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News Release

Easy Autocentres motors ahead with acquisition of Goodyear Dunlop-owned HiQ motoring repair centres

Easy Autocentres Limited has acquired 27 motoring repair centres from HiQ, the trading division of Goodyear Dunlop, to become one of the largest independent fast fit operators in the Midlands with a turnover of circa £10m.

The acquisition of the HiQ branded units, which is a leading national fast-fit provider of tyres, exhausts, batteries and car servicing, was financed by Steve Taylor at The Co-operative Bank's Birmingham Corporate Banking Centre with David Totney at invoice factoring specialists Liquidity provided working capital facilities.

Easy Autocentres was advised by David Neate, who originated the transaction, at Springboard Corporate Finance with legal advice being provided by Gareth O'Hara from law firm Wilkes Partnership.

The 27 units, including the flagship store in Nottingham, are based throughout the Midlands with one of the Birmingham branches being based near Goodyear Dunlop's Tyre Fort Head Office in Erdington. The units comprise 12 freehold and 15 short leasehold properties.

Chris Kisby, Managing Director and majority shareholder of Easy Autocentres, who has extensive experience within the tyre industry and fast fit sector commented that "having previously been Managing Director of Goodyear Dunlop's HiQ national operation, I recognised

that the opportunity to acquire these units would provide a strong platform for Easy Autocentres in the Midlands. Having concluded this transaction we will seek to build Easy Autocentres both organically and through acquisition to be a significant player in the sector.”

Steve Taylor, Business Manager at The Co-operative Bank’s Corporate Banking Centre in Birmingham, said; “Although conditions are turbulent in the automotive industry, the outlook for the fast-fit sector remains good. Easy Autocentres came to us with a robust business plan and we are confident that they will go from strength to strength over the next few years.”

“This deal shows that even in today’s uncertain economic climate, we are still very much open for business and lending to companies with impressive business strategies.”

David Neate, Director at Springboard Corporate Finance, said, “This transaction represents the culmination of seven months work during which the funding market has fundamentally changed.”

“While the credit crunch has made raising funding difficult, the successful completion of this transaction demonstrates that where the business can demonstrate resilient trading performance in the current economic environment it is still possible to raise an appropriate funding package. The funding package will enable Easy Autocentres to grow its business from a strong base to enable it to become a significant player in the fast fit market.”

Gareth O’Hara, Corporate Partner at Wilkes Partnership, commented; “It was good to work with The Co-operative Bank and Springboard again. The legal aspects of the transaction were not entirely straightforward and there were a number of issues which had to be dealt with both due to the number of individual properties involved and the fact that Easy Autocentres will have an ongoing business relationship with Goodyear in respect of future business. However, Chris Kisby knew the business he was buying inside out and this enabled us always to find a practical and efficient solution to the legal issues arising.”

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