

AUTONATION INC /FL
Form DEF 14A
April 12, 2004

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**SCHEDULE 14A
(Rule 14a-101)**

INFORMATION REQUIRED IN PROXY STATEMENT

SCHEDULE 14A INFORMATION

**Proxy Statement Pursuant to Section 14(a) of the Securities
Exchange Act of 1934**

Filed by the Registrant x

Filed by a Party other than the Registrant o

Check the appropriate box:

- o Preliminary Proxy Statement
- x Definitive Proxy Statement
- o Definitive Additional Materials
- o Soliciting Material Pursuant to Rule 14a-11(c) or Rule 14a-12
- o Confidential, for Use of the Commission Only (as permitted by Rule 14a-6(e)(2))

AutoNation, Inc.

(Name of Registrant as Specified In Its Charter)

(Name of Person(s) Filing Proxy Statement, if other than the Registrant)

Payment of Filing Fee (Check the appropriate box):

- x No fee required.
- o Fee computed on table below per Exchange Act Rules 14a-6(i)(1) and 0-11.

(1) Title of each class of securities to which transaction applies:

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April 12, 2004

Dear AutoNation Stockholder:

We are pleased to invite you to attend the 2004 Annual Meeting of Stockholders of AutoNation, Inc. to be held at 8:30 a.m. Eastern Time on Wednesday, May 12, 2004, at the AutoNation Tower, located at 110 S.E. 6th Street, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301.

The accompanying Notice of Annual Meeting and Proxy Statement describe the specific matters to be acted upon at the meeting. We also will report on our progress and provide an opportunity for you to ask questions of general interest.

Whether you own a few or many shares of AutoNation stock and whether or not you plan to attend the meeting in person, it is important that your shares be represented at the annual meeting. **We ask that you please cast your vote as soon as possible.** The Board of Directors unanimously recommends that stockholders vote FOR each of the matters described in the accompanying Proxy Statement to be presented at the meeting.

We look forward to seeing you on May 12, 2004 in Fort Lauderdale. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mike Jackson
*Chairman of the Board and
Chief Executive Officer*

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AUTONATION, INC.

**AutoNation Tower
110 S.E. Sixth Street
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301**

NOTICE OF THE 2004 ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS

TO THE STOCKHOLDERS OF AUTONATION, INC.:

The 2004 Annual Meeting of Stockholders of AutoNation, Inc. will be held at the AutoNation Tower, located at 110 S.E. 6th Street, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301 on Wednesday, May 12, 2004 at 8:30 a.m. Eastern Time. At the meeting, we will consider and vote upon the following matters:

- (1) The election of eight directors, each for a term expiring at the next Annual Meeting or until their successors are duly elected and qualified;
- (2) The ratification of the appointment of KPMG LLP as our independent auditor for 2004; and
- (3) Any other business that is properly presented at the meeting or any adjournments or postponements of the meeting.

Only stockholders of record as of 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on March 26, 2004, the record date, are entitled to receive notice of the Annual Meeting and to vote at the Annual Meeting or any adjournments or postponements of the meeting.

We cordially invite you to attend the Annual Meeting in person. **Even if you plan to attend the meeting, we ask that you please cast your vote as soon as possible.** You may revoke your proxy and reclaim your right to vote at any time prior to its use.

By Order of the Board of Directors,

Jonathan P. Ferrando
*Senior Vice President,
General Counsel and Secretary*

April 12, 2004

PLEASE DATE AND SIGN THE ENCLOSED PROXY AND RETURN IT

TO US PROMPTLY IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE.

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AUTONATION, INC.

AutoNation Tower
110 S.E. Sixth Street
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301

PROXY STATEMENT

This Proxy Statement contains information relating to the solicitation of proxies by the Board of Directors of AutoNation, Inc., for use at our 2004 Annual Meeting of Stockholders. Our annual meeting will be held at the AutoNation Tower, located at 110 S.E. 6th Street, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301 on Wednesday, May 12, 2004 at 8:30 a.m. Eastern Time.

This Proxy Statement, the Notice of the 2004 Annual Meeting, the proxy card and our 2003 Annual Report to Stockholders were first mailed to stockholders on or about April 12, 2004.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT OUR ANNUAL MEETING

What is the purpose of our annual meeting?

The purpose of our annual meeting is to:

- elect eight directors, each for a term expiring at the next annual meeting or until their successors are duly elected and qualified;
- ratify the appointment of our independent auditor for 2004; and
- consider any other matters properly presented at the meeting.

In addition, senior management will report on our business and financial performance and respond to your questions.

Who is entitled to vote at the annual meeting?

Only our stockholders as of 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on March 26, 2004, the record date, are entitled to receive notice of the annual meeting and to vote at the meeting, or any postponements or adjournments of the meeting.

What are the voting rights of AutoNation stockholders?

Each stockholder is entitled to one vote on each matter properly presented at the annual meeting for each share of common stock owned by that stockholder on the record date. Therefore, if you owned 100 shares of common stock as of 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on March 26, 2004, you can cast 100 votes for each matter properly presented at the annual meeting. As of 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on March 26, 2004, there were 267,575,432 shares of AutoNation common stock issued and outstanding and entitled to vote at the meeting.

What constitutes a quorum?

