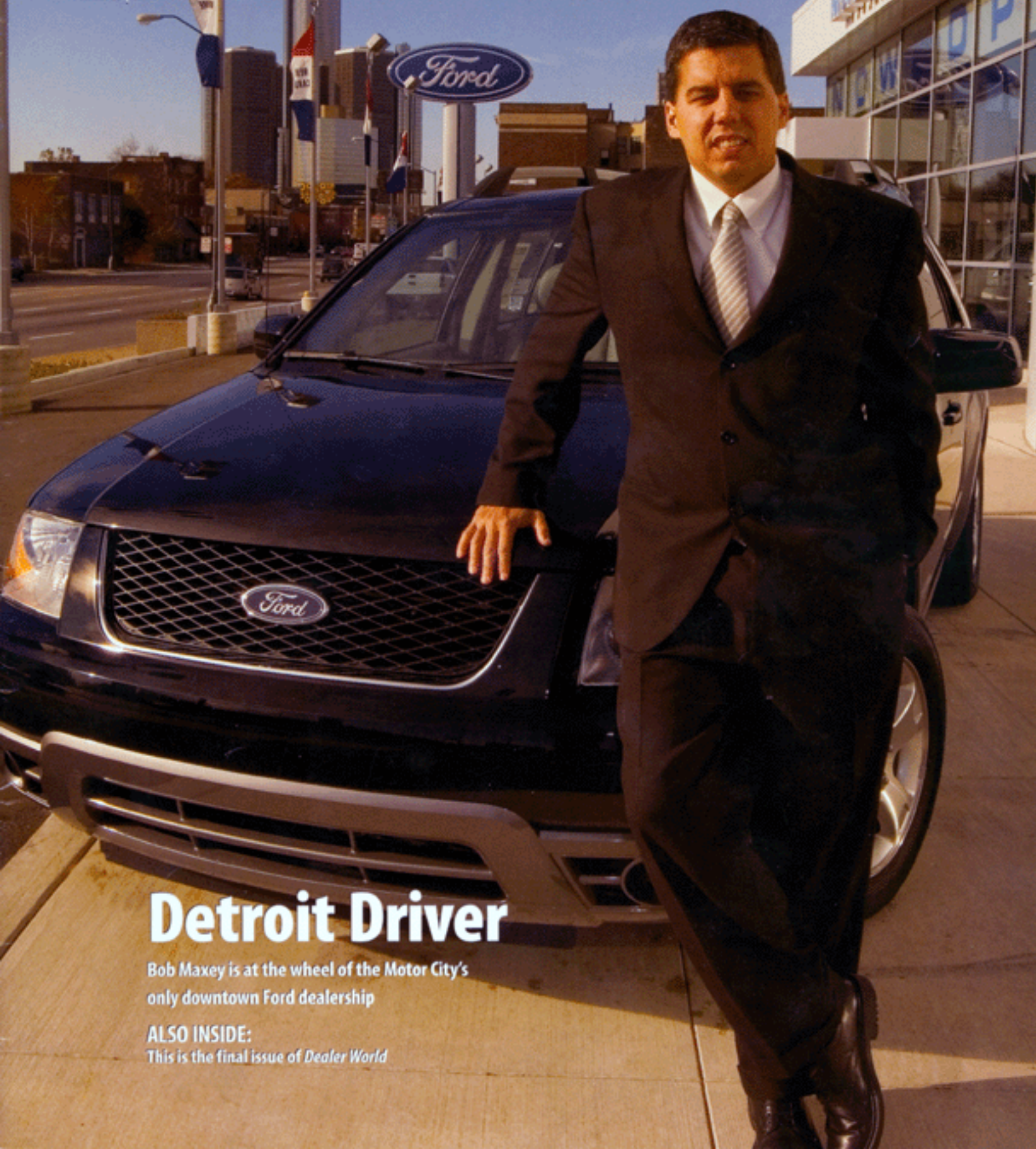


For Ford, Lincoln and Mercury Dealers and Dealership Managers

# DEALERWORLD

Volume 25 | Number 10 | December 2004



## Detroit Driver

Bob Maxey is at the wheel of the Motor City's only downtown Ford dealership

### ALSO INSIDE:

This is the final issue of *Dealer World*

## MOTOR CITY MOVERS

Two brothers bring a Ford franchise back to the heart of downtown Detroit | by Peter Franks

In the looming shadow of General Motors' headquarters, Ford Motor Company has reestablished a presence in downtown Detroit with the help of two enterprising brothers.

Bob and Mike Maxey already had a successful dealership, Bob Maxey Lincoln Mercury, on the Detroit-Grosse Pointe border when the opportunity arose to purchase a Ford franchise downtown. After working in temporary offices

the downtown dealership, while younger brother Mike mans the Lincoln Mercury store.

"The Maxeys not only represent the city's renaissance, but they're also ramping up their new dealership just as Ford is introducing a number of exciting new products," says Curt Skaluba, regional market representation manager for Ford Division's Detroit Region. "The timing couldn't be better."

### SETTING THEIR SIGHTS

From Bob Maxey's point of view, his dealership fills a void that has existed since Detroit's previous downtown Ford store, Riverside Ford, closed its doors a year and a half ago. Bob Maxey Ford sits on that dealership's old grounds. "At our grand opening in August, we had several [Riverside Ford] customers come up to us and exclaim how great it was that they would once again have a place to bring their vehicles for service," Maxey reports.

