

# CURRENT

OFFICIAL  SPONSOR





Volume 12, No. 4

Fall 1996

## ON TRACK WITH PONTIAC!

**A**s the 1996 Winston Cup season came to a close, the Interstate Batteries/Joe Gibbs Racing team announced that it will field Pontiac Grand Prixes for the 1997 NASCAR season!

Team Owner Joe Gibbs, whose NHRA drag racing teams have been with Pontiac for two years, said the decision to switch to the Grand Prix was a long process made easier by his commitment to General Motors. Now the Gibbs Winston Cup and NHRA teams have a complete partnership with Pontiac, which makes for “one exciting package,” he said.

“We built the car and tested it,” Joe said. “Bobby liked it, Jimmy liked it, and we decided together to be part of Pontiac’s excitement. We’d like to help take things to the forefront, and help make Pontiac an even bigger winner in NASCAR Winston Cup racing!”

According to Driver Bobby Labonte, who drove Pontiacs earlier in his career, the decision to make this change to Grand Prix solidified after extensive testing at Pocono Raceway, North Wilkesboro Speedway and in two wind tunnel tests in Michigan. “I see a lot of potential with the new Grand Prix,” Bobby said. “On our first time out with the car, its performance was comparable to one of our best qualifiers. A little work and we’re going to adjust that thing right to victory lane!” ■



Team Owner Joe Gibbs announced the team’s switch to Pontiac Grand Prix for ’97 and here he poses with Pontiac Brand Manager William Heugh, Pontiac Motorsports Manager Gary Claudio, Driver Bobby Labonte and Pontiac Brand Manager James Murray!

## Labonte Powers Up New TV Ad

**B**obby Labonte as a stand-up (or more accurately, a sit-down) comedian? Just tune in to Interstate Batteries’ new Fall/Winter TV commercials and you’ll see Bobby deliver his lines tongue-in-cheek from the driver’s seat of the new Joe Gibbs Racing Pontiac Grand Prix. It may be one of the funniest NASCAR-themed TV commercials for any sponsor yet, thanks to Bobby’s humorous script delivery.

“I don’t think a lot of race fans think of me as a funny guy,” Bobby said between scenes being filmed at Concord Motor Speedway near Charlotte, N.C. “So maybe after people see this new Interstate commercial, they’ll see my true personality.”

The humor in the new commercial comes from Bobby’s use of an Interstate battery in his race car which “has enough power to run my car as well as other race necessities...” Bobby points out several accessories his powerful Interstate battery runs in his new Pontiac that other NASCAR race car



The new TV ad also stars an Interstate battery and our new tag line, “Power Fast... Built to Last!”

drivers may be doing without – such as a cold air-blowing window air conditioner... “Brrr,” Bobby says as he goes low to pass another car. He goes on to show viewers other unusual race accessories being run by his obviously very powerful Interstate battery such as his fully-stocked mini refrigerator, complete with fresh fruit, a variety of bottled juices and a Labonte family favorite, ice cold chocolate milk. As the familiar (but slightly redesigned) green, black and red colors of the #18 roar around the track, Bobby completes his description of the many

Please see **Powerful TV Ad** on page 3

**INTERSTATE BATTERY  
SYSTEM OF AMERICA, INC.  
12770 Merit Dr Ste 400  
Dallas Texas 75251-1292**

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Dallas, Texas

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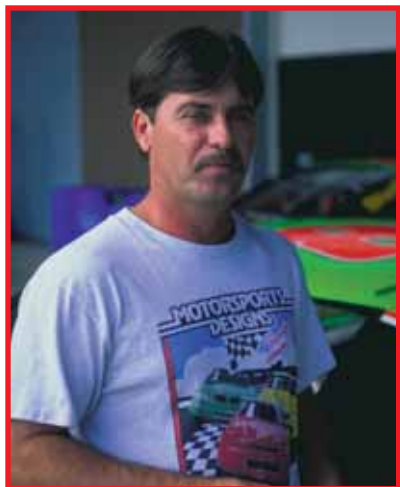


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## Gary Bumgarner Paint & Body Expert

**W**ith more than 20 years' experience in automotive paint and body work, many consider Gary "Bucky" Bumgarner an expert in his field. But while he has a heavy responsibility on the Winston Cup race team, he's not likely to tell you himself. There's no doubt Gary Bumgarner's humble about his work.

