



Auto Repair Business Keeps Community Moving

PROFILE

Ripperger Auto Repair

AFTON, IOWA

Employees: 4

Ripperger Auto Repair services nearly 350 Iowa Select Farms' vehicles annually.



Even at the young age of 12, Eric Ripperger was a budding entrepreneur.

While most kids his age spent their afternoons riding bikes, fishing or tending to livestock, Eric was busy going door-to-door promoting his lawn mower repair business.

Throughout the years, the money he made was just enough to get him and his '74 Chevy back and forth to Creston every day to complete a degree in auto mechanics from Southwest Iowa Community College (SWICC).

Today, his small business—that started in a retired milking parlor on his family's farm—has blossomed into one of the most successful auto repair shops in Afton, Iowa, servicing hundreds of vehicles annually.

Trust—a powerful currency

A true local, Eric knows *nearly* everyone in town. "We've tripled the amount of business we've done since opening in 2006 and it's all been word of mouth," he said. "People like to do business with someone they trust."

People like the employees of Iowa Select Farms—Eric's largest customer.

"We really appreciate the consistent business Iowa Select Farms brings us," he said. "We service anywhere from 5-6 vehicles a week, but it can be more depending on the time of year. They're our biggest account by far."

Chris Franklin, environmental projects manager at Iowa Select Farms, enjoys working with Eric because he understands farming and the seasonality that comes along with it.

"Fall and winter are especially hectic times for our business and the crew at Ripperger gets it," said Chris. "They take on an increased work load without question. We can always count on them to get the job done fast, and most importantly, well."

"EVERYONE IN THIS COMMUNITY HAS TIES TO AGRICULTURE. OUR LIVELIHOODS DEPEND ON IT."

-Eric Ripperger

Small community thriving

It's hard for Eric to imagine the city of Afton without agriculture and companies like Iowa Select Farms.

"It's the industry that keeps our town going," he said. "Most of the people here are farmers. Everyone in the community has ties to agriculture. Our livelihoods depend on it."

Even with a population of less than one thousand, the city of Afton is booming with opportunities.

"It's because of businesses like Iowa Select Farms that there are hundreds of trucks going through here each day stopping at the gas station, restaurant, you name it," he continued. "My stepson actually just opened a meat locker here in town. It's exciting when you have young people coming back. We're grateful for the opportunities agriculture provides our close-knit community."

