From Weiser Roots to... National Recognition

by Nancy Grindstaff

A career that began in a Boise dealership detail shop more than four decades ago has earned Fruitland auto dealer Steve Dominguez recognition on one of the automotive industry's biggest stages.

Dominguez, president and dealer principal of Hometown Chevrolet GMC of Fruitland, has been selected as Idaho's nominee for the 2027 TIME Dealer of the Year award, one of the nation's most prestigious honors for automobile dealers. He is one of just 48 nominees nationwide who will be recognized during the 110th annual National Automobile Dealers Association Show in Orlando, Florida, on Feb. 19, 2027.

The award recognizes not only business success but also long-term commitment to community service, an area in which Dominguez has built a longstanding reputation throughout the Western Treasure Valley.

For many area residents, Dominguez is a familiar name. In 1990, he partnered in the purchase of Ryder Ford and Del's Auto Chrysler in Weiser. Seven years later, he became sole owner and began building what would become Steve's Hometown Dealerships.

For roughly three decades, Steve's Hometown Motors operated in Weiser before the dealership was sold in late 2023. Along the way, Dominguez expanded his automotive footprint, purchasing Sunset Toyota in Ontario in 2001 and renaming it Steve's Hometown Toyota. In 2016, he acquired Hanigan Chevrolet GMC Buick in Payette, a dealership that had served the area for more than 70 years.

He later relocated that operation to an 11-acre campus in Fruitland, opening a state-of-the-art dealership and collision center in 2019. Today, Hometown Chevrolet GMC employs 49 people and has earned General Motors' Mark of Excellence Award for both Chevrolet and GMC during each of the past five years.

Despite the business accomplishments, Dominguez said community involvement has always been at the heart of the company's mission.

"This nomination is an incredible honor because it reflects the work of our employees, the loyalty of our customers and the support of the communities we serve," Dominguez said in a news release.

That commitment has been evident for decades. What began as a fundraising golf tournament to help a local hospital purchase an incubator in 1990 has evolved into the Hometown Community Benefit, a two-day auction, dinner and golf tournament that now raises more than $75,000 annually. Over its 36-year history, the event has generated nearly $1 million for local causes, including Weiser's annual Ho Ho Express.

Dominguez has also spent more than 25 years helping lead Help Them to Hope, a regional holiday assistance program that serves hundreds of families with food boxes, toys, bicycles and backpacks each year.

In addition, Hometown dealerships support local schools, food pantries, veterans organizations, youth programs, Special Olympics Idaho and numerous community service groups throughout Idaho and eastern Oregon.



Among 48 nominees nationwide who will be recognized during the 110th annual National Automobile Dealers Association Show in February, 2027, president and dealer principal of Hometown Chevrolet GMC of Fruitland, Steve and Marisa Dominguez are pictured in the showroom late last week. Dominguez' support for local causes at this end of the Treasure Valley has grown alongside his success in the automobile industry for more than three decades.

Reflecting on the nomination, Dominguez credited the people who helped build the business over the years.

"The years have gone by quickly, and the journey has not always been easy," he said. "But we are stronger than ever and deeply appreciative of everything we have been able to accomplish together."

Now, after growing from a small-town dealership owner in Weiser to one of only 48 nominees nationwide, Dominguez is receiving recognition that mirrors the philosophy that has guided his career for more than 40 years: success is measured not only by vehicles sold, but by the communities served.