

# Global safety campaign comes to UK dealerships



'Think Before You Drive', the global safety campaign launched by Bridgestone and the FiA Foundation, has arrived at tyre dealerships in the UK.

The campaign will be officially launched in the UK on the weekend of the British Grand

Prix in early July, with activity involving First Stop dealerships due to begin shortly afterwards.

Formula One weekends and safety awareness evenings will be re-branded with the 'Think Before You Drive' message, helping to bring extra value to events and generate greater local media interest for dealerships hosting them.

Additional activity will include free tyre checks for drivers, and thousands of safety leaflets will be distributed. Promotional items, such as t-shirts, caps, and wristbands will also be given to visitors, and a life-sized crash test dummy will be on-hand to greet people at each venue.

"The 'Think Before You Drive' initiative is designed to help reduce road deaths - globally estimated at 1.2 million a year - by promoting simple road safety messages to drivers and car users," said Andy Dingley, senior marketing analyst at Bridgestone UK.

"By re-branding the Formula One events and safety awareness evenings with the campaign messages we can reach a huge audience, as well as gain valuable local publicity for First Stop dealerships," he added.

For more information on 'Think Before You Drive', see our next issue of First Stop News.

## Run-flats are here to stay

With around 750,000 run-flat tyres already on UK roads, anyone who thinks the technology is not here to stay is in for a rude awakening.

Bridgestone's run-flat tyres are the standard or optional OE fitment on top car brands including BMW, Mercedes Benz and Porsche. And Andy Lane, marketing manager at Bridgestone UK, says the market is getting bigger every day.

"We're now working with mass market manufacturers on incorporating run-flat technology into their vehicles, and the increase in number will have a huge impact on the tyre trade.

"While it is important to remember that run-flat is a new, evolving technology, RFT tyres are undoubtedly the future of the tyre market," he said.

To reinforce its commitment to the technology, Bridgestone UK has increased the level of investment in its RFT training programme for 2005 and 2006.



THE POTENZA RE050 RFT

The Run-Flat Certificate Programme is accredited by the Institute of the Motor Industry, and offers training for tyre dealers and fitters across the UK. More than 600 UK tyre fitters and store managers have attained certification, and more than 400 machines have already been inspected and accredited by Bridgestone.

Andy Lane believes this infrastructure is vital if dealers are to cope with the number of vehicles already using run-flat tyres in the UK. "We will soon see RFT tyres being fitted to more and more vehicles as manufacturers seek to introduce the technology as a selling point. As a result, dealers will have to ensure that their fitters are fully trained to replace the tyres," he said.

For information about attending one of Bridgestone's RFT training schemes, please contact 0808 1800 800.



THE BMW Z4: ONE OF MANY TOP MARQUES TO FIT BRIDGESTONE RUN-FLAT TYRES AS ORIGINAL EQUIPMENT



# NEWS

## NEW GOLF IS A PLUS FOR VOLKSWAGEN

Volkswagen has launched its latest version of the ever-popular Golf - the Golf Plus - and like many previous models it will benefit from Formula One-derived Bridgestone Potenza tyres.

Since its launch in 1974 the Golf has been a phenomenal success, and the Golf Plus looks set to build on the vehicle's popularity by offering drivers even more practicality and flexibility.

Although the Golf Plus shares the same platform as the new Golf, an additional 95mm of height, flexible rear seating, and a dual-level boot floor on certain models mean significantly more interior space for passengers in the Plus.

With a variety of different engine options, ranging from the entry-level 1.4-litre version, to a 2.0-litre GT FSI engine delivering 150PS (148bhp), the Golf Plus has retained the performance characteristics that have helped define the Golf as a sporty family hatchback.

To complement the sporty performance of the car, the Golf Plus has been fitted with Bridgestone Potenza RE050 tyres, which provide it with huge amounts of grip in both wet and dry conditions.

Like other high-performance tyres in the Potenza family, the RE050 utilises a racing car nose-shaped tread pattern, not only giving the Golf Plus a sporty look, but also reducing the possibility of the car hydroplaning.

Andy Lane, marketing manager at Bridgestone UK, said: "We are thrilled that Volkswagen has chosen Bridgestone tyres for the new Golf Plus. It already looks like mirroring the popularity of the Golf, and the Potenza RE050 tyres will provide the same excellent grip and performance for this exciting new model."

THE VERSATILE NEW GOLF PLUS



# A good sign for the future

Modern new look coming to celebrate ten years of First Stop



First Stop is ten years old, and to mark the occasion it will soon be getting a modern new look.

The new logo will be gradually phased into the network, and will eventually appear on all First Stop workwear, signage, and branded promotional items.

"The new logo will reflect the modern outlook of the First Stop network," said Andy Dingley, senior marketing analyst at Bridgestone UK. "More and more high-quality dealerships are joining First Stop, and the logo reflects its status as one of the leading tyre partnership schemes in Europe."

"We are continuing to invest heavily in the First Stop programme, and will strive to develop the size and quality of the scheme throughout 2005 and beyond," added Andy.

Your business development manager will be on hand to help integrate the new logo into your business

# Sales force strengthened in Scotland

Bridgestone has appointed Scott Jones to the joint roles of business development manager and area sales manager for Scotland.

