



## Valvoline, Sears Auto Centers Join Forces for Auto Service, NASCAR Racing

LEXINGTON, Ky., Aug. 28 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Two great American names in automotive service announced an alliance that will provide consumers with great automotive products. The agreement calls for Valvoline to be the primary brand of motor oil offered at all 850-plus Sears Auto Centers.

"We build relationships with our customers at Sears one customer at a time," said Kevin Carr, vice president of sales and operations for Sears Auto Centers. "With quality products like Valvoline, we're helping our customers find solutions for their cars and their homes. And we are providing our customers with the brand the nation's top mechanics use most often in their own cars and trucks."

(Logo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20040113/ASHLANDLOGO>)

Customers at Sears Auto Centers have their choice of Valvoline motor oils - based on their specific driving habits and needs. Sears Auto Centers will feature VALVOLINE® conventional premium motor oil changes. For customers wanting to extend the life of their vehicles, Sears will offer MAXLIFE® motor oil for vehicles with more than 75,000 miles and Sears will offer SYNPOWER® synthetic oil for the ultimate in vehicle protection and performance.

"The combination of these two great brands is good news for car owners," said Bob Craycraft, vice president of installer channel for Valvoline. "Consumers recognize Valvoline as a premium highly recommended brand and they recognize Sears offers premium brands and guaranteed service."

Through its partnership with Valvoline, Sears Auto Centers will have a sponsorship presence on a NASCAR Nextel Cup car at various times over the next three seasons. Sears Auto Centers will be primary sponsor on Scott Riggs' Dodge at Nextel Cup events at California and Atlanta this fall.

### About Valvoline and Ashland Inc.

Valvoline, a division of Ashland Inc. (NYSE: ASH), has been serving American motorists longer than any other motor oil company and is a leading innovator and supplier of quality, high-performing automotive and industrial products in more than 100 countries. Best known for its lubricants, Valvoline also markets Eagle One® appearance products, Car Brite® car restoration products, Zerex® antifreeze, SynPower® performance products, Pyroil® automotive chemicals and MaxLife® products created for higher-mileage engines. Valvoline also has a stake in the quick-lube market with its Valvoline Instant Oil Change® unit.

Ashland Inc., a diversified, global chemical company, provides quality products, services and solutions to customers in more than 100 countries. A FORTUNE 500 company, it operates through four divisions: Ashland Performance Materials, Ashland Distribution, Valvoline and Ashland Water Technologies. To learn more about Ashland, visit [www.ashland.com](http://www.ashland.com).

### About Sears Holdings Corporation

Sears Holdings Corporation is the nation's fourth largest broadline retailer with over \$50 billion in annual revenues and approximately 3,800 full-line and specialty retail stores in the United States and Canada. Sears Holdings is the leading home appliance retailer as well as a leader in tools, lawn and garden, home electronics and automotive repair and maintenance. Key proprietary brands include Kenmore, Craftsman and DieHard, and a broad apparel offering, including such well-known labels as Lands' End, Jacyln Smith and Joe Boxer, as well as the Apostrophe and Covington brands. It also has Martha Stewart Everyday products, which are offered exclusively in the U.S. by Kmart and in Canada by Sears Canada. The company is the nation's largest provider of home services, with more than 13 million service calls made annually. For more information, visit Sears Holdings' website at [www.searsholdings.com](http://www.searsholdings.com).

FORTUNE 500 is a registered trademark of Time Inc.

SOURCE Ashland Inc.

CONTACT: Barry Bronson, Ashland Inc., +1-859-357-7393,  
[barry\\_bronson@ashland.com](mailto:barry_bronson@ashland.com); or Larry Costello, Sears Holdings, +1-847-286-9036/

"Safe Harbor" Statement under the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995: Statements in this press release regarding Ashland's business which are not historical facts are "forward-looking statements" that involve risks and uncertainties. For a discussion of such risks and uncertainties, which could cause actual results to differ from those contained in the forward-looking statements, see "Risk Factors" in the Company's Annual Report or Form 10-K for the most recently ended fiscal year.