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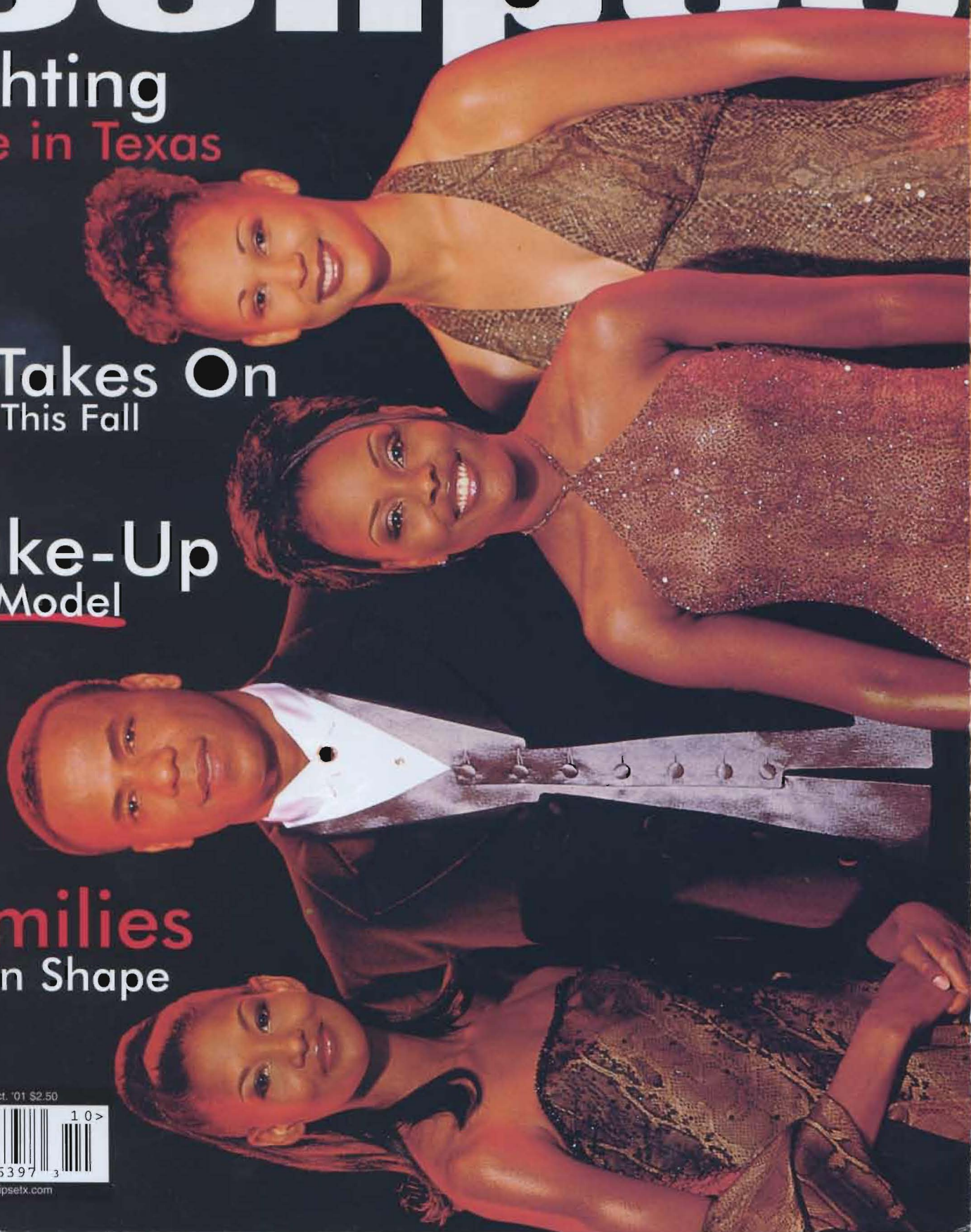
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From Left to Right: Max Mediz - Sales Manager, Benny Franklin - Fleet Director, John Ingram - GM / General Partner, John Eagle - Owner, Rod Turner - Financial Director, Jim Sanders - Sales Manager

