

# COLUMBUS BUSINESS FIRST

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C&A Harley-Davidson General Manager Dena Besece in front of the retailer's showroom expansion in Plain City.

C&A General Manager Dena Besece said the family-owned business is expanding to offer new products and services. The dealership purchased four acres next to its three-acre site and plans to add a driver training course and expand its 18,000-square-foot building for a classroom and extra showroom and merchandise space.

The construction and land costs are \$850,000.

"We have to find a way to get new riders into the sport, and Rider's Edge is a way to do that," Barry Besece said of the training course.

Rider's Edge offers classroom and maneuvering sessions on the course.

"Harley-Davidson is an investment," said Alexa McAllister, director of promotions and marketing for C&A. "People want to know it before they invest in it."

New motorcycles make up half of the dealership's total sales.

Bob Althoff, owner of **A.D. Farrow Co.**, made the investment in Rider's Edge three years ago and said it has helped business. He has seen almost 2,000 riders go through the course since 2004 and he expects the class total to increase now that the dealership has a permanent course at its Sunbury complex.

McAllister said C&A also is trying to appeal to women riders with special events and functions at the dealership. She said 4 percent of Harley-Davidson buyers 10 years ago were women and they now make up 12 percent - a gain that came about without much attention from dealers.

## **Rapid growth**

Despite the sales slowdown, the decade has been good to the industry. More motorcycles were sold between 2000 and 2003 than in all of the '90s, Mount said.

"It isn't a subculture anymore," he said. "It is very mainstream."

Althoff thinks the recent sales slide will be short-lived.

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At his dealerships - on West Broad Street in Columbus, in Sunbury and at Centennial Park in Pataskala - sales are up, Althoff said, but much of that was driven by the February debut of the 30,000-square-foot Sunbury complex.

Central Ohio has a strong tradition of motorcycling, Althoff said. Besides Honda's Marysville operation, the Mid-Ohio track draws races, and Pickerington is the home of the **American Motorcyclist Association** and its Motorcycle Hall of Fame.

C&A has ridden that wave of success, too.

The dealership moved to its complex in 2001, and it marked an upgrade from a 10,000-square-foot building with a 5,000-square-foot showroom.