In order for us to conduct business at our annual meeting, we must have a quorum of at least 133,787,717 shares of common stock represented at the meeting, in person or by proxy, and entitled to vote. If you submit a properly executed proxy or vote instruction card or properly cast your vote by telephone or via the Internet, your shares will be considered part of the quorum, even if you abstain from voting or withhold authority to vote as to a particular proposal. We also will consider as present for purposes of determining whether a quorum exists any shares represented by broker non-votes as to a particular proposal.

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What are broker non-votes ?

Broker non-votes occur when shares held by a brokerage firm are not voted with respect to a proposal because the firm has not received voting instructions from the stockholder and the firm does not have the authority to vote the shares at its discretion. Under the rules of The New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), brokerage firms may have the authority to vote their customers' shares on certain routine matters for which they do not receive voting instructions, including the uncontested election of directors and the uncontested ratification of the appointment of independent auditors. If, as we presently anticipate, the agenda for our meeting will provide only for a vote for the election of our Board's nominees for director and ratification of the appointment of KPMG LLP as our independent auditor, brokerage firms may have the authority to vote all shares of our stock that they hold, even if they do not receive specific voting instructions from their customers. However, if other matters are properly brought before the meeting and they are not considered routine under the applicable NYSE rules, shares held by brokerage firms will not be voted on such non-routine matters by the brokerage firms unless they have received voting instructions and, accordingly, any such shares will be broker non-votes and will not be counted with respect to such matters.

Will my shares be voted if I do not provide my proxy?

If your shares are held in the name of a brokerage firm, they may be voted by the brokerage firm (as described above) even if you do not give the brokerage firm specific voting instructions. If you are a registered stockholder and hold your shares directly in your own name, your shares will not be voted unless you provide a proxy or fill out a written ballot in person at the meeting. If you hold shares through the AutoNation 401(k) Plan, your shares may be voted as described below even if you do not provide voting instructions.

How do I vote my 401(k) shares?

If you participate in the AutoNation 401(k) Plan, you may vote the number of shares credited to your account as of 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on March 26, 2004, by instructing our plan trustee, Merrill Lynch & Co., how to vote your shares pursuant to the instruction card being mailed with this Proxy Statement to plan participants. If you do not provide clear voting instructions, Merrill Lynch will vote the shares in your account in the same proportion that it votes shares for which it received timely and clear instructions.

How do I vote?

You can vote in any of the following ways. Please check your proxy card or contact your broker to determine whether you will be able to vote by telephone or via the Internet.

To vote by mail:

Mark, sign and date your proxy card or vote instruction card; and
Return it in the enclosed envelope.

To vote using the Internet:

Have your proxy card or vote instruction card in hand;
Log on to the Internet and visit the website address provided on your proxy card or your vote instruction card; and
Follow the instructions provided.

To vote by telephone:

Have your proxy card or vote instruction card in hand;
Call the toll-free number listed on your proxy card if you are a registered stockholder (that is, your shares are held on the company's books in your name or by you in certificate form), or call the number listed on your vote instruction card if your shares are held in street name (that is, in the name of your bank or broker); and
Follow the recorded instructions.

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To vote in person if you are a registered stockholder:

Attend our annual meeting;
Bring valid photo identification; and
Deliver your completed proxy card or ballot in person.

To vote in person if you hold in street name:

Attend our annual meeting;
Bring valid photo identification; and
Obtain a legal proxy from your bank or broker to vote the shares that are held for your benefit, attach it to your completed proxy card and deliver it in person.

Can I change my vote after I have voted?

Yes. If you voted by proxy card, vote instruction card or telephone or via the Internet, you can change your vote at any time before the proxy is exercised. To change your vote:

Submit a later dated and signed proxy by mail;
Recast your vote by telephone or via the Internet;
Attend our annual meeting and vote your shares in person in accordance with the procedures set forth in the answer to *How do I vote?* above. The powers of the proxy holders will be suspended if you attend the meeting in person and so request, although attendance at the meeting will not by itself revoke a previously granted proxy; or
Submit a written notice of revocation to our Secretary.

What vote is required to elect directors or take other action at the annual meeting?

In order to be approved, any proposal that comes before the meeting must receive the affirmative vote of a majority of the shares present and entitled to vote at the meeting with respect to such proposal. If you mark your proxy or vote instruction card *withhold* with respect to any director or *abstain* with respect to any other proposal, you will effectively be voting against the election of such director or the approval of such proposal. If your shares are not voted by your brokerage firm or nominee with respect to a particular proposal, or if you direct your proxy holder not to vote all or a portion of your shares with respect to a particular proposal, such shares will not be considered to be present at the meeting for purposes of considering such proposal and will not be counted.

How does the Board recommend I vote on the proposals?

The Board recommends that you vote:

FOR each of the nominees for director set forth on page 5; and
FOR the ratification of the appointment of our independent auditor set forth on page 5.

How will my proxy holders vote?

The enclosed proxy card designates Mike Jackson, our Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer, and Jonathan P. Ferrando, our Senior Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary, or their duly named successors, to hold your proxy and vote your shares. With respect to the election of directors, Messrs. Jackson and Ferrando will vote in accordance with the instructions set forth on your duly executed proxy or vote instruction card or as directed by you over the telephone or via the Internet. If you sign and return your proxy card but do not provide instructions or if your instructions are unclear, Messrs. Jackson and Ferrando intend to vote FOR each of the nominees for director and FOR the ratification of the appointment of our independent auditor.

