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By ROBERT PIERCE • Daily Leader

Stu Emmert began working for General Motors in Detroit when he was 18 years old, and after graduating from college, he was promoted from an hourly worker to a salary worker and eventually a supervisor at a plant there.

Emmert, who said he wanted to work in sales, was later sent to Kansas City, where he worked for another 10 years before becoming a district manager in Southwest Kansas in the late 1960s.

Emmert bought the dealership he currently owns on Second Street from the Hood family in 1972 and began operating it in 1973.

When it originally started, Stu Emmert Auto Center only sold Chevy and Buick cars, but more manufacturers were soon added.

“Then we had Subaru. We didn’t do real well with that,” Emmert said.

“Then we got BMW. We had BMW for 10 years. The market for BMW was a little smaller. We added Cadillac. We’ve had Cadillac for about 18 or 20 years. We took on Toyota 15 years ago, which has been a real success for us.”

Emmert said he has a good staff working for him at the Liberal dealership.

“Fred Miller became a partner about 10 years ago,” he said. “Fred is the acting manager. I’m semi-retired and live in the Scottsdale, Ariz., area.”

Emmert said the Liberal community has been good to him.

“We’ve developed a lot of great customers here,” he said. “We have really good products with both the General Motors and Toyota lines in the same store.”

Emmert said Miller is gradually buying stock in the dealership, and he will continue to do so.

“My son, Michael, also is a stockholder in the business,” he said.

“He operates another store that we have right outside of Portland, Ore. It’s a General Motors store. We are concentrating very heavily on Toyota, but we’ll just continue operating and pursue business as we always have here.”

Emmert said he also has another dealership in the area.

“We have a used car lot in Garden City,” he said. “We’ve owned it about 12 years. That does very well for us up there. Other than that, I’m pretty much retired.”

Emmert said the future of the business will likely be in the hands of its new owner and his son.

“Michael Emmert and Fred will probably make those decisions,” he said. “There’s a good chance the name will probably stay the same.”

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