

The screenshot shows the top section of the National Oil & Lube News website. On the left is the logo, which features a stylized oil drop above the text "NATIONAL OIL & LUBE NEWS". To the right of the logo is the tagline: "The leading source for news and information about the automotive maintenance industry." Below the logo and tagline is a horizontal navigation menu with the following items: Home, Subscribers, Inside NOLN, Resources, Online Buyers Guide, Advertising, About Us, Contact Us, Lube Chat Forum, and Lube News Blog. Below the navigation menu is a promotional banner for the "Fast Lube Computer Guide". The banner includes an image of a tablet and two smartphones displaying software interfaces. The text in the banner reads: "Fast Lube Computer Guide" in red, followed by "Our annual look at the latest features in lube shop management and POS computer systems." To the right of the banner are three blue buttons with white text: "Subscribe to NOLN", "Search Our Site", and "Subscriber Login".

## **Branick Industries**

Brian Brasch, president

[www.branick.com](http://www.branick.com)

*What is the biggest operational challenge facing operators right now?*

Customer retention — the number of cars coming through bays has decreased due to new technologies in oil, longer service intervals and dealerships offering free service to customer vehicles after purchase. All of these pose challenges, but there are also new technologies that are creating opportunities for the oil and lube industry.

*How do you predict the fast lube/automotive maintenance industry will fare in 2012, and what developments do you predict the industry will see?*

In this economy, consumers are becoming more knowledgeable about services that will save money in the long run. Consumers are learning more about the benefits of using nitrogen in tires including holding a tire pressure longer for better fuel mileage and longer tire life. Bring nitrogen tire inflation into your shop before the dealership, and the customer has one more reason to service with you instead of the dealership.

*What steps can lube operators/managers take to succeed in today's challenging economic climate, and what steps is your company taking to help operators achieve that success?*

Even in this economy, consumers are still considering "green" alternatives, even though buying "green" can sometimes mean costing "green." To help operators, Branick offers products that help the environment. Nitrogen tire inflation provides fuel savings and tire life advantages, both of which are known to help the environment. Smart-O is a drain plug that has an O-ring situated within the plug that expands up to 20 percent when it comes in

contact with oil. This added protection keeps the oil in the pan, off driveways, and more importantly, out of the environment. Branick also offers CARB-compliant tire inflation equipment and auto inflation units that can perform auto inflate/deflate operations, taking away the constant back and forth with hand-held devices.

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## Smart-O Drain Plug

Ordinarily I shy away from writing technical tips about specific products, but in this instance I couldn't resist. Oil leaks caused by loose or damaged drain plugs have long been an operational challenge for lube operators, but I recently finished testing a new product called the Smart-O drain plug and found it to be something that could take the worry out of replacing a loose or damaged drain plug.

The Smart-O has a groove cut into the threaded portion of the drain plug, a groove that holds a specially engineered O-ring. Once this O-ring comes into contact with motor oil and heat, it expands up to 10 percent, creating a seal between the threads that helps prevent leaks — especially handy in the case of a damaged plug.

These plugs are a little tough to install and uninstall, owing to the O-ring, but they can be used over and over.