

GAS STATION & CONVENIENCE STORE :: Yellow Dog Express — Utica, Ohio



BEFORE

Background

Yellow Dog Express is located about 40 miles northeast of Columbus, Ohio, in the small rural community of Utica. It's a Marathon gas station and convenience store combo owned by Brian and Jo Walters, who bought it from Jo's father 22 years ago. The Walters love their shop, but running it hasn't always been easy. "It's a demanding business," Brian Walters said. "It gets tough at times." Across the street sits their biggest competitor — a gas station and convenience store that's part of a 150-station chain. "They keep us on our toes," Walters said.

Results

When Brian Walters began researching LED sign manufacturers, he first approached Watchfire after another company dropped the ball. "I couldn't get them out here for a demo," Walters said. Watchfire put Walters in touch with Kessler Sign Company who sold and installed the sign. Now, motorists who pass by Yellow Dog Express are greeted by full-color video commercials, promotions, store specials and more. "The impact of the sign was direct and immediate," Walters said. "It started making a difference the day it was installed."



AFTER

SIGN SPECS

19mm Color LED
Matrix: 48 x 96
3'4" High x 7' Wide
6 Lines x 19 Characters

Case Study

When Jo Walters' father bought what's now known as the Yellow Dog Express in 1959, it was a modest gas station with two mechanic's bays. It remained that way until Jo and her husband, Brian, bought it in 1987. Eventually, the bays were replaced by a convenience store, and a drive-through window was added to let customers shop from their cars.

Survival is tough for Yellow Dog Express partly because a 150-station franchise set up shop right across the street in the mid '80s. Walters updated his own reader board to attract customers, but was limited to displaying just one message at a time. That's when he began researching LED signs. He stated, "I knew it let me communicate more things in a bold fashion."

"The sign is the single biggest and most effective investment that we've made. It's been an absolute positive."

— Brian Walters, Owner
Yellow Dog Express

Mike Davis of Kessler Sign Company showed Walters several different Watchfire LED sign models. "I proposed a few different units, in monochrome and full-color," Davis said. "Once he saw full-color graphics with his products on it, he was sold."

But Walters' wife wasn't sure. After a few conversations, the couple decided to take the plunge together. "Five minutes after the sign went up, the impact was obvious," Walters said.

Walters knew the sign was making an impact, but he wanted concrete evidence it was increasing sales. So he implemented three promotions and advertised them on the Watchfire sign, and nowhere else. "Those three programs continue to generate more than the cost of the sign," Walters said. "The monthly profit I make from them is significantly more than what I pay for the sign."

Walters added that his ATM business has increased 23 percent since advertising it on the sign. And he said that he's certain the sign is paying off in other, immeasurable ways. "Any other business increase from the sign is just a bonus. It's doing its job — and then some."

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