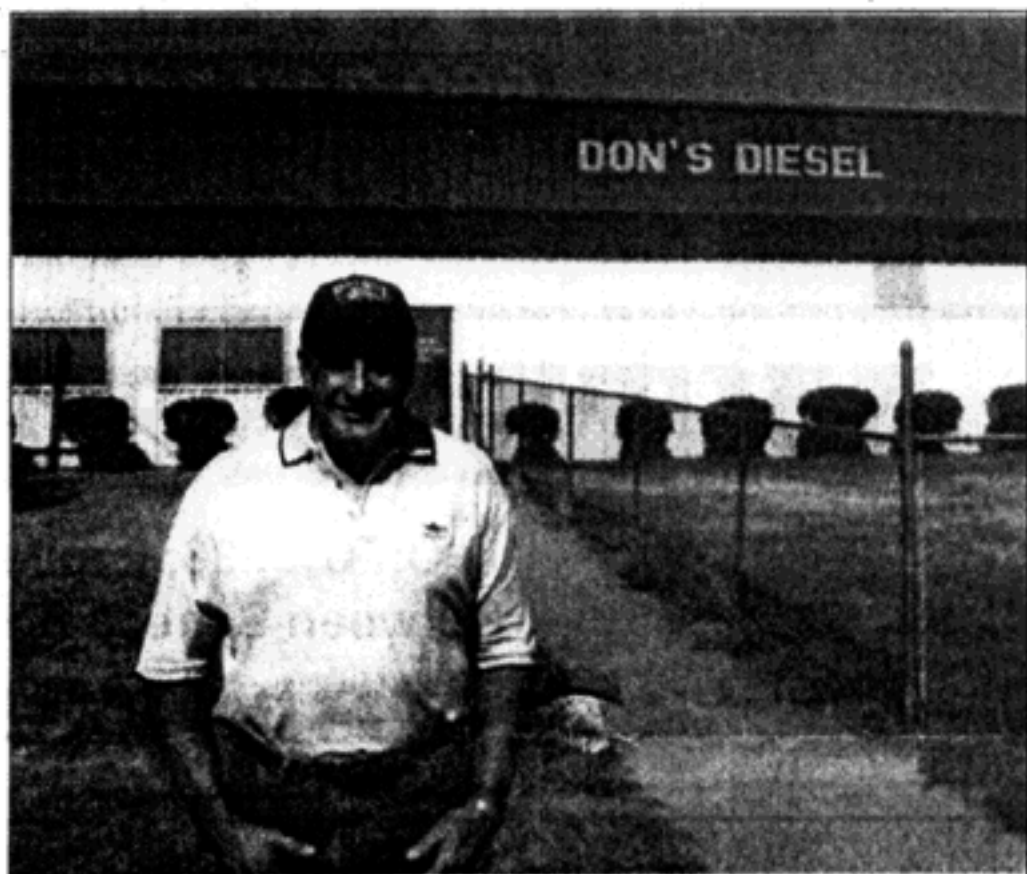
"We are a mail order business and wholesaler that sells repair kits primarily for agricultural diesel equipment, like large diesel trucks, tractors, or other types of ag. equipment with diesel engines," explains Rod Urish of Lawrence, owner of Don's

Diesel. "The repair kits include sleeve assemblies, pistons, rings, pins, rod bearings, and main bearings. Gaskets are optional, and they are available as in-frame or full sets."

"At Don's Diesel, we carry parts for most all American diesel engines and also Perkins, which is English," he adds, noting that he has Clevite, Sealed Power, and FP Diesel brand name engine parts.

In addition, he sells some parts for agricultural equipment powered by gasoline engines, especially older models.

Urish stresses that the engine components he sells are designed and



Rod Urish of Lawrence, Kan., is owner of Don's Diesel.

manufactured to meet or exceed original equipment standards of quality.

Most of the customer orders are placed by telephone, according to Urish. However, there is some walk-in business from local folks or from people who have broken down and are in a hurry to get up and running again.

Customers come from literally all over the U.S., but the majority of them reside in an area bounded by the

Rockies on the west and Illinois on the east, north to the Canadian border and south to Texas. About half of the customers are in the repair business, while the others are individuals doing their own repair work. The same prices are charged to everyone.

Items ordered from Don's Diesel are usually shipped UPS with same-day shipping available for customers in all of the lower 48 states. Urish stores the parts and ships them out of a warehouse that is about 4800 square feet in size. Assisting Urish in his work is Linda Urish, who helps with all aspects of the business.

Don's Diesel has an interesting history in Lawrence. A number of years ago, Don Baxter opened a place called Don's Speed Shop on Hwy. 24 and sold race car parts. Urish purchased this business in 1976. Then 10 years later, Urish decided to open Don's Diesel.

"The closing of so many of the implement dealers in the 1980s left a void, and there was a need for businesses that sell agricultural parts," Urish explains. "It was a niche that I felt we could fill. I have a farm background, and I'm well-versed and well-acquainted with the engine business. I've been involved in the motor

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business since I was in high school, so it was a field I was very familiar with."

He operated both businesses until 1987, when he decided to sell Don's Speed Shop. He kept Don's Diesel, however, and moved it to its current location.

Urish has noticed that the condition of the farm economy doesn't seem to affect his business a great deal. He explains that during prosperous times for farmers, he sees them wanting to "fix up" tractors and other equipment that they might have had to leave in disrepair at other times. When the farm economy is poor, farmers don't have the money to purchase new equipment, so they repair and upgrade their existing

equipment instead.

The inventory is large and the prices are reasonable at Don's Diesel. But, there are more factors that keep customers coming back time and again.

"The keys we live by are being honest, friendly, and knowledgeable," says 57-year-old-Urish, who is the father of six grown children. "We don't treat our customers any different than we'd want to be treated."

"I like my work," he adds. "I deal with different people with different problems every day. It's always interesting. And for the most part, farm people are honest people and enjoyable people to do business with."

For more information about Don's Diesel, please call 1-800-345-6513.