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With respect to any other proposal that properly comes before the meeting, Messrs. Jackson and Ferrando will vote as recommended by our Board of Directors or, if no recommendation is given, in their own discretion.

How much did this proxy solicitation cost?

We engaged Innisfree M&A Incorporated to assist with the solicitation of proxies for a fee not to exceed \$8,500, plus reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses. In addition to soliciting proxies by mail, certain of our employees also may solicit proxies personally, by telephone or otherwise, but such persons will not receive any special compensation for such services. As is customary, we will reimburse brokerage firms, banks, fiduciaries, voting trustees and other nominees for forwarding the soliciting material to each beneficial owner of stock held of record by them. We will pay the entire cost of the solicitation.

Can I receive materials relating to future AutoNation annual meetings via the Internet?

Yes. In an effort to reduce our proxy solicitation costs, you may receive future annual meeting materials via the Internet. We encourage you to help us reduce our costs by electing to receive our annual meeting materials via the Internet. If you are a registered stockholder, log on to <http://www.computershare.com/us/sc/auin> in order to register to receive our annual meeting materials via the Internet. If you hold AutoNation stock through a brokerage firm, bank or other nominee, you may be able to register to receive future annual meeting materials via the Internet by voting online and following the instructions provided. Alternatively, you should call your broker for instructions on how to receive our future annual meeting materials via the Internet.

If you elect to receive our future annual meeting materials via the Internet, you will receive a proxy card in the mail or, if you choose, an e-mail notification alerting you when our annual meeting materials are available online. Our future proxy statements and annual reports will be available online on the same day as such materials are filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission. You may revoke at any time your election to receive our future annual meeting materials via the Internet.

This Proxy Statement and our 2003 Annual Report to Stockholders also are available on AutoNation's corporate website, which you can visit by logging on to <http://corp.autonation.com/investors/>.

Can different stockholders sharing the same address receive only one Annual Report and Proxy Statement?

Yes. The Securities and Exchange Commission permits companies and intermediaries, such as a brokerage firm or a bank, to satisfy the delivery requirements for proxy statements and annual reports with respect to two or more security holders sharing the same address by delivering only one proxy statement and annual report to that address. This process, which is commonly referred to as householding, can effectively reduce our printing and postage costs. Under householding, each stockholder would continue to receive a separate proxy card or vote instruction card.

Certain of our stockholders whose shares are held in street name and who have consented to householding will receive only one set of our annual meeting materials per household this year. If your household received a single set of our annual meeting materials this year, you can request to receive additional copies of these materials by calling or writing your brokerage firm, bank or other nominee. If you own your shares in street name, you can request householding by calling or writing your brokerage firm, bank or other nominee.

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PROPOSALS ON WHICH WE ARE ASKING YOU TO VOTE

PROPOSAL 1

ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

Our Board of Directors currently consists of nine members. Each of our current directors was elected by our stockholders at the Annual Meeting of Stockholders in 2003, except for Mr. Alan S. Dawes, who was appointed as a director by our Board in June 2003. Our Board, upon the recommendation of the Corporate Governance Committee, has nominated the eight persons listed below to stand for election for a new term expiring at the Annual Meeting of Stockholders in 2005 or until their successors are duly elected and qualified. Each of the nominees listed below is currently serving as a director. Detailed biographical and other information concerning each nominee for director is provided on pages 6 and 7 of this Proxy Statement. Each nominee is willing and able to serve as a director of AutoNation.

Mr. H. Wayne Huizenga, who has served as a director since 1995 and as our Chairman from August 1995 until December 31, 2002, has declined to stand for re-election in 2004 and will retire from our Board as of the date of the annual meeting.

Nominees For Director	Positions and Offices Held with Us
Mike Jackson	Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer
Robert J. Brown	Director
J.P. Bryan	Director
Rick L. Burdick	Director
William C. Crowley	Director
Alan S. Dawes	Director
Edward S. Lampert	Director
Irene B. Rosenfeld	Director

Our Board of Directors unanimously recommends a vote **FOR the election
of each of the nominees for director named above.**

PROPOSAL 2

RATIFICATION OF THE APPOINTMENT OF OUR INDEPENDENT AUDITOR

The Audit Committee of our Board of Directors has appointed KPMG LLP as our independent auditor for the year ending December 31, 2004. KPMG LLP has served us in this capacity since May 6, 2003. If the appointment of KPMG LLP as our independent auditor is not ratified by our stockholders, the Audit Committee will re-evaluate its appointment, taking into consideration the stockholder vote on the ratification. However, the Audit Committee is solely responsible for appointing and terminating our independent auditor, and may do so at any time at its discretion. A representative of KPMG LLP is expected to attend the annual meeting and be available to respond to appropriate questions. The representative also will be afforded an opportunity to make a statement, if he or she desires to do so. As further described on page 15 of this Proxy Statement, KPMG LLP replaced Deloitte & Touche LLP as our independent auditor effective as of May 6, 2003.

