

Salem Speedee Oil Change Franchise Honored

There are a lot more plaques on the walls of the Speedee Oil Change shop following Brenda and Mike Pratt's recent trip to the national franchise's convention.

The Pratts, who have owned the Salem franchise since 2000, came home with quite a bit of hardware for their recognition at the convention. The Pratt's business was named "Franchise of the Year 2003." The title was based on overall customer service, consistently high "mystery shopper" scores, and largest increases in sales, ticket averages and car counts for the year.

Other honors bestowed upon the business included the "Customer Service Excellence" award for the third and fourth quarters of 2003 as well as the overall "Customer Service Excellence" award for 2003. The various awards and plaques are proudly displayed upon the walls of the Pratt's business.

Until four years ago, Mike had been the manager for the KB Toy Store. Brenda had been a pharmacy technician. Neither had previous experience in the automobile service business, but both loved working and meeting new people. They also knew they wanted to go into business for themselves. After looking into various possibilities of opening either a retail or service-based business, the Pratts decided the service-oriented business would be their best bet. They began looking for business opportunities and got the opportunity to purchase the existing Speedee Oil Change shop.

Roy Baldwin, executive director of the Roanoke Regional Small Business Development Center, began working as a business counselor with the Pratts from



Speedee Oil Change owners Mike and Brenda Pratt have several new plaques on their shop's walls following their trip to the franchise's annual meeting.

almost the beginning of their small business venture.

"We needed to find out the correct way and what we needed to do to start a business," Brenda recalls. "Roy was extremely helpful in telling us what we need to do to come to the point that we could buy the franchise. He taught us how to do a business plan before we went to the bank."

Baldwin helped the Pratts find pertinent information to research and create a viable business plan. The couple has also participated in several RRSBDC training seminars and workshops.

The Pratts have an even distribution of the work load. Brenda runs the office which entails taking care of the customers, answering the constantly ringing telephones, and handing all of the billing. Mike's responsibilities include managing the service department and supervising the employees. The business is located at 1019 West Main Street in Salem.