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## CJ's Tire and Automotive Service Over a Half Century of Keeping Drivers and Their Vehicles Safe

By Kathy Hunt

Vehicle safety should be at the forefront of every driver's mind. In inclement weather do you find your tires skating across, instead of gripping, the road? Do your wipers clean your windshield or leave streaks of water, sleet or snow behind? When you step on the brake pedal, does your automobile respond immediately or shudder slowly to a stop? At CJ's Tire and Automotive, keeping cars and trucks road-worthy while making automotive maintenance "better, faster, more affordable" is the top priority. Winner of Berks County's "People's Choice Award" for the past eight years, the family-owned and operated business has a proven track record of providing reliable, consistent and reasonably priced service in Southeastern Pennsylvania.

### Over 50 years of automotive care and customer service

Many businesses profess to have a lengthy list of satisfied customers, but very few can back up that claim with a half-century of happy consumers. In 2021 CJ's Tire and Automotive celebrated 50 years as an independently owned and operated business. A former employee of the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company in Pottstown, Paul "Skip" Levensgood Sr. opened CJ's Tire and Automotive in Birdsboro, Berks County in the spring of 1971. He was motivated by the belief that people should receive better customer service than what he had experienced himself.

"We recognize that what we sell, tires and automotive service and repairs, are commodity products," explains said Bill Bainbridge, vice president of marketing and business development at CJ's. "There are a lot of people right down the street, so to speak, who sell the same thing. The difference between our competitors and

CJ's comes down to our people and the experience customers have when they visit our website, call us on the phone, or come into our stores and work with our staff. We emphasize exceptional customer service. At the end of the day, that's what makes us different," he said. CJ's 4.5 star Google ratings seems to back that up.

This dedication to a positive customer experience has paid off. Although it began as just a tire shop, CJ's has evolved into a much larger enterprise. Over the years it has added automotive services, repairs, and aftermarket custom wheels to its offerings and developed a strong business-to-business (B2B) as well as retail consumer client base. Today, small to mid-sized businesses take their fleets to CJ's not only for tires but also scheduled maintenance.

Over the past 50 years, CJ's has increased the number of its retail locations from one to 17 and operates six distribution centers (with more than 90,000 tires in stock!) and servicing their own stores and wholesale customers in 21 Pennsylvania counties. If the area's population is growing, and the right real estate is available, CJ's will consider opening additional locations.

Although Skip Levensgood has stepped back from day-to-day operations, his son Paul serves as CJ's president and oversees the business. All three of Paul's children are involved in the family business.

Every April and October, CJ's Tire and Automotive celebrates "car care month." These are the months when people typically begin to prepare their cars for changes in the weather and in their driving habits.

"Spring is a time of people getting out and putting more miles on their vehicles," Bainbridge said. "It's also a time when people start thinking about vacations and about how often their cars'

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air conditioners will need to run in the coming months. In the fall, people start thinking about being prepared for cold weather. They want to make sure that their tires are in good condition and provide the traction to get them where they want to go, when they need to go there. They also want to know that their wipers are working, they have enough antifreeze in the cars, and their batteries aren't affected by the cold temperatures," he said.

One of the newer technology products that CJ's carries and about which drivers should be aware is the all-weather tire. Comprised of different rubber compounds

than all-season tires, an all-weather tire provides close to the same grip of a traditional winter tire in cold weather and on snow and ice-covered roads. However, if driven year-round, winter tires simply can't last as long as an all-season tire.

"A nice thing about the new technology in all-weather tires is that, even when it's cold and winds are blowing, the tread remains flexible and grips a slushy, snowy road as if it's dry, but the tires will last for up to 70,000 miles. And the great news for consumers is that all-weather tires really don't cost any more than premium all-season tires," Bainbridge said.

Global manufacturers including Bridgestone, Goodyear, Continental, Hankook, and Nokian are all now producing all-weather tires.

In April and October, CJ's offers several preventative maintenance packages to prepare drivers and their vehicles for the upcoming season. Information on these special offers can be found on CJ's website and in print.

A way to guarantee that your vehicle performs optimally, not only in the summer and winter, but also year-round is to have it checked by one of CJ's licensed

technicians. Their tire technicians are trained and recertified each year through the Tire Industry Association. CJ's Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certified technicians must stay up-to-date on the latest technology and retake their ASE certification test every five years.

CJ's retail locations are open Monday through Friday from 8 AM to 6 PM and on Saturday. As Saturday hours vary, it's best to contact the specific store or consult CJ's Facebook page for details.

For more information about locations and service, please visit <https://cjtire.com>.

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