Our Board of Directors unanimously recommends a vote **FOR the ratification
of the appointment of KPMG LLP as independent auditor
for us and our subsidiaries for the year ending December 31, 2004.**

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NOMINEES FOR OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mike Jackson

Mike Jackson, age 55, has served as our Chairman of the Board since January 2003 and as our Chief Executive Officer and director since September 1999. From October 1998 until September 1999, Mr. Jackson served as Chief Executive Officer of Mercedes-Benz USA, LLC, a North American operating unit of DaimlerChrysler AG, a global automotive manufacturing company. From April 1997 until September 1999, Mr. Jackson also served as President of Mercedes-Benz USA. From July 1990 until March 1997, Mr. Jackson served in various capacities at Mercedes-Benz USA, including as Executive Vice President immediately prior to his appointment as President of Mercedes-Benz USA. Mr. Jackson was also the managing partner from March 1979 to July 1990 of Euro Motorcars of Bethesda, Maryland, a regional group that owned and operated eleven automotive dealership franchises, including Mercedes-Benz and other brands of automobiles.

Robert J. Brown

Mr. Brown, age 69, has served as a director of the Company since May 1997. Mr. Brown has served as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of B&C Associates, Inc., a management consulting, marketing research and public relations firm, since 1973. Mr. Brown also serves as a director of Duke Energy Corporation, a diversified energy company, Wachovia Corporation, a commercial and retail bank, and Sonoco Products Company, a manufacturer of industrial and consumer packaging products.

J.P. Bryan

Mr. Bryan, age 64, has served as a director of the Company since May 1991. From January 1995 until February 1998, Mr. Bryan served as President and Chief Executive Officer of Gulf Canada Resources, Ltd., which is engaged in oil and gas exploration and production. Since 1998, Mr. Bryan has served as Senior Managing Director of Torch Energy Advisors, Inc., an outsourcing and service provider to the oil and gas industry.

Rick L. Burdick

Mr. Burdick, age 52, has served as a director of the Company since May 1991. Since 1988, Mr. Burdick has been a partner in Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld, L.L.P., a global full service law firm. Mr. Burdick serves as a member of the firm's Executive Committee, Chairman of the firm's Corporate and Securities Department and Partner-In-Charge of the Washington office. Mr. Burdick also serves as non-executive Vice Chairman of Century Business Services, Inc., a provider of outsourced business services to small and medium-sized companies in the United States.

William C. Crowley

Mr. Crowley, age 46, has served as a director of the Company since January 2002. Since May 2003, Mr. Crowley has served on the Board of Directors of Kmart Holding Corporation, an international mass merchandising company, and serves as its Senior Vice President, Finance. Since January 1999, Mr. Crowley has been President and Chief Operating Officer of ESL Investments, Inc., a private investment firm. Prior to joining ESL Investments, Mr. Crowley served for 13 years with Goldman Sachs, a leading global investment banking and securities firm, most recently as a Managing Director in the firm's mergers and acquisitions department.

Alan S. Dawes

Mr. Dawes, age 49, has served as a director of the Company since June 2003. Since January 2003, Mr. Dawes has served as Vice Chairman and Chief Financial Officer of Delphi Corporation, a leading global automotive electronics and components supplier. Mr. Dawes was named Chief Financial Officer of Delphi Automotive Systems Corporation, a predecessor of Delphi, in August 1998 and director and Executive Vice President in charge of Finance, Mergers & Acquisitions and Information Technology in January 2000. He had been a Vice President of Delphi since November

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1998. Prior to 1998, Mr. Dawes served in various executive capacities for General Motors Corporation, from which Delphi was separated in May 1999. Mr. Dawes is Vice Chairman of the Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association.

Edward S. Lampert

Mr. Lampert, age 41, has served as a director of the Company since January 2002. In April 1988, Mr. Lampert formed ESL Investments, Inc., a private investment firm, and since then has managed the business and operations of ESL Investments and its various investment partnerships. Mr. Lampert also serves on the Board of Directors of AutoZone, Inc., a national retailer of automotive parts and accessories, and Kmart Holding Corporation, an international mass merchandising company.

Irene B. Rosenfeld

Ms. Rosenfeld, age 50, has served as a director of the Company since March 1999. From September 2002 until July 2003, Ms. Rosenfeld served as President, North American Businesses, of Kraft Foods North America, a unit of Kraft Foods, Inc., a diversified food company. From May 2000 until September 2002, Mr. Rosenfeld served as Group Vice President of Kraft Foods North America and President, Operations, Technology, Procurement, Information Systems and Canada, Mexico & Puerto Rico, and prior to that as President of Kraft Canada, Inc. Ms. Rosenfeld also serves as a Trustee of the Steppenwolf Theatre Company.

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BOARD GOVERNANCE

Our business and affairs are managed under the direction of our Board of Directors, which is AutoNation's ultimate decision-making body except with respect to those matters reserved to our stockholders. Our Board's mission is to maximize long-term stockholder value. Our Board establishes our overall corporate policies, selects and evaluates our senior management team, which is charged with the conduct of our business, and acts as an advisor and counselor to senior management. Our Board also oversees AutoNation's business strategy and the performance of management in executing our business strategy and managing our day-to-day operations.

Does AutoNation have corporate governance principles?

Yes. Our Board is committed to sound corporate governance principles and practices. Our Board's core principles of corporate governance are set forth in the AutoNation, Inc. Corporate Governance Guidelines (the Guidelines), which were adopted by the Board in March 2003 and most recently amended as of February 3, 2004. A copy of the Guidelines is set forth as Exhibit A hereto and also is available at <http://corp.autonation.com/investors/>. The Guidelines, which exceed NYSE corporate governance listing standard requirements, serve as a framework within which our Board conducts its operations. The Corporate Governance Committee of our Board has been charged with periodically reviewing the Guidelines and recommending to our Board appropriate changes in light of applicable laws and regulations, the governance standards identified by leading governance authorities and our company's evolving needs.

