

Rister Automotive and Transmission awarded Business of the Month

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By [FRED POLLARD](#)

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ALTON - Rister Automotive and Transmission has been recognized as the RiverBend Growth Association Business of the Month for January.

"We appreciate being recognized by the RBGA for the many years of service," co-owner Candy Rister said.

Celebrating its 20th year of business, the shop at 1322 Milton Road opened for business in July 1991. Duane and Candy Rister have proven a husband-and-wife team also can make a high-fueled company ready to go the distance.

"Duane has always been into cars," Candy said. "He went to Ranken Technical College and received his certificate in automotive technology. He worked as a motorcycle technician for a couple of years and decided he wanted to get back into cars."

Over the years, many late nights and quality work necessitated the need for expansion.

"We eventually bought this building, and then we bought the house behind us in 1997, tore it down and constructed our addition back there," Candy said.

The expanded shop went from a two-bay work area to five bays, along with a separate transmission area.

"Rister Automotive has always taken pride in the appearance of our business," Candy said. "Remodeling and several upgrades have been completed through the years."

In 2009, the "little shop that could" was featured in the April issue of Transmission Digest, an automotive industry journal circulated to shops all over the country.

"We were honored to be in this (magazine)," Duane Rister said. "Not everyone gets a magazine like this, but for a transmission shop, this is the one place that every transmission technician goes to. A parts guy I know called and said 'Hey, you're famous.' I think they chose us in part because we have been here so long."

A separate magazine feature showcased the family's love for drag racing. Duane's 2000 Corvette Outlaw Pro Modified, which boasts a Brad Anderson supercharged Hemi engine and Lenco transmission, often can be found on the track at Gateway International Raceway. It also is a popular attraction and an award winner at the Super Chevy Shows.

"We have been drag racing for about 10 years," Duane Rister said. "It started out as a hobby for me and my friends."

The best performance for the Pro Modified Corvette for the one-eighth-mile race is 4.08 seconds at 183 mph, and 6.28 seconds at 222 mph in the quarter-mile race.

The Risters live in the area and have three children, Derek, Abbie and Trevor.

"Trevor is actually a Duane Jr.," Candy said, laughing. "He looks just like his dad, he acts just like him, and he is going to be a 'gearhead' just like Duane."

Candy oversees the day-to-day operations in the office, while Duane uses his expertise in the garage, supervising his staff and working on vehicles. Quality of the shop's work has been a priority since day one.

"We use the higher-quality parts, and we don't cut corners," Candy said. "Do it right the first time, and then verify the repairs. Customer service and satisfaction is very important."

Although a visit to the family business is a friendly and laid-back experience, quality, professionalism and expertise are the priorities.

"We do everything except body work, including oil changes, major engine repair and transmission overhauls," Candy said. "Duane is an ASE certified master mechanic and also has an advanced level specialist certificate. I am ASE-certified as a service consultant. Our three other employees are experienced automotive technicians. Without our qualified staff, our business would not be what it is today."

"The Better Business Bureau has given us an 'A' rating," Duane added. "That should be one of the first things someone looks at when choosing a shop."

Rister Automotive is open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. For information, call (618) 465-5591.