

AWT Octogenarian Delivers the Goods

Brian Gay, owner of AWT in Houston, and manager Judy Capielo, have a small, but capable troop of deliverymen who gather each morning to trade war stories before the daily runs begin. Since joining AWT in 1994, the elder statesman of the group, Rod Lea, 81, has put 350,000 delivery miles on his Toyota Tacoma pickup. He racks up more than 100 miles during deliveries each day, which includes businesses as far away as 40 miles.

“My mechanic says he wonders which of us – me or my truck – will crap out first,” Rod joked. “It has 400,000 miles on it.”

All bets are on Rod to keep ticking long after the truck has given up the ghost. Brian says Rod takes his responsibilities as a driver for AWT seriously and goes to any length to see that his mission is accomplished. When the Tacoma experienced a breakdown while on a run he talked the wrecker driver into making his last delivery before heading in to the garage. “Awww, we were pretty close to them, anyway,” he said.

The 15 to 20 regular stops Rod makes each day have enabled him to get to know his customers, and many times they ask for him by name. “They say, ‘Tell Rod to stop by,’” said Judy. “He’s our informant; he understands the business very well and keeps up with what his customers are doing.”

Judy attended Rod’s 50th wedding anniversary celebration a couple of years ago and was greeted warmly. “Rod’s family really loves him,” she said. “His children came up to me, hugged and kissed me and said, ‘Thank you for keeping our father active – it’s the job that keeps him alive.’” Rod has a slightly different story to tell as to the reason he’s still employed at the age of 81. “It’s mental health therapy,” he said, and after a pause he added, “for my wife.” ♦



AWT deliveryman Rod Lea and his Tacoma pickup keep customers stocked in the Houston area.