Do we have a policy regarding our Board's attendance at our annual meeting of stockholders?

Yes. Our directors are expected to attend our annual meeting of stockholders. A director who is unable to attend our annual meeting is expected to notify the Chairman of the Board in advance of the meeting. All of our directors standing for election at the 2003 Annual Meeting of Stockholders attended the meeting.

How many times did our Board meet during 2003?

Our Board of Directors held seven meetings and took four actions by unanimous written consent during 2003. During 2003, each of our incumbent directors attended at least 75% of the total number of meetings of our Board of Directors and any Board committee on which he or she served.

What Committees has our Board established?

Our Board of Directors has established three separately designated standing committees to assist it in discharging its responsibilities: the Audit Committee, the Compensation Committee and the Corporate Governance Committee. In addition, our Board has established the Executive Compensation Subcommittee, which is a subcommittee of the Compensation Committee. The charters for our Board committees are in compliance with the provisions of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, the rules of the Securities and Exchange Commission and the NYSE's new corporate governance listing standards, and are available on AutoNation's corporate website at <http://corp.autonation.com/investors/>.

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The following chart reflects the current membership of each of our Board's committees:

Name	Audit Committee	Compensation Committee	Executive Compensation Subcommittee	Corporate Governance Committee
Robert J. Brown		*	*	*
J.P. Bryan	*			
Rick L. Burdick				**
William C. Crowley				*
Alan S. Dawes	**	*	*	
Edward S. Lampert		**		
Irene B. Rosenfeld	*	*	**	

* Member

** Chair

Audit Committee. The Audit Committee primarily assists the Board in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities by reviewing our financial reporting and audit processes and our systems of internal controls and disclosure controls. Among the Committee's core responsibilities are the following: (i) overseeing the integrity of our financial statements and reviewing and approving the scope of the annual audit, (ii) appointing, retaining, compensating, overseeing, evaluating and replacing our independent auditor, (iii) reviewing the company's critical accounting policies, (iv) reviewing the company's quarterly and annual financial statements prior to their filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission, (v) preparing the Audit Committee report for inclusion in our annual proxy statement and (vi) reviewing with management significant financial risks or exposures and assessing the steps management has taken to minimize, monitor and control such risks or exposures. For a complete description of our Audit Committee's responsibilities, you should refer to the Audit Committee Charter, a copy of which is available at <http://corp.autonation.com/investors/>.

The Audit Committee currently consists of three directors. Our Board has determined that the Audit Committee members have the requisite independence and other qualifications for audit committee membership under NYSE corporate governance listing standards, the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, our Audit Committee Charter and the independence standard set forth in the Guidelines (as discussed below). Our Board also has determined that Messrs. Dawes and Bryan are audit committee financial experts within the meaning of Item 401(h) of Regulation S-K under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the Exchange Act). The Audit Committee held eight meetings and took no actions by unanimous written consent during 2003. The Audit Committee Report for fiscal year 2003, which contains a description of the Audit Committee's responsibilities and its recommendation with respect to our audited consolidated financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2003, is set forth on page 14.

Compensation Committee. The Compensation Committee primarily assists our Board in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities by, among other things: (i) reviewing our director compensation program; (ii) reviewing and approving the compensation of our chief executive officer and other senior executive officers and, except as expressly delegated to the Executive Compensation Subcommittee, setting annual and long-term performance goals for these individuals; and (iii) reviewing and approving the compensation of all of our corporate officers. Our Board has determined that the Compensation Committee members have the requisite independence for compensation committee membership under NYSE corporate governance listing standards and the independence standard set forth in the Guidelines. The Compensation Committee held five meetings and took one action by unanimous written consent during 2003. The Compensation Committee Report for fiscal 2003 is set forth on page 17. A copy of the charter by which the Compensation Committee is governed is available at <http://corp.autonation.com/investors/>.

Executive Compensation Subcommittee. The Executive Compensation Subcommittee is a subcommittee of the Compensation Committee. The Subcommittee assists the Compensation Committee in fulfilling its responsibilities by performing the following duties: (i) reviewing and approving performance-based compensation of executive officers as contemplated under Section 162(m) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the

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Code), including bonuses and stock option grants; (ii) administering the AutoNation, Inc. Senior Executive Incentive Bonus Plan, including establishing performance goals and certifying whether such goals are attained as contemplated under Section 162(m) of the Code; and (iii) administering our stock option plans, including approving stock option grants. Our Board has determined that each member of the Subcommittee qualifies as a non-employee director within the meaning of Rule 16b-3 under the Exchange Act, and as an outside director under Section 162(m) of the Code. The Executive Compensation Subcommittee held three meetings and took three actions by unanimous written consent during 2003. A copy of the charter by which the Executive Compensation Subcommittee is governed is available at <http://corp.autonation.com/investors/>.

