

# Southland Motor Car Dealers Association Relocates To Cerritos

## In Long Beach For Nearly 80 Years

■ By **TIFFANY RIDER**

Staff Writer

The Southland Motor Car Dealers Association (SMCDA), headquartered in Long Beach since 1932, is relocating to the Cerritos College campus as of April 1.

The new office is part of the 10,000-square-foot Automotive Partners Building at the Southland Cerritos Center for Transportation Technologies, 11111 New Falcon Way. A dedication ceremony is scheduled May 21.

SMCDA Executive Director Todd Leutheuser says the move from the Bixby Knolls area will help bring Southern California auto dealerships together.

“Cerritos is centrally located between Orange County and Los Angeles County,” he says. “It will make it a comprehensive hub for the industry.”

Leutheuser says the facility will provide a public/private space where SMCDA can offer management, dealer and employee training. In January 2007, SMCDA pledged \$500,000 in campaign funds to support the Automotive Partners Building on campus.

The association’s new home will also house a media marketing room for dealer ad associations.

“The Toyota dealers of Southern California and the Ford and the Volkswagen dealers will be coming here to a centralized location and actually have a full media teleconference room,” he says.

Another tenant will be Northwood University, which, Leutheuser says, is the only university in North America that offers a B.A. in automotive retail management.

According to The Southland/Cerritos Center for Transportation Technologies Web site, [www.scctt.org](http://www.scctt.org), the unique partnership between Cerritos College and Northwood

University – a public institution and a private institution – will be a model for other industries and colleges.

Northwood University is based in Michigan. Leutheuser says having the program in Cerritos will benefit local dealership employees and others who want to earn a fully accredited bachelor’s degree in their field.

“Traditionally, car dealers would send their sons and daughters back to Michigan to go to school for their four-year education,” Leutheuser says. “Hopefully, this program will offer that same education but to current employees.”

Students with an associate’s degree can enroll in the Northwood University program at Cerritos College. Through an articulation agreement, students take accounting, economics, business law and what Leutheuser calls “vocabulary-building courses” during their third year through Cerritos College. In the fourth year, students take automotive classes and management classes through the Northwood program. The classes are taught at night to accommodate working adults.

“This is a super-comprehensive program here on the campus, and it’s only logical that the association move on board here, too,” Leutheuser says.

So far, the program has been successful and will graduate 18 students on May 21, he says. The program has 250 enrollments this year, and Leutheuser says he expects next year’s enrollment number to double.

SMCDA was established in 1932 to represent the majority of new-car and truck dealerships in Southern Los Angeles County, with the goal of providing services and programs while addressing the needs of its members. For more information on SMCDA, visit [www.smcd.org](http://www.smcd.org). ■