Since he's working in the Joe Gibbs Racing shop on raceday, Gary's not as visible as other team members. With co-worker Randy Humphries, he primes and paints the car, applies decals and makes sure all of NASCAR's standard templates fit. His job, in a nutshell, is to prepare the car for race day so it will dazzle on the track. Here Gary gives us some insight into his work at the shop.

### **After a race, what do you do to clean up the car again?**

Well, when the car gets back to the shop Monday morning, the guys take the motor out and check the set-up; then Randy and I pull it outside. It's pretty beat up most of the time, so we steam clean it, fix the body damage and replace all the decals. When we're finished, we put it back on the floor so the other guys can get it ready for its next race.

### **What's the process you and Randy go through to paint the car?**

Basically, we Bondo the whole car – all the seams and welds. (Bondo is a material used to seal dents and cracks.) We fit all the templates – there are quite a few of them, probably about 15 or so templates that have to be fit within 1/16th of an inch. Then we prime the car, sand it and put the black paint on.

Then we bake the car in our oven for about an hour. After it dries, we stripe the car off and shoot a green paint for a base coat, then the neon color on top of that, and finally we

clear coat the whole car two or three times. As far as the neon color itself, it takes about four coats to get the effect we need.

### **You mentioned that you bake the car. How does that process work?**

We have what's called a spray-bake booth, which is basically a spray booth with a baking process. With it, you can turn the temperature up to 150 degrees, and in 45 minutes the car you just painted will be done

Coca-Cola 600. There's so much to do at the shop, really, as far as getting the cars ready for other races. So I work in the shop on weekends while the other guys are working at the races.

### **What'd you do before joining Joe Gibbs Racing?**

Well, I started in 1987 with Buddy Baker's team. From there I went to work with the Crisco car and the Red Baron Frozen Pizza car, and then in 1989 I worked with Rod

# Putting the Green in the #18

and you can pull it out and decal it. Basically I could paint your car and in 45 minutes you could drive it home. That's pretty amazing!

### **How do NASCAR rules affect your job, as far as rule specifications for decals and contingency stickers?**

We've got our templates from NASCAR, and we have to fit them. As far as decals on the fenders, they can't come further back than the A-posts (windshield posts), and you can't put them on just anywhere you want to. You've got to put them on in sequence the way they're supposed to be.

Now the door numbers, NASCAR doesn't regulate those. But you want

Osterland when he got back with the Heinz 57 car. A year later I worked for Davey Allison, and for the first part of '91 I was with the Mello Yello team.

Then I came to Joe Gibbs Racing, and I've been here ever since. And that's good – I'm glad to be here. You know when you've found the right boat!

### **With the change to Pontiac and with the new graphic design for next year, how much extra time goes into preparing the new car?**

Well, to paint and decal a car from start to finish, it takes Randy and me right at a week. Working on the new Pontiacs takes about the same

### **What do you think are some of the best-looking cars on the track?**

Well, I like Earnhardt's car because it's simple. And ... well, I like ours. It takes some getting used to, I think, but I like it. To tell you the truth I really haven't paid that much attention to other cars. I see them racing but I look at ours all day long.

What you want in a race car is something that stands out from the rest. Some of the cars are just a blur that you don't notice. And ours –

when it comes around the track, you know it's there!

### **Since you aren't at the races, is someone there to fix any last-minute dings or other body problems?**

Well, I'd say Jimmy (Makar) does all that. He knows a lot about body work. When he got started in this business, that's what he did. So if anything needs to be fixed, he can fix it.

### **What kind of last-minute body changes has the team made to the car before a race?**

At Watkins Glen one time we crashed in practice, and we fixed it – replaced the decals, etc. Most of the time if it's something in the paint and it's a last-minute deal, we'll use duct tape or whatever we've got to put the color back on. Then we put new decals on and then we race. It's just one of those spur-of-the-moment deals where you've got to go!