Scott has more than 18 years' experience in the tyre industry, beginning his career with Central Tyres before joining Kwik-Fit, where he worked in a variety of roles ranging from tyre fitter through to operations manager overseeing 13 depots across western Scotland.

"It's an exciting time to be joining Bridgestone," said Scott, 40. "The First Stop network is booming, and I'm looking forward to supporting the existing members in Scotland, as well as bringing more new dealerships into the scheme."

Andy Dingley, senior marketing analyst at Bridgestone UK, said: "Scott's knowledge, experience, and enthusiasm will be of great benefit to both the company and the members of First Stop."

Scott, from Irvine in Ayrshire, is married with three children.



Scott can be contacted on 07979 359138

# Bridgestone claims top award for its run-flat technology

Bridgestone has scooped a prestigious tyre industry award for its development of run-flat technology.

The company's newest generation run-flat tyre, the Potenza RE050 RFT, helped it win the Product Innovation category at the inaugural Tyre and Fast Fit (TAFF) awards handed out by the National Tyre Distributors Association (NTDA).

"It's a tremendous honour to win this award," said John McNaught, managing director of Bridgestone UK, "and it demonstrates how we are leading the way in the development of this breakthrough technology."

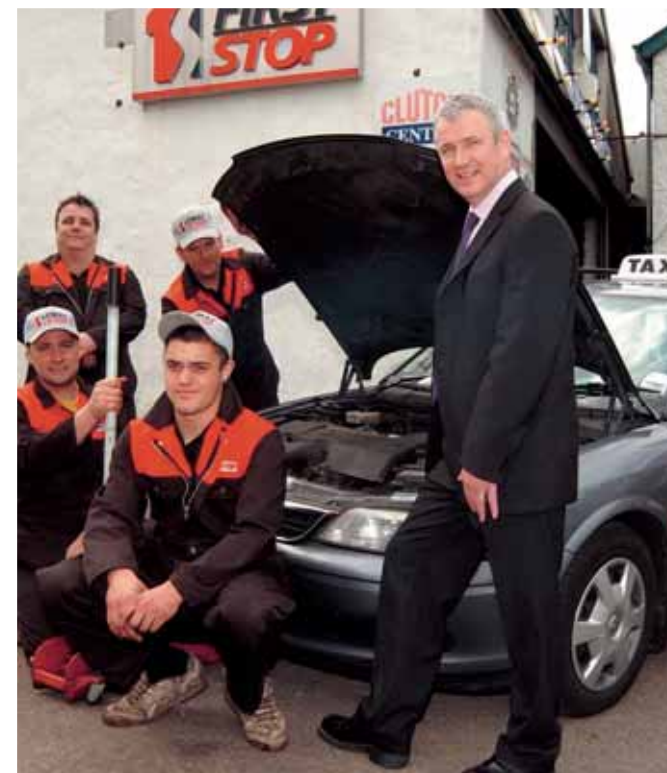
"We believe that run-flat tyres will soon become a standard fitment on most cars sold in the UK, and we are continuously working to further develop the technology, and, together with the leading car manufacturers, make the extensive benefits of run-flat tyres available to all motorists," added John.



JOHN MCNAUGHT (LEFT) RECEIVES THE PRODUCT INNOVATION AWARD FROM NTDA CHAIRMAN JOHN TARBOX

# Next stop: Hemel Hempstead

## Ed's Treads wins second major taxi contract



CHRIS HAWKINS (RIGHT) WITH THE ED'S TREADS TEAM

First Stop tyre dealership Ed's Treads is celebrating being awarded a lucrative three-year contract to carry out MOT tests on Hackney carriages and private hire cars in Hemel Hempstead - just 12 months after being awarded a similar contract at its Watford depot.

The tyre dealership and MOT specialist now has the exclusive licence to give private hire vehicles in the town their annual inspections.

"Being responsible for the testing of all the taxis in Hemel Hempstead is an excellent endorsement of the thoroughness and quality of our work," said Ed Callan, owner of Ed's Treads.

"Winning the Watford contract was a tremendous boost, and our reputation for high levels of professional integrity within our workforce has clearly spread to Hemel Hempstead," he added.

More than 500 private hire cars and Hackney carriages operate in the town, all of which are covered in a scheme designed by the council to provide quality control for public service vehicles.

Chris Hawkins, business development manager at Bridgestone UK, said: "It's wonderful to see the second Ed's Treads depot winning such a prestigious contract. Ed has assembled a highly-skilled and professional workforce at both his branches, and regularly invests in training for them."

# Global exposure for First Stop

The First Stop brand is currently getting excellent media exposure thanks to the sponsorship of two cars in the new GP2 motor racing series.

The Campos Racing team are competing in the championship with two cars displaying the network's new logo. Argentinean Juan Cruz Alvarez, 19, and 21-year-old Sergio Hernandez from Spain are the team's drivers who will be striving for glory.

The GP2 Series is designed to be the final step on the ladder before entering the FIA Formula One World Championship, providing ambitious racing drivers with a clear route to the pinnacle of single-seater racing.

Bridgestone already has strong links with the GP2 series, being the sole tyre supplier to the championship. And with all cars having identical Renault engines, it is proving to be a highly competitive series. Many of the drivers have stepped up from junior categories into the GP2 Series where they are learning the skills necessary to become a Formula One driver.



SERGIO HERNANDEZ'S FIRST STOP-SPONSORED GP2 CAR