Of course, Maxey is eyeing more than just their service business; he's seeking new-vehicle sales in a variety of ways. Print advertising and billboards highlight the modern, inviting TrustMark facility. Direct-mail pieces sent to 40,000 residents and 2,200



Bob Maxey Ford is one of many businesses contributing to Detroit's recent renaissance.

for the better part of seven months, the brothers and their dealership team unveiled Bob Maxey Ford and its new 40,000-square-foot, \$5 million Ford TrustMark facility this past summer. Bob Maxey runs



Dealer Bob Maxey is looking to his bright, beautiful Ford TrustMark facility to draw in people from several client bases, including the more than 60,000 people who work downtown.

businesses also emphasize the convenient location—no more than 20 miles from any point in the city by way of nearby expressways—and underscore the comprehensive marketing strategy the dealership employs.

"We see several distinct client bases to target," Maxey says. "One is obviously our customers from the Lincoln Mercury store, who might have wanted to get into a Ford vehicle before but who also wanted to stay with us. Then there are those who live downtown, including the growing number of people moving into new lofts and condos. [In 2003, Detroit registered its highest number of building permits for new housing in more than two decades.] As the only Ford franchise downtown, we see that as a wonderful opportunity—particularly for selling established favorites such as the Ford Explorer and F-Series.

"The third client base is people who work here, which we estimate to be in the 60,000 to 70,000 range. We feel this diverse group is right in line for the number of unique vehicles we now offer, including the new Ford Mustang, Five Hundred and Freestyle."

To reach out to the downtown workforce, Bob Maxey Ford offers free shuttle service to and from customers' places of employment. The new dealership features an easily accessible service department—a hallmark of

## IN A NUTSHELL

**THE DEALERSHIP** | Bob Maxey Ford, Detroit

**THE SUCCESS** | Is the only Ford dealership in downtown Detroit

**THE STRATEGY** | Opened a new 40,000-square-foot Ford TrustMark facility; is actively marketing sales and service offerings to new residents of the city as well as the downtown workforce



With the dealership's free shuttle service, driver Curtis Leon Baker (left) keeps things rolling for customers such as Joe Dobrich.

the TrustMark design—as well as a separate body shop facility right alongside, which doubled as a showroom during the construction phase. Add to that a clearly marked after-hours drop-off spot and an on-site car wash to clean every vehicle serviced, and

customers living in the city now have a convenient and reliable place to bring their vehicles.

To keep those customers satisfied, the Maxeys tapped into a pool of experienced staff, hiring a number of Riverside Ford employees. The dealership also is maximizing synergies available through its sister Lincoln Mercury store just seven miles away: For example, the dealerships share the controller and warranty administrator positions.

## A GOOD NEIGHBOR

More than anything, though, both stores share an understanding of the importance of being part of a

*Bob Maxey Ford expects greater exposure in the coming months when Detroit hosts marquee events such as the 2005 Major League Baseball All-Star Game and the 2006 NFL Super Bowl.*

community. "Ever since our dad first opened the doors of the Lincoln Mercury dealership in 1972, we've built our reputation as a dependable, family-run operation that would be a presence in our customers' lives—whether it was sponsoring local sports teams or just greeting customers with a smile when they come

through the doors," says Mike Maxey.

Bob Maxey Ford has begun to build that kind of rapport with its neighbors. One instance came this summer, when the victory parade of the NBA Champion Detroit Pistons closed the dealership for the day. Bob Maxey parked a Ford F-150 out front with a basketball hoop mounted in the bed, giving youngsters following the parade route the opportunity to display their own hard-court moves. Maxey also fired up a grill in the back for an impromptu barbecue.

The dealership expects greater exposure in the coming months when Detroit hosts marquee events such as the 2005 Major League Baseball All-Star Game and the 2006 NFL Super Bowl. To take advantage of the increased visibility as Ford's lone downtown retail presence, Bob Maxey Ford acquired two acres of land across the street, where it will display 250 new and used vehicles.

"The city helped us with this acquisition, including getting several crucial permits," Bob Maxey says. "They've been an important partner during these early stages in our growth."

For their part, city officials have shown great enthusiasm for their new corporate citizen. Five council people joined representatives from the mayor's and governor's offices as well as Ford Division President Steve Lyons at the dealership's grand opening.

"Excitement has returned on East Jefferson with the arrival of Bob Maxey Ford," says Detroit councilwoman Alberta Tinsley-Talabi. "The commitment to excellence exhibited by the Maxey family—as shown in this beauti-

ful facility—resonates throughout the city and beckons all who travel on East Jefferson to visit."

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In addition to a whole new lineup of Ford vehicles, Leasing Manager Tracy King (right) can offer customers such as Anthony Richmond a convenient place to come for service.



**GLORIOUS GRAND OPENING** (from top): A luscious buffet entices Bob Maxey Ford's guests. ■ City council members welcome the Maxey brothers to Detroit. From left are Barbara-Rose Collins, Alberta Tinsley-Talabi, Mike Maxey, Maryann Mahaffey, Bob Maxey and JaAnn Watson. ■ Ford Division President Steve Lyons (right) presents Bob and Mike Maxey with a Golden Shovel Award.