Corporate Governance Committee. The Corporate Governance Committee assists our Board in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities by performing the following duties: (i) periodically reviewing the corporate governance principles and practices set forth in the Guidelines, in comparison to the governance standards identified by leading governance authorities and our evolving needs, and making recommendations to the Board with respect to any appropriate amendment to the Guidelines; (ii) periodically assessing our Board's needs in terms of skills and qualifications and recommending to our Board candidates for nomination and election to our Board; (iii) reviewing Board candidates recommended by our stockholders; (iv) recommending to our Board assignments to committees; and (v) leading annual evaluations of Board and Board committee performance. The Corporate Governance Committee currently has three members. Our Board has determined that each Corporate Governance Committee member has the requisite independence for corporate governance committee membership under NYSE corporate governance listing standards and the independence standard set forth in the Guidelines. The Corporate Governance Committee held six meetings and took one action by unanimous written consent during 2003. A copy of the charter by which the Corporate Governance Committee is governed is available at <http://corp.autonation.com/investors/>.

How are our Directors compensated?

In 2003, we paid each of our non-employee directors an annual fee for service on our Board of Directors of \$25,000, plus \$1,000 for each Board meeting attended in excess of four annually and for each committee meeting attended. The annual fee payable to our directors is prorated based on the number of months served during the year. Our directors also are entitled to the use of a company vehicle, or receipt of a vehicle allowance to purchase or lease a company vehicle, in accordance with our Director Car Policy and expense reimbursement in connection with Board and committee meeting attendance. Imputed income from the use of company vehicles by our directors under our Director Car Policy averaged approximately \$19,200 during 2003 for each of our directors who used a company car during 2003.

We want our outside directors' compensation to be aligned with your interests as stockholders. Accordingly, our 1995 Amended and Restated Non-Employee Director Stock Option Plan currently provides for an initial grant of options to purchase 50,000 shares of our stock immediately upon the appointment of a non-employee director to our Board. This plan also provides for an annual grant of options to purchase 20,000 shares of our stock at the beginning of each fiscal year to each non-employee director serving on the Board at such date. Unless otherwise provided, all options granted under this plan are fully vested and immediately exercisable. Under this plan, each grant of options to a non-employee director remains exercisable for a term of ten years from the grant date so long as the director remains a member of the Board. The options are exercisable at a price per share equal to the closing price per share of our stock on the NYSE on the date immediately prior to the grant date. In accordance with the plan, on June 30, 2003, upon their appointment to our Board, Mr. Dawes and Mr. Frederick J. Schwab each received an automatic grant of options to purchase 50,000 shares at an exercise price of \$15.75 per share; and on January 2, 2004, Messrs. Brown, Bryan, Burdick, Crowley, Dawes, Huizenga and Lampert and Ms. Rosenfeld each received an automatic grant of options to purchase 20,000 shares of our stock at an exercise price of \$18.37 per share. Mr. Schwab, who voluntarily resigned from the Board in September 2003, did not receive any fees for his services to us. Upon his resignation from the Board, Mr. Schwab voluntarily forfeited all of the stock options granted to him on June 30, 2003. Pursuant to agreements between us and Messrs. Crowley and Lampert, no director stock options currently held by Messrs. Crowley and Lampert may be exercised until November 1, 2004.

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Is a majority of our Board independent under our Director Independence Standard and applicable New York Stock Exchange rules?

Yes. Under the Company's Corporate Governance Guidelines, our Board has committed that a substantial majority of our directors be independent. On October 27, 2003, as required by recently adopted NYSE corporate governance listing standards, our Board adopted a Director Independence Standard to assist it in determining whether a director is independent. The full text of our Director Independence Standard (the Independence Standard) is set forth in the AutoNation, Inc. Corporate Governance Guidelines, a copy of which is set forth as Exhibit A hereto. Our Board has affirmatively determined that, except for Mr. Jackson, who serves as our Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, and Mr. Huizenga, who served as our Chairman until December 31, 2002 and who is not standing for re-election at the annual meeting, none of our current directors has a material relationship with us (either directly or as a partner, shareholder or officer of an organization that has a relationship with us) and each of our directors is independent within the meaning of our Independence Standard and applicable NYSE listing standards.

Do our non-management directors meet at regularly scheduled sessions without management present?

Yes. Our non-management directors (each director other than Mr. Jackson) meet in regularly scheduled sessions without management of our company present. The presiding director for each executive session is rotated among the chairs of our Board committees.

Can our stockholders and interested parties communicate with our directors?

Yes. To communicate with our Board, any Board committee, any individual director, any group of directors (such as our non-management directors) or our presiding director, our stockholders or interested parties should send written correspondence to AutoNation, Inc. Board of Directors, c/o Corporate Secretary, AutoNation, Inc., 110 S.E. 6 Street, 29th Floor, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301. You may also ask questions at the Annual Meeting of Stockholders.

How does the Corporate Governance Committee identify and evaluate nominees for director?

The Corporate Governance Committee has retained an executive search firm to identify and evaluate potential director candidates. Potential candidates also may come to the attention of the Corporate Governance Committee through recommendations made by current directors, stockholders or other persons. In June 2003, following consideration of potential candidates identified by a professional search firm, and based on the recommendation of the Corporate Governance Committee, the Board appointed Mr. Dawes as a director. All of our nominees for director, whether or not recommended by a stockholder, will be selected on the basis of, among other things, broad experience; wisdom; integrity; ability to make independent analytical inquiries; understanding of our business environment; and willingness and ability to devote adequate time to our Board's duties; all in the context of the needs of our Board at that point in time as assessed by our Corporate Governance Committee and with the objective of ensuring diversity in the background, experience and viewpoints of our Board members. Our Corporate Governance Committee is responsible for assessing the appropriate balance of skills and characteristics required of our Board members.