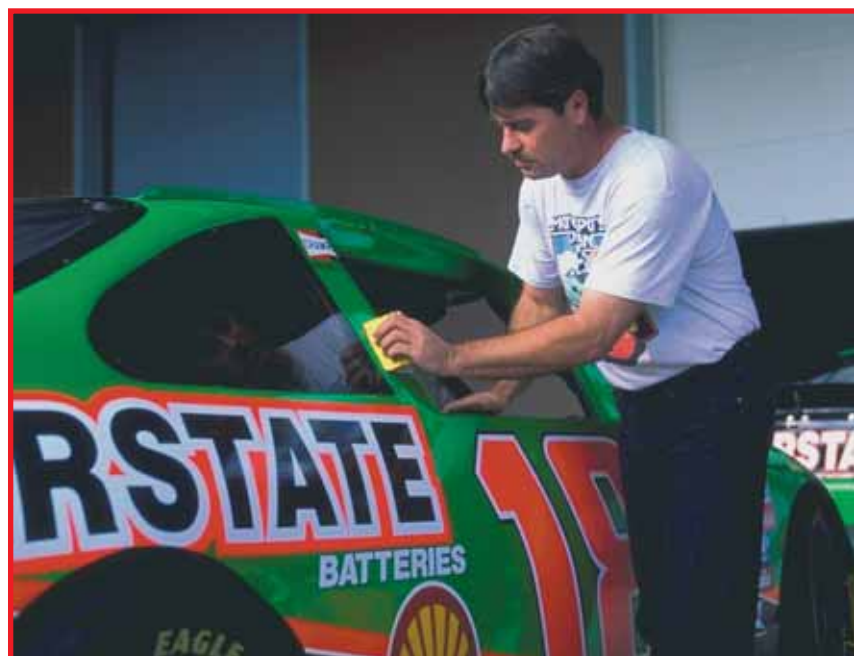
### **How'd you get interested in paint and body work?**

When I was about 18, I started learning body work 'cause all my brothers were in it. I worked for one of my brothers for a while painting big trucks. I remember in 1981 or 1982 we painted a Harry Ranier truck; that's about the first thing I did in racing.

Speaking of my family, my older brother works with Dale Jarrett on Robert Yates' team, and my nephew changes right rear tires for Terry Labonte. So there's a bunch of us Bumgarners in racing.

### **Where'd your nickname "Bucky" come from?**

Oh, everybody calls me Bucky, and probably other names at times! That comes from Buckwheat; my grandfather gave me that name when I was probably three or four years old, as far back as I can remember. My family called me that when I was little, and it just stuck! ■



Doing his part to make the car look its best, Gary Bumgarner applies a decal to the Grand Prix. His job strongly affects how battery buyers see the #18 on race day.

to put them in the center of the doors, so that's why we do that. The biggest thing NASCAR officials want to regulate is where the contingency stickers go – on the front fender and right behind the front tire.

### **When was the last time you went to a race?**

My last race was in '95 at the Charlotte race, when we won the

amount of time as the others, really. The main thing is trying to get all the details like Interstate likes it – you know, as far as the design itself and, of course, the same unique color of green.

### **How do you like the new design, by the way?**

I like it! It's got more green than before, and I think it looks real racey – even more than before.





# 1996 NASCAR/NHRA Season Wrap-up



**Bobby Labonte**

**B**obby Labonte's second year with the Interstate® Batteries/Joe Gibbs Racing team was successful, though not as strong statistically as his first. But the team believes starting their in-house engine program this year will put them ahead in the long run. Bobby recorded three poles, four top-five finishes and 13 top-10 finishes. Now the team is ready to build on their success for an even brighter future in 1997!

