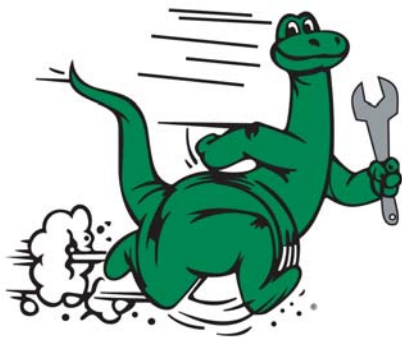


Sinclair Launches Dino Lube Program

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Dino Lube

If there is one trend that has defined the fast lube industry during the last decade-plus, it is the expansion of oil company branded programs. These non-franchise programs find independently owned and operated lube shops wearing an oil company's signage in exchange for carrying that company's products. Many oil companies chip in with

co-op advertising dollars, credit card programs, marketing assistance and other perks, as well.

The latest such oil company to enter the branded arena is Sinclair Oil Corporation with their Sinclair Dino Lube program. Initially launched in 2010, the program has grown rapidly, with 13 Dino Lube facilities now open in key Sinclair markets in Utah, Colorado, Idaho, Oklahoma and Nebraska. Thus far, according to Todd Cawley, manager of National Accounts and Lubricant Sales at Sinclair, Oklahoma is the biggest market, but he expects the program to catch on quickly in other markets.

"We've had Sinclair-branded service stations and garages for decades, but this is the first time we've offered a branded fast lube program. We're looking to grow very rapidly," Cawley said.

Sinclair markets fuel at stations in 25 states, which Cawley said will be core Sinclair Dino Lube markets. However, with the familiar dinosaur logo still well known across the United States, he added that the Sinclair Dino Lube program will be a good fit anywhere.

We can go to all 50 states very easily," he said. "We've got no problem going anywhere." The Sinclair brand itself dates back almost 100 years, giving it broad notoriety among consumers. Cawley said he expects that brand recognition will be a strong selling point with lube operators.

Why the Dinosaur?

Even though the Sinclair dinosaur consistently ranks as one of the most recognizable brands in the nation, few people know why, exactly, the company chose the dinosaur.

According to a company history, Sinclair's advertising writers began noting that the lubricants refined at the company's Wellsville, Pennsylvania, refinery derived from crude oil that originated more than 270 million years earlier during the Mesozoic era. (The Mesozoic era lasted until 65 million years ago and includes the more familiar Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous geologic periods.)



In 1930, the company launched a series of advertisements in more than 100 newspapers and five national magazines that featured many different types of dinosaurs, from the Tyrannosaurus Rex to the Triceratops to what was then called the Brontosaurus (now known as the Apatosaurus), a 40-ton dinosaur with a neck and tail that each stretched more than 30 feet. The campaigns featured taglines like, "Mellowed a hundred million years," and "Oldest crude oil makes best lubricants."

The campaign was a phenomenal success, but the specimen that most resonated with the public was the Apatosaurus. It wasn't long before the company began associating itself with the massive vegetarian, and the company's logo has proudly displayed the dinosaur ever since.



"Our goal is to partner with determined independent lube operators who need a strong, reliable program to successfully drive their business," he said. "We want to find people who know the business but need a marketing program."



For the Sinclair Dino Lube program, Sinclair has incorporated both its familiar Sinclair/dinosaur logo (that dates back to 1930) and a new Sinclair Dino Lube-specific logo that features a green dinosaur (an Apatosaurus, in case you don't have a nearby five-year-old to identify it for you) carrying a wrench and racing to service a bay full of cars. Or at least that's what we surmise the

intended effect is. A fully branded Sinclair Dino Lube will include a primary street sign, paint, building signs, equipment and fascia.

In addition to a strong image and brand identity, Cawley said the Sinclair Dino Lube program will offer a wide array of quality products at competitive prices. Sinclair markets a line of Arctic Fire lubricants that includes conventional, high-mileage, synthetic-blend and full-synthetic motor oil — including a licensed dexos1 full-synthetic motor oil. In addition, Sinclair offers various heavy-duty engine oils, transmission fluids, gear oils, greases, antifreeze, etc.

According to Jeanette Blackham, Lubricant and Specialized Product rep at Sinclair, the company's distributor network will be able to deliver everything from bulk motor oil to quart bottles and everything in between.

Cawley also said Sinclair will offer a strong credit card program for Sinclair Dino Lubes, allowing lube operators to tap into a broad base of Sinclair credit card users. He added that both the Sinclair credit card and a co-branded Sinclair/Visa card offer operators the ability to accept charged transactions without paying a fee.

The company has high hopes for the new Sinclair Dino Lube program, and if the baker's dozen shops that signed on in the first year are any indication, the industry could respond favorably.



"Sinclair's tagline is 'We're about as American as it Gets.' That American pride means a lot to people right now, and we believe it will be beneficial to operators and locations that offer a brand that really represents America," Cawley said, adding that he sees no limit to how big the program could get during the next few years. "We'll grow as fast as we need to."