

Stop by for a tuneup

New business thriving in Hatfield Borough

By DAN SOKIL
Staff Writer

HATFIELD BOROUGH — Twenty five years ago, Steve Godshall was pumping gas for Gambino's Arco Service Station, at 225 S. Main Street two blocks south of its intersection with Broad Street in Hatfield Borough.

Although he moved on from that job in 1989, he came full circle this past June by opening his own business, and his Godshall's Auto Service is now located on the same site where he started working all those years ago.

"I've always liked working at small shops like this. When I started here, back when it was Gambino's, that was an entirely different world, but as I've grown and matured I can kind of appreciate that part of it a little more now," Godshall said.

Being a customer-friendly business is now his top priority, not just getting your car back on the road but making sure you know what the problem was.

"If we're working on a car, we'll call that person personally and explain to them what's wrong, or take the time to show them the problem, because I'd rather be the guy out there explaining what's wrong than the guy hiding the back while a sales rep tells them," said Godshall.

That friendly style made a big difference to customer Laurie Clements, who had her car serviced there earlier this month.

"I stopped in the other day to tend to my car's business at Steven's garage, and it was a pleasure to see two elderly gen-



GEOFF PATTON/THE REPORTER

STEVE GODSHALL, owner of Godshall's Auto Service in Hatfield, is shown at work in the shop on Main Street on Monday.

tleman customers there chit chatting, shooting the breeze," said Laurie.

While those two talked, she said, Godshall explained to her what had gone wrong with her car, showed her the problem parts, and explained how to prevent the problem from happening again in terms a non-auto expert could understand.

"How nice that was. It reminded me of years ago when time went a bit slower, and people actually took the time to talk to one another," she said.

But the importance of communication is just one of the things he learned over two decades working for Old Forge Lincoln Mercury in Spring Hill; he also

picked up a thing or two while there thanks to a special educational program run by the Ford Motor Company.

"I used to take three trips a year out to Dearborn, Michigan to sit on the Ford Advisory Board, and that was pretty much the highlight of my career there. I met a lot of neat people, and saw a lot of neat things out there," he said.

However, as local auto dealers have seen more and more upheaval in the last few years, Godshall started to look at ways of starting his own business, and for where the best fit would be.

"When I saw that this building

had become available, it was just a perfect fit. I knew this building, I pumped gas here, and I've been a part of this community for so long, I belonged to the volunteer fire company for 20 years, and now I've come back to where I started," he said.

The business isn't making huge profits but is staying above water, and he hopes to keep adding new equipment and possibly expanding his property as time and money permit.

But he also has a few more immediate projects to work on, like updating the coupons available on his Web site www.Godshall'sAuto.com and going through some of the surprises the pre-

vious owners left in the building.

"This is my junkyard, out back. There's an attic upstairs that they used to store stuff, and I've found all kinds of neat things. Most of it will probably go out as scrap, but we've found some pretty cool old signs and things like that up there too," Godshall said.

IF YOU GO

- Where: 225 S. Main Street, Hatfield Borough.
- When: Open 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday.
- Call (215) 855-7800 or visit www.Godshall'sAuto.com.