

sorships in the early 1980s, but re-entered with a vengeance in the Fall of 1998.

It's sponsoring 200 snowmobile, auto, motorcycle and boat racing teams nationwide this year, backed with a seven-figure racing budget. The company won't get any more specific.

Here's why they're making the investment. Race promotion — backed by a

national sales network that's grown by 5,000 new dealers over the last 12 months through the Internet alone — is sustaining double digit sales growth at AMSOIL. The company is believed to have generated about \$70 million in revenues last year. Company executives won't confirm that figure either, but they don't dispute it.

"We're pushing for \$100 million," said

A.J. "Al" Amatuzio, the company's flamboyant chief executive and founder, rattling off a list of friends in the racing fraternity that includes another A.J. (Foyt), Bobby and Al Unser Jr.

Amatuzio's company was the first in the nation to manufacture synthetic motor oils and lubricants for consumer and general industrial use back in 1972.

As a jet fighter squadron commander and a Minnesota Air National Guard officer for nearly three decades, Amatuzio studied synthetic lubricants in action. The poly-alpha olefin (PAO)-based lubricants then were used only in jet engines because they hold up under extreme operating conditions.

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Steam Locomotive No. 261 rides again



Pamela Rust photo

No. 261 cools its tubes after steaming its way north to Duluth. The locomotive has the fourth largest coal-operated steam engine in the world, and a cult following.

By Pamela Rust

A black smoke cloud billowed, steam hissed and shiny, black No. 261 steam engine thundered into the Duluth Depot at 4:10 p.m. on a sunny, chilly May afternoon.

Upon the train's arrival, a group of hardhatted locomotive engineers in blue jumpsuits began greasing the wheels and hand-waxing the engine sides.

According to Mark Palquist, one of the train engineers, the roughly 6-ft. high wheels need to be lubed every 100 miles. Palquist was one of 16 all-volunteer crew members participating in a fundraiser that raised \$7,000 for Duluth's Lake Superior Railroad Museum.

A band with clarinet and horns played to celebrate the occasion.

Crew members came from as far away as Colorado, California, Montana, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Arizona and Chicago. The 800 passengers in 22 train cars were from across

the nation, even traveling from Florida and Arizona for the trip, originating in Minneapolis.

Ken Buehler, executive director of the Lake Superior Railroad Museum and general manager for the North Shore Scenic Railroad, said the fundraiser also contributed to the Duluth-Superior economy, bringing tourists who spent the night at area hotels and ate at local restaurants. He said the steam locomotive was built in the 1940s, weighs 460,000 pounds, and can travel at speeds to 110 miles per hour.

The train is owned by the National Railroad Museum in Green Bay. A non-profit group, the "Friends of No. 261," restored the train under an agreement with the museum that allows members to take it for several rides a year. The group sponsored the ride to Duluth, which it last visited two years ago. Museum assistant Dave Borgeson said that the group came for the museum's 26th anniversary.

"A train cult follows the No. 261," Buehler said, with members keeping up with its travels, either riding or volunteering as crew members. "What's different about the No. 261 is that it is the fourth largest working steam locomotive in the nation," he said.

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