## N H R A



**Jim Yates**

### PRO STOCK

**I**n the 1996 season, Jim Yates clinched the Pro Stock Series Championship with impressive runs resulting in eight victories! Starting the successful year with a win in Pomona, Calif., he continued to hold the top spot in points throughout the year. And at the Pioneer Electronics Keystone Nationals in September, he set the national elapsed time record of 6.947 seconds, becoming the quickest Pro Stock driver in NHRA history!



**Cruz Pedregon**

### FUNNY CAR

**F**unny Car Driver Cruz Pedregon was busy setting records this year! At the first event of the season, the Chief Auto Parts Winternationals, he recorded the quickest and fastest run in Funny Car history at 4.935 seconds and 307.06 mph. Five months later at the Western Auto Nationals, he set the national speed record of 311.20 mph. Cruz finished the season with a third-place finish and one victory, his 17th career win!



**Cory McClenathan**

### TOP FUEL

**T**his year sure was exciting for "Cory Mac," who recorded three wins and ended the season with a solid third-place standing. A highlight of the season came at the Champion Auto Stores Nationals in August, when he posted the highest speed of his career at 310.13 mph! All through the year, Cory and the team consistently improved in Top Fuel points from seventh to third for an impressive finish in '96!

**Congratulations to all the Interstate Batteries teams for a terrific season!**

#### Powerful TV Ad continued from page 1



*Bobby played the role convincingly, adding to the humor and effect the ad can have on your sales.*

conveniences and race accessories his powerful Interstate battery runs by setting up the even funnier punchline to the commercial. "Heck," Bobby says saving the steering wheel through turn four, "I even had a big screen TV put in for my friends." The camera moves to reveal that Bobby has two 'friends' strapped into their own back seat. It's Bobby's boss Joe Gibbs enjoying a cup of espresso with Norm Miller, Interstate's chairman! While they watch the race on TV, Joe and Norm toast the viewers with their tiny #18 cups.

The commercial continues with the Interstate Batteries Grand Prix flying past the flag stand. The scene quickly changes to show an Interstate battery on a tool box in the pits. Underneath the signature green-

top battery, words appear: "Power Fast... Built to Last!" Then the viewers see Bobby, Joe and Norm inside the race car one last time as Norm asks, "Hey Bobby, is my burrito done yet?" Before he can answer, an unmistakable sound is heard: the "ding" of a microwave signaling the food is ready! The commercial ends as Bobby passes a plate of steaming burritos back to his passengers.

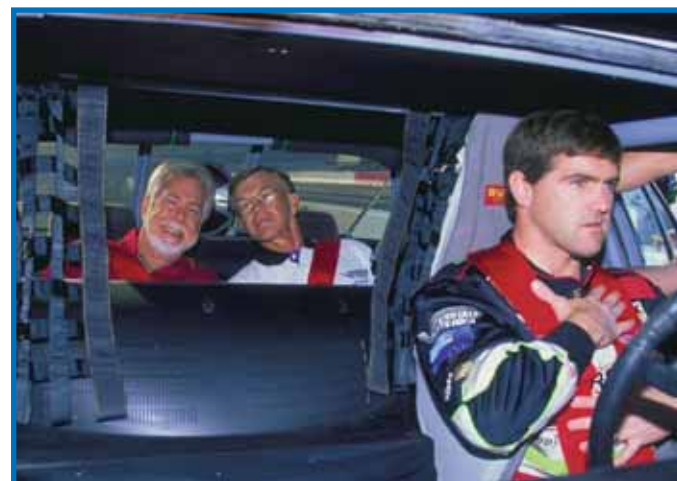
"I think race fans and football fans will all get a good laugh out of this new commercial," Norm Miller said while the camera was being set up

for another shot. "And while they're laughin' and talkin' about the commercial, they're actually becoming more aware of the Interstate Batteries brand name," said Norm. "And that's the whole reason we invest so much in commercials, and our racing sponsorships... to help each of our over 200,000 Interstate Dealers sell more batteries!"

The new Interstate TV spots will be seen all over the US and Canada on the major networks and cable stations during the coming months. The ads will run on a variety of sports programs, but the emphasis will be to reach viewers during NFL games, including some very popular Monday Night Football games on December

16 and 23, a Wildcard game on December 29 and a playoff game on January 4.

