

Big Indian Sign

BILLINGS, Mont., is more than 1,500 miles from Cincinnati, and yet it was a spectacular sign in Billings that inspired the huge neonized Indian of Sky Pontiac, Inc., Cincinnati, pictured here and on the front cover. On a recent visit to Billings, Walter Schott, Jr., president of Sky Pontiac, saw the dramatic electrical identification which had been produced for Bob Porter's Elmo Club by Electrical Products Consolidated of Billings (ST, April, 1950, page 84). Schott, a prominent industrialist who is noted for his effective showmanship, was impressed with the impact and attention value of the huge neonized pictorial of Bob Porter, owner of the Elmo Club. Upon his return to Cincinnati, he brought along the suggestion for Andy Anderson, who manages Sky Pontiac.

Sky Pontiac had a difficult identification problem for one of their used car lots, the lot being located in the valley several miles away and in a different suburban section than its main operation in College Hill. Nestled among a variety of other businesses competing for attention, it was in need of some outstanding identification that would enable it to dominate a particularly busy section at the intersection of Vine street and Paddock road, two of the busiest traffic arteries leading North through the Evendale industrial area. The heavy traffic promised good opportunities for increased used car sales through more effective attraction of attention to the lot.

Anderson called in Jack Kaufmann of Lumilite Neon Sign Company, Norwood, O., and they went to work on the design. An Indian was of course the logical figure for characterization of a Pontiac agency, but since the used car lot is leased and there might be a change of occupancy, it was decided not to use the Indian of the Pontiac trademark. Instead, another Indian was designed, close enough to indicate the Pontiac connection, and yet with a personality of his own for Sky Pontiac. The figure developed was especially appropriate for adaptation in the auto agency's newspaper advertising, where it has not only promoted the tie-up with the big Indian sign, but also it has enabled Sky Pontiac's ads to stand out from among the surrounding competition. There is no lettering on the sign, not even the name of Sky Pontiac, since the character is being made to tell the whole story in itself. They are, however, planning to make one change. They will paint the make one change. They will paint the address on the extended arm for the address on the extended arm for the address on the extended arm for the



WAVING one arm above his head and pointing to the Sky Pontiac used car lot with the other, the 42-foot Indian blinks his neonized eyes and pulls attention into the lot. He dominates the heavy traffic intersection of Paddock road and Vine street, Cincinnati. (Photo by Lee.)

convenience of people who might be looking for the lot by address.

Once the pictorial was established, the job became a problem of engineering, fabrication and erection. Lumilite handled the electric and metal signwork, and Crawford Construction Company, Silverton, Ohio, was called upon for erection of this huge display. To top off the dramatic effect of the huge figure, Anderson wanted animation which would wave attention into the lot by moving the arm that is extended above its head. Since this arm weighs 850 pounds, a three horsepower motor is required to put it into action.

The chief is a double faced display towering 42 feet, and the pictorial is accomplished in paint on metal. The figure was fabricated in three sections to facilitate transportation from the Lumilite shop to the location, where they were fitted together upon erection.

Two "H" beam posts were already in the ground for support of the previous sign. For added support, two pipe columns were sunk 5 feet down and 8 cubic yards of concrete were poured for the base and anchorage.

Six colors of tubing are employed in the display: white for the shoes and hair-

line; yellow for the feather and star; green for the bows, belt, shoes, hair flaps and vest; red on the shoes and shirt; blue on the necklace, and tangerine on the face and hands. The eyes wink in flashing action. There are 540 feet of tubing and 15 transformers in the job, and access is provided inside for servicing.

This is one of the largest signs in the Cincinnati area and indeed one of the most spectacular. Thus, its appearance has created widespread interest and comment. It was given prominent illustration and description in the Cincinnati newspapers, and Sky Pontiac also has featured it prominently in its newspaper and television advertising.

The public reaction to the appearance of the huge neonized Indian has been summed up by Andy Anderson with the comment that "People say they haven't seen a sign like this between here and Las Vegas." He states that they are well pleased with the early indications of effectiveness. Judging from the initial reception, he is confident that it will enable the lot to step up volume by more than 25 to 40 used-cars per month and thus make the investment in it well worthwhile.