Does the Corporate Governance Committee have a policy with regard to the consideration of any director candidates recommended by our stockholders?

Yes. The Corporate Governance Committee has a policy pursuant to which it considers director candidates recommended by our stockholders. As described above, all director candidates recommended by our stockholders are considered for selection to the Board on the same basis as if such candidates were recommended by one or more of our directors or other sources. To recommend a director candidate for consideration by our Corporate Governance Committee, a stockholder must submit the recommendation in writing to our Secretary not later than one hundred twenty (120) calendar days prior to the anniversary date of our proxy statement distributed to our stockholders in connection with our most recent annual meeting of stockholders, and the recommendation must provide the following information: (i) the name of the stockholder making the recommendation, (ii) the name of the candidate, (iii) the candidate's resume or a listing of his or her qualifications to be a director, (iv) the proposed candidate's written consent to being named as a nominee and to serving as one of our

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directors if elected and (v) a description of all relationships, arrangements or understandings, if any, between the proposed candidate and the recommending stockholder and between the proposed candidate and us so that the candidate's independence may be assessed. The stockholder or the director candidate also must provide any additional information requested by our Corporate Governance Committee to assist the Committee in appropriately evaluating the candidate.

Does AutoNation have a code of ethics?

Yes. In order to clearly set forth our commitment to conduct our operations in accordance with our high standards of business ethics and applicable laws and regulations, we have a company-wide Business Ethics Program, which includes a Code of Business Ethics applicable to all company employees. We also maintain a 24-hour Alert-Line for employees to report any Company policy violations under our Business Ethics Program. In addition, our Board has adopted the Code of Ethics for Senior Officers and the Code of Business Ethics for the Board of Directors. Copies of these codes are available at <http://corp.autonation.com/investors/>. These codes comply with the new NYSE corporate governance listing standards.

Does the Board have a policy with regard to related party transactions?

Yes. Our Board's policy requires that transactions with related parties must be entered into in good faith on fair and reasonable terms that are no less favorable to us than those that would be available in a comparable transaction in arm's-length dealings with an unrelated third party. Our Board, by a vote of the disinterested directors, must approve all related party transactions valued over \$500,000, while our Audit Committee must approve all related party transactions valued between \$100,000 and \$500,000 and review with management all other related party transactions. The following is a summary of agreements and transactions with parties related to our directors or us. Based on our experience, we believe that each of the transactions described below complied with our Board's policy at the time the transaction was effected.

During 2003, we paid an aggregate of approximately \$420,000 to the Miami Dolphins and Pro Player Stadium in exchange for certain marketing services, including the rental of the stadium for off-site used vehicle sales events for our dealerships, and for the use of executive suites and tickets to events at Pro Player Stadium. Mr. Huizenga owns the Miami Dolphins and Pro Player Stadium, a professional sports stadium in South Florida. We expect to continue these relationships with the Miami Dolphins and Pro Player Stadium during 2004.

During 2003 and the first quarter of 2004, we paid the Marriott Harbor Beach Resort in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, approximately \$411,000 and \$500,000, respectively, for the use of conference facilities and lodging accommodations in connection with our 2003 and 2004 management conferences. Mr. Huizenga indirectly owns approximately 12.5% of the limited partnership interests in the resort. We expect to use the conference facilities and lodging accommodations of the Marriott Harbor Beach Resort in the future.

During 2003, we purchased approximately \$920,000 of pre-employment drug screening services from Psychemedics Corporation. Mr. Huizenga owns approximately 11.4% of the outstanding common stock of Psychemedics. We have a comprehensive background and drug-screening process for our employees and expect to continue to utilize Psychemedics to perform customary pre-employment drug screenings in 2004.

We are party to certain transactions with ANC Rental Corporation, which operated our former rental car business and which we spun off to our stockholders in June 2000. ANC Rental declared bankruptcy in November 2001. Messrs. Bryan and Huizenga served as directors of ANC Rental until October 2003. We lease certain space at our computer data center to ANC Rental, for which ANC Rental paid us approximately \$905,000 in 2003. ANC Rental also paid us approximately \$3.0 million for parts purchases made during 2003. We provided certain guarantees and credit enhancements to ANC Rental in connection with the spin-off. In May 2003, the bankruptcy court approved a settlement agreement that we entered into with ANC Rental and the unsecured creditors' committee in the bankruptcy, pursuant to which potential claims against us arising out of the bankruptcy were resolved and we agreed to continue to provide certain guarantees and to make certain payments. For a further discussion of our relationships with ANC Rental, please refer to our Annual Report on Form 10-K filed with the SEC on March 10, 2004.

We lease certain space at our computer data center and sublease office space at our corporate headquarters to Republic Services, Inc. Mr. Harris W. Hudson, who served as our director until May 14, 2003, and

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Mr. Huizenga currently serve as directors of Republic Services. During 2003, Republic Services paid us approximately \$615,000 pursuant to these leases. In addition, during 2003, Republic Services collected solid waste from, and leased roll-off containers to, certain of our dealerships at standard rates. In February 2004, we reached an agreement with Republic Services pursuant to which we expect to sell fleet vehicles to Republic and its employees. We expect these arrangements to continue in the future.