"We're excited about our new ads," said Charles Suscavage, Interstate's Vice President of Advertising and Public Relations. "Bobby, Joe and our own Norm Miller are really funny together and help make the commercials stand out. Plus, the NASCAR theme gave us a chance to show off our new Pontiac Grand Prix," he added. "We think these ads are really going to increase brand awareness, leading



*It was a technical feat to build and maneuver a race car with a back seat so Norm, Joe and Bobby could race in style and comfort!*



NBC



## Interstate Batteries Winter TV Blitz Highlights

### NOVEMBER 24

Dallas vs. NY Giants  
Atlanta vs. Cincinnati  
NC Panthers vs. Houston  
Detroit vs. Chicago  
New Orleans vs. Tampa Bay  
San Francisco vs. Washington

### DECEMBER 15

Oakland vs. Denver  
New England vs. Dallas  
Green Bay vs. Detroit  
New Orleans vs. Giants  
St. Louis vs. Atlanta  
San Francisco vs. Pittsburgh  
Tampa Bay vs. Minnesota  
Washington vs. Arizona

### AND THESE FAVORITES...

DECEMBER 16 - Buffalo vs. Miami  
DECEMBER 23 - Detroit vs. San Francisco  
DECEMBER 29 - Wildcard Game  
JANUARY 4 - Playoff Game



# TECHTALK

WITH INTERSTATE® BATTERIES PROCLINIC® INSTRUCTOR GALE KIMBROUGH

## The New INTERSTATE Sealed AGM Technology

GALE KIMBROUGH



### Application Considerations

The SBD-78DT was placed in a "worst case scenario" testing regiment, in taxi cab fleets in the desert southwest. How did they operate? Compared to its closest AGM product competitor, the SBD-78DT provided double the life... *Wow!*

You may be thinking, "That sounds great! That means I could use this battery in every automotive-type application." Well it may work in many applications, but it's important to remember that the AGM doesn't enjoy repetitively being deeply discharged (deep cycled).

Also, it won't permit water additions if used in electrical systems with abusive charging.

Another consideration is its premium price; the SBD-78DT is more expensive to build and its added value is reflected in a higher consumer price.

### Important charging note

The AGM battery has less tolerance to fast chargers with 15.2-16.0 volt capabilities. (If this battery is charged at too high a voltage for too long, it may be damaged.) By bench charging at less than 10 amps, life-damaging high temperatures can be avoided.

### So where do we use this battery?

Here are some situations that can benefit from an SBD-78DT:

- Show cars, antique cars or other vehicles that are used minimally. (The vehicle sits in the garage and is driven once a week or less and only needs an oil change once a year.) The SBD-78DT helps because of its very low self-discharge rate.
- Off-road vehicles where battery vibration is a key consideration.
- Vehicles that have unique starting/charging demands that may increase gassing and corrosion.
- Vehicles that have the battery located in a difficult place for testing/charging/replacement. (Corvette owners and shops, pay attention!) It also makes sense for vehicles like Volkswagen Vanagons, Audi or BMWs where the battery location makes minimal gassing essential.

I'm sure you can think of many more specialty situations where this battery could be extremely useful. The SBD-78DT even qualifies as a starting battery with a CCA rating of 725. ...But sorry, it's a little large for the Mazda Miata.

### Summary:

Will this battery operate effectively in every automotive application?

Almost everyone in our industry has applications where the AGM technology makes more sense than a flooded battery. Anytime gassing is restricted to minimize corrosion (i.e. the starting battery is located under the seat or inside the truck), improvement in vibration resistance is needed or battery location makes it difficult to test or maintain, think of the SBD-78DT. Remember, charge and use it correctly and the SBD-78DT can offer some tremendous advantages! ■

What about this new AGM battery designated as a SBD-78DT? Is it a Gel Battery? Liquid Electrolyte? ... A different technology altogether?