## A Fresh New Squeeze On Lemmon Avenue

By Delmetria L. Millener

**I**t has been a year since the expansion along Lemmon Avenue began. In the midst of the construction mayhem, John Eagle Honda sat poised, ready for its makeover. "We've been in this same location since 1973," said John Ingram, partner of John Eagle Honda car dealership. "Several times, the idea came up for us to move to another location, but we decided to remain in this location," he said. "With the improvements along the entire avenue—town homes and condominiums being put up, and with all the other car dealerships in the area, we are surrounded by competition so we had to step up. This facelift has finally paid off. I think this is the nicest Honda showroom in Dallas," said Ingram.

Before the creation of the new state-of-the-art facility, the structure was moved back a few feet from Lemmon for more front-end space, so that more cars could be displayed. When that was complete, the three-phase, 18-month makeover began, first with the connection of the sales, service and parts departments.

Formerly, 22,500 sq. ft., the new 45,000 sq. ft. car dealership resembles all other Honda dealerships in the country. Customers are now, not only satisfied with their service, but also comfortable while they wait. Improvements include a larger coffee bar and waiting lounge, a children's play area, computer portals equipped with telephones, PC connections and shuttle service to take customers to

and from downtown while their cars are being serviced during business hours or provided loaner cars for more than one-day service.

In addition to showroom comfort, business offices were strategically placed behind walls, "to create a less intimidating atmosphere," said Ingram. "We lowered the position of the glass and frosted them so computer and telephone wires wouldn't show. That creates a friendlier atmosphere. We try to make it as pleasant as possible when our customers come into the showroom to purchase vehicles—give it that Barnes & Nobles feel. They can sit down, read a book, do schoolwork, office work or whatever they need to do," he said. For convenience, customers also can be preapproved over

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the Internet to save time when shopping for cars.

Since the completion of the new building in its original location, sales for John Eagle Honda have increased by 30% and they are ahead of competition by 3 points. "We had the opportunity to move to the freeway. But this is a family-owned business and we wanted to stay here. It gives our customers a sense of stability and belief in our company. People are moving back to downtown and we want to be here for them." The goal of the dealership is to reach 200 in sales by each month's end. "We'll make it," said Benny Franklin, Fleet and Leasing Director. "We're almost there," he added.

John Ingram also is concerned with the belief in the company that his employees have. "We have a very diverse staff here at John Eagle, and that's on purpose; that's intentional. We are involved in a lot of community activities, including sponsoring the "Real Men Cook Dallas" event where we received a proclamation from Mayor Ron Kirk. We have about 20% African Americans, 20% Hispanic, those from the Middle-Eastern culture—from all backgrounds and for all positions." Franklin, who is African American, agrees. "John is a very diverse employer. That was the most attractive thing for me when choosing to work for this company. John is a good guy, but he runs a tight ship around here. He makes sure our goals stay high and does whatever he can to help us meet those goals if we need it. He is very fair and appreciates and awards hard work accordingly, which is inclusive of John's commitment to diversity and hard work," he said.

Additionally, the top finance director for John Eagle Honda is an African American. "Rod Turner has won the "Eagle One" award three quarters in a row," Ingram said. "If I'm not mistaken, Rod is the only African American Finance Director in the entire state of Texas to hold his position. He earned it and he deserves it. We employ a very mixed group of cultures here and don't hire based on color, but on qualifications," said Ingram.

When you visit the showroom of the "new and improved" John Eagle Honda car dealership at 5311 Lemmon Avenue, you will immediately experience the positive effects of the expansion of John Eagle Honda car dealership, its customers, employees and the community. You can visit the John Eagle Honda Web site at [www.eaglehonda.com](http://www.eaglehonda.com). ■



Fleet Manager Benny Franklin shows off the new showroom