THE HIGH POINT ENTERPRISE

SATURDAY-SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3-4, 2026

Ilderton dealership marks 100 years

BY PAT KIMBROUGH
ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER

HIGH POINT — When Tim Ilderton's grandfather, Horace, in 1926 founded the High Point auto dealership that bears his name, it focused on one brand.

H.G. Ilderton Motor Co. became synonymous with Dodge after it opened its doors at the corner of what's now S. Elm Street and W. Commerce Avenue, where the Casa Italia (formerly Natuzzi) showroom is located.

"They had the garage upstairs with a wooden ramp they had to use to get the cars up to it," Ilderton said.

Since then, the dealership has grown in every possible way but remains family owned and operated, now in its fourth generation.

Ilderton Dodge Chrysler Jeep Ram Fiat will host a 100th anniversary celebration Sunday with live music, food trucks and a presence from the Triad Jeep Club to thank the community for its support.

"We've had the blessing of having that family orientation and serving our customers' needs for 100 years and doing the best we can to take care of our customers," said Ilderton, CEO and dealer principal. "Service is really good and customers are continuing to come in and get their cars fixed. So, we've been very blessed."

He said it's his understanding that theirs is the second-oldest Dodge dealership in the U.S.

Today, it spans about 10 acres on and around the 700 block of S. Main Street that include its core brands as well as Ilderton Conversion Co., which was one of the first of its kind to make wheelchair-accessible vans.

Ilderton said his father, Carey Ilderton Sr., started the conversion business in 1972.

"He was quite a pioneer in that field," he said. "We had a retired Air Force mechanic, Chuck Willard, who started building these vans here. And then in 1990, I took over the managerial position of that

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mobility company, and we've grown it and progressed from there. We've branched out in Charlotte, Asheville and Charleston, South Carolina."

Ilderton and his brother, Steve, who has since retired, became the third-generation operators of the dealership.

Tim Ilderton's children, Christopher, Catherine and John, today handle the bulk of the operations, he said.

His nephew, Carey Ilderton IV, also works for the dealership and his granddaughter, Eleanor, is a college student who works there part time, he said.

The Ilderton 100th anniversary celebration will be held from 1 to 6 p.m. Sunday at 712 S. Main St., which is the parking lot of Ilderton Truck Center, across the street from the dealership's showroom. The event is free and open to the public.



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Tim Ilderton, seated, CEO and dealer principal of Ilderton Dodge Chrysler Jeep Ram in High Point, and his children Christopher Ilderton, from left, Catherine Ilderton Martin and John Ilderton, are marking the auto dealership's 100th anniversary this weekend.

The High Point Central High School marching band will kick off the event at 12:30, followed by a welcome and opening remarks at 1 p.m. After that, there will be live music from four bands: Blue Ridge James (1:10 to 2), Tatum Scott (2 to 3), Parker Webb & Guilford (3 to 4) and Envision (4 to 6).

There will also be food trucks, vendor booths, games and family activities.

Ilderton will donate all of the proceeds from the event to three local nonprofits: Visit High Point, High Point Discovered and Cohab Space.