Most people will say, "Oh yeah, you're talking about a gel battery," but although some similarities exist, it's not the same type chemistry. (In fact, this battery will get its feelings hurt if you call it anything but an AGM.) You see, recent design innovations have helped overcome historical problems with sealed product in high operating temperature applications, so it's time to change the way you think about uses for AGM product.

(Note: In case you're wondering, the letters SBD stand for Sealed Battery Division. The number 78 is the BCI group size and last but not least, the DT is for Dual Terminal, indicating that it's top- and side- post applicable. And don't worry... we're working on a more consumer-friendly name for this innovative battery now!)

### Specific Technical Information

This battery is an AGM (Absorbent Glass Mat) technology. That means the separator material located between each positive and negative plate is a special, highly absorbent (sponge-like) glass mat which contains the acid. All of the liquid electrolyte is absorbed and suspended in the separator material; the battery is non-spillable and can be charged/discharged in various positions. This battery is considered to be a recombinant gas-type chemistry which means the oxygen recombines with the hydrogen through the separator material (see Figure A) as opposed to the gassing of a liquid electrolyte battery (see Figure B). It also has a one-way valve built into the unit to allow any inside pressure build-up above 2-3 psi to be released. Consequently, this battery is sometimes referred to as a valve-regulated product (see Figure C).

What are some of the advantages?

1. High CCA capability
2. No terminal corrosion
3. Minimal gassing
4. No maintenance
5. Very low self-discharge
6. Good vibration resistance

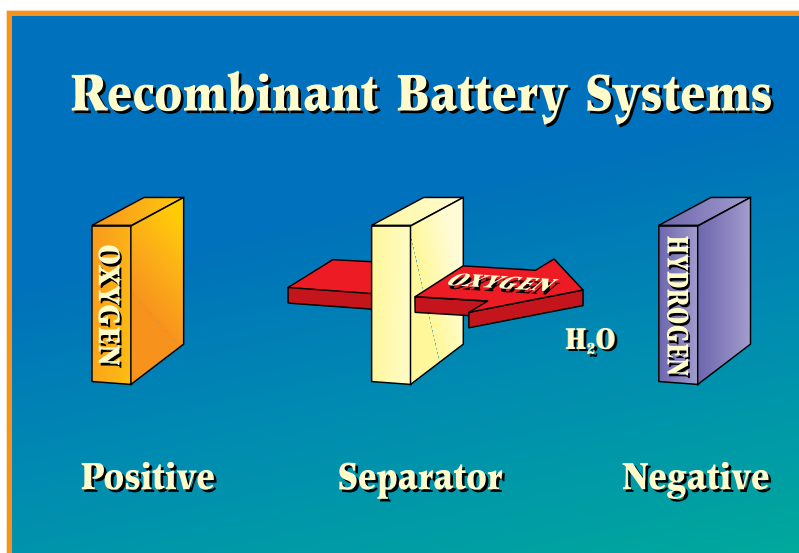


Figure A: Gas Flow for Recombination.

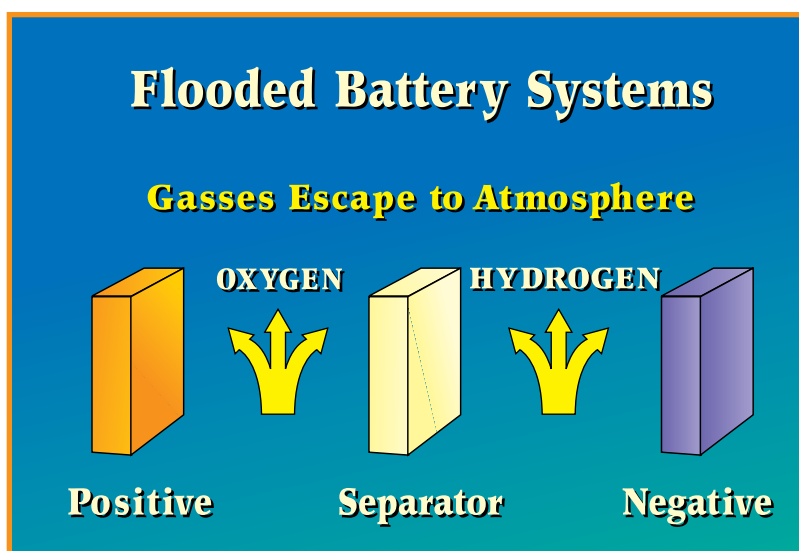


Figure B: Liquid Electrolyte Gassing.



