

# WATCHFIRE CASE STUDY: WATCH WHAT HAPPENS.

## AUTOMOTIVE :: Bobby's Tire & Muffler - Franklin, VA



**BEFORE**

### Background

In late 2009, the city of Franklin, Va., took a major economic blow when International Paper, a global paper manufacturer, announced it was closing its Franklin-based mill. When Bobby Cutchins heard the news, he worried it would mean a drop in business at his Franklin-based muffler and tire business. Cutchins had recently invested in a new electronic message center by Watchfire®. Would he see a return on his investment now that more than 1,000 area jobs were about to disappear?

### Results

Cutchins' concerns turned out to be unfounded. According to Cutchins' son, Bobby's Tire & Muffler general manager Robby Cutchins, the new electronic message center actually played a key role in the store's continued success during the difficult period. "It added to our business," he said. "Traffic actually went up because of it." The new LED sign – the first of its kind in the Franklin community – re-energized the 28-year-old tire and muffler service center at just the right time, giving it a dynamic, attention-grabbing way to inform motorists of specials, rebates and more.



**AFTER**

#### :: SIGN SPECS ::

19mm Color LED  
Matrix: 48 x 112  
6-Lines x 5" Characters  
3'4" High x 8' Wide

### Case Study

Since opening its doors nearly 30 years ago as a two-bay service station, Bobby's Tire & Muffler has become a household name in the small town of Franklin, VA. Started by Bobby Cutchins in 1982, Bobby's Tire & Muffler has recently added a second location, Bobby's Tire Pros, in Emporia, Va. Between the two locations, Cutchins now employs 24 people.

In 2009, Bobby's Tire & Muffler continued to thrive in spite of the economic crisis. Business was so steady that Cutchins worked with Brooks Gray Signs in Richmond, Va., to buy a fully animated, full-color Watchfire® LED sign. The dynamic advertising tool wasn't only the first of its kind for Bobby's, but also for the entire city of Franklin.

Cutchins planned to use the new sign to promote specials and rebates, and maybe even explore co-op opportunities with big tire brands. But his enthusiasm soured when he learned International Paper, a nearby mill employing more than 1,000 people, would be closing due to the recession. He began second-guessing the timing of his investment, wondering if it was a mistake.

Still, with the help of the installation staff at Brooks Gray Signs, Cutchins moved forward, replacing his old marquee letterboard with then new Watchfire sign. Then, he waited to see if it would work.

He didn't have to wait long. "Traffic at the shop got heavier real fast," Robby Cutchins said. Cutchins typically runs 10 promotional messages on the sign on any given day, updating them on a weekly basis. This way, he's able to advertise 10 times as many specials as he did before. Moreover, the full-color logos grab drivers' attention far better than a letterboard reading "Michelin" or "Firestone."

"People may want a certain brand of tire they didn't know you sold, or services they didn't know you offer, and the sign does a great job of communicating those things," Cutchins said.

Asked if he would recommend a similar sign to other automotive businesses, Cutchins didn't hesitate. "Definitely," he said. "If you have the traffic, it is well worth the investment. You'll get the return."

And his father's feelings on the sign?

"He's definitely pleased, to say the least. He loves it."

**"It's well worth the investment  
- you'll get the return."**

**-- Robby Cutchins, General Manager,  
Bobby's Tire & Muffler, Franklin, Va.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL YOUR LOCAL SIGN DEALER.**

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