Figure C: One-Way Valve Allows Pressure Release. Characteristic of a Recombinant Battery System.



# Dear Interstate...

Dear Interstate,

I think I have the world's greatest Interstate battery!

Recently some friends and I were riding our Harleys on a 70-mile trip on Texas backroads. When we were about 30 miles out, we took a short break at an intersection, and when we were ready to go, the starter stuck – it just wouldn't disengage! We tried to get to the battery, which was under the seat, but I didn't have the wrench to remove the seat. The starter



Photo by Albert Porter

continued to grind and grind.

After 12 minutes or so, the battery ran down, enabling us to get the seat off, disconnect the battery and finally unlock the starter. To get going again, I pushed the bike a little and it started! We rode the remaining 40 miles to our turnaround point and hurried to leave before dark, so I wouldn't have to use headlights. Amazingly, I made it all the way back on that Interstate battery!

When I got home I immediately tried to reverse any damage done to the battery out on the road. I put one of your mini-chargers on it, and it was charged within an hour.

Needless to say, you have a fine product that I know can be trusted in a tough situation. I truly believe your batteries are the best!

Sincerely,

Jerry Bragg  
Dallas, Texas

Dear Interstate,

I have an outstanding Interstate battery! Almost 10 years ago, I inherited an old car – a 1971 Chevy Nova "Cream Puff." The battery that was in it was dead, so I bought an Interstate battery from my brother, who had a Texaco station in East Falls Church, Va. (Actually, two of my brothers and I have all sold Interstate at our service stations!)

I bought your 42-month model, one you don't make anymore. Nine years and four months later, it still keeps my car running great!

The Interstate battery has never failed to start the car. Even during the big blizzard we had this year, the battery did not let me down.

Thanks for making such a great product!

Sincerely,

Warren Tuthill  
Fairfax, Va.

**If you have an interesting  
Interstate battery story or any comments,  
we'd like to hear from you.**

**Please write to:**

**CURRENT  
Interstate® Batteries  
12770 Merit Drive, Suite 400  
Dallas, Texas 75251**

## We'll Feature Your Business on the World Wide Web!

Even if you've never logged on to the "information superhighway," you probably have an idea of the excellent exposure you could receive via the Internet. Here's your chance to find out... if you have an Interstate Batteries metal sign or banner displayed on the exterior of your location, we want to feature it on our home page! Millions of users are looking in on sites like Interstate Batteries every day, so we're very excited to bring you this great opportunity to gain exposure for your business. It's also a great way for us to show consumers where they can buy Interstate Batteries! For best results, please take your color photograph on a sunny day, then just send it, along with your business address, to: Jane Koenecke, 12770 Merit Dr., Ste. 400, Dallas, TX 75251. We'll let you know when to look for your location on-line!

Interstate's home page allows Internet users access to product information, company history, Bobby Labonte/Joe Gibbs Racing information—with plenty of exciting and colorful photos, an on-line *CURRENT* and consumer letters. There's also a survey that helps us gather information about the folks who are looking in on Interstate's site and suggestions for

what users would like to see. Best of all, having a site on the World Wide Web allows us to get to know Dealers and consumers on a more personal basis. We continually receive e-mail that gives us insight into our products and services so that we can continue improving what we do for you and your customers. Through this fast-growing

medium, Interstate can provide the latest product, technical, racing and other information in response to consumer requests. As a result of e-mail we've already received, plans are underway to add even more product and technical material, an on-line application guide and Dealer locator information soon. We'll be able to send even more consumers right to your door!



*Interstate Batteries will feature your location on our home page... Just send us a photo!*

If you are "on-line," check us out! You can find us at: [www.interstatebatteries.com](http://www.interstatebatteries.com)—and by the way, we welcome you to complete a survey and give us your comments, too! ■



# A "Cooler" Way to a New Race Season!

## The #18 Bobby Labonte Sports Caddy



Keep your beverages and snacks cool while you show your support for Bobby Labonte and the #18 Pontiac Grand Prix. This stylish, insulated sports caddy (14" tall, 11 3/4" wide and 8" deep) has a removeable divider, a freezer pack, an adjustable shoulder strap and velcro-closure pockets at each end. So if you want to take some cold ones along, and look good while you're on your way, order a #18 racing sports caddy today!

### To Order:

Call

**1-888-832-6764**

OR

Fill out the form below and mail along with payment to:

**Sports Caddy**  
1867 S. I-85 Service Road  
Charlotte, NC 28208

Credit card orders may also be faxed to:

**(704) 393-5937**

**Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.**

**Please print**

Ship to: Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

ITEM	QTY	PRICE EACH	SUBTOTAL (Qty. x \$22.50)
#18 Sports Caddy		\$22.50	

<input type="checkbox"/> Check or money order made payable to Sports Caddy	Shipping	\$9.95 each
<input type="checkbox"/> VISA/MasterCard	Tax (6% NC only)	
	TOTAL	

Cardholder's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Account # \_\_\_\_\_



### Training for Today's Professional Technicians and Mechanics

Look for upcoming INTERSTATE BATTERIES Automotive ProClinics in your area!

For more information about this one-day Automotive ProClinic, please call your local INTERSTATE BATTERIES Distributor. There will be no registration at the door.

Clinic Date	Clinic Location
Dec. 9, 1996	Nashville, Tennessee

## Automotive Electric Sells Interstate Batteries!

Since opening the doors in 1968, Jim Tebbe and his crew have specialized in all types of automotive and truck electrical repair, including wiring problems, starter and alternator work (which they remanufacture themselves) at Automotive Electric in Findlay, Ohio. They also provide customers with Interstate batteries (exclusively) and currently sell more than 1,300 units each year, year after year!

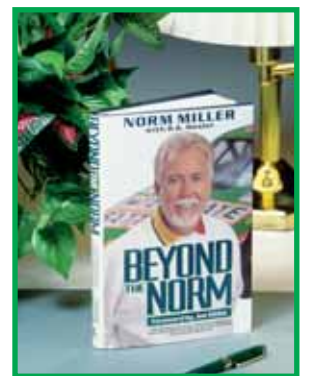


Meet Jim Watercutter, Interstate's Route Manager, Steve Strack, Joe Tebbe, Jim Tebbe and John Schroeder of Automotive Electric, and Doug Kieffer, Interstate Distributor of Northwest Ohio!

It's a first-class operation and Jim and his brother Joe, who co-own this business today, are known for their honesty and integrity throughout Northwest Ohio. That makes local Distributor Doug Kieffer extremely pleased he's serviced Automotive

## National Media Looks "Beyond the Norm"

In response to the recent release of his book "Beyond the Norm," Chairman of Interstate Batteries Norm Miller has been a guest on many national television and radio shows including, CNN-FN's "Who's in Charge," CNBC's "Power Lunch," "The 700 Club" and Christian Radio Network. His book brings the reader insight into what Norm has learned in three exciting and successful decades at Interstate Batteries, which operates with some pretty innovative and inspirational business methods. "Beyond the Norm" is now available at Sam's, Walmart and many Christian bookstores. ■



Norm Miller shares his formula for success and the journey he took to find it in "Beyond the Norm."

*The entire Interstate family wishes you a very cold winter (for your battery prosperity) filled with warm holiday memories!*

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Look for us on the Internet at [www.interstatebatteries.com](http://www.interstatebatteries.com)

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:6-7

For information about how you can find salvation through Christ Jesus, please contact Jim Coté at INTERSTATE® BATTERIES, 12770 Merit Dr., Ste. 400, Dallas, TX 75251-1292 or call (972) 991-1444.