During 2003, we sold approximately 40 fleet vehicles to AutoZone, Inc. for an aggregate price of approximately \$620,000. Mr. Lampert is a director of AutoZone and is Chairman, Chief Executive Officer and controlling principal of ESL Investments, Inc., which together with its affiliated investment partnerships owns approximately 23% of the outstanding common stock of AutoZone. Mr. Crowley is the President and Chief Operating Officer of ESL Investments. We paid AutoZone approximately \$48,000 for parts purchases made during 2003. We received approximately \$97,000 from AutoZone for parts sales made during 2003. We expect to enter into similar arrangements with AutoZone in the future.

During 2003, we engaged the law firm of Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld, L.L.P., of which Mr. Burdick is a partner, for various legal services. Mr. Burdick is not involved directly in our relationship with Akin, Gump or in the provision of legal services to us, and the legal fees paid by us represent significantly less than 1% of the firm's annual revenue. We expect this relationship to continue in 2004.

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AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

The following statement made by our Audit Committee does not constitute soliciting material and should not be deemed filed or incorporated by reference into any filing under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, except to the extent that we specifically incorporate such statement by reference.

During 2003, the Audit Committee consisted of J. P. Bryan (Chair), Rick L. Burdick, William C. Crowley, Alan S. Dawes (since June 30, 2003), and Frederick J. Schwab (from June 30, 2003 until his voluntary resignation from the Board in September 2003). Since January 1, 2004, the Audit Committee has consisted of Messrs. Dawes (Chair since April 1, 2004) and Bryan and Irene B. Rosenfeld. The charter under which the Audit Committee operates is available on AutoNation's corporate website at <http://corp.autonation.com/investors/>. The Board has determined that each Audit Committee member has the requisite independence and other qualifications for audit committee membership under New York Stock Exchange corporate governance listing standards, the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, the Audit Committee Charter and the independence standard set forth in the AutoNation, Inc. Corporate Governance Guidelines. The Board also determined that Messrs. Dawes and Bryan are audit committee financial experts within the meaning of Item 401(h) of Regulation S-K under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended.

Our primary function is to assist the Board in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities by reviewing AutoNation's financial reporting and audit processes and systems of internal controls and disclosure controls. Management is responsible for the company's financial statements and the financial reporting process, including the system of internal controls. We also monitor the preparation by management of the company's quarterly and annual financial statements. AutoNation's independent auditor, who is accountable to us, is responsible for expressing an opinion as to whether the consolidated financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position, results of operations and cash flows of AutoNation in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles in the United States. We are solely responsible for selecting and reviewing the performance of AutoNation's independent auditor and, if we deem appropriate in our sole discretion, terminating and replacing the independent auditor. We also are responsible for reviewing and approving the terms of the independent auditor's annual engagement, including the scope of audit and non-audit services to be provided by the independent auditor and the fees to be paid for such services, and discussing with the auditor any relationships or services that may impact the objectivity and independence of the auditor.

In fulfilling our oversight role, we met and held discussions with the company's management and independent auditor. Management advised us that the company's consolidated financial statements were prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, and we reviewed and discussed the consolidated financial statements and key accounting and reporting issues with management and the independent auditor in advance of the public release of operating results and filing of annual or quarterly reports with the Securities and Exchange Commission. We discussed with the independent auditor matters deemed significant by the independent auditor, including those matters required to be discussed pursuant to *Statement on Auditing Standards No. 61 (Communication with Audit Committees)*, as amended.

The independent auditor also provided us with the written disclosures and the letter required by *Independence Standards Board Standard No. 1 (Independence Discussions with Audit Committees)*, and we discussed with the independent auditor matters relating to their independence and considered whether their provision of certain non-audit services is compatible with maintaining their independence. In the letter, the independent auditor confirmed its independence and we determined that the independent auditor's provision of non-audit services to AutoNation is compatible with maintaining their independence. We also reviewed a report by the independent auditor describing the firm's internal quality-control procedures and any material issues raised in the most recent internal quality-control review or peer review.

Based on our review with management and the independent auditor of AutoNation's audited consolidated financial statements and the independent auditor's report on such financial statements, and based on the discussions and written disclosures described above and our business judgment, we recommended to the Board of Directors that the audited consolidated financial statements be included in AutoNation's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2003 for filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Audit Committee:

Alan S. Dawes (Chair)

J. P. Bryan

Irene Rosenfeld

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**STATEMENT REGARDING OUR
CURRENT AND FORMER INDEPENDENT AUDITORS**

Effective as of May 6, 2003, the Audit Committee of our Board appointed KPMG LLP (KPMG) as our new independent auditor. Effective as of May 5, 2003, the Audit Committee dismissed Deloitte & Touche LLP (D&T) as our independent auditor. The change was made following the announcement by D&T that it had ended efforts to separate Deloitte Consulting, which at the time was providing certain non-audit consulting services to us as described below that were to become prohibited services for an audit firm to provide to its audit clients under the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 and the rules promulgated thereunder.

During 2002, prior to our Audit Committee's selection of D&T as our independent auditor for 2002, we issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to several consulting firms, including Deloitte Consulting, to obtain financial information systems implementation project management services in connection with our Shared Resource Center (SRC) project. After evaluating several firms' responses to our RFP, we determined that Deloitte Consulting was the firm best qualified to assist us in connection with our SRC project. Accordingly, we engaged Deloitte Consulting to assist us with the remainder of our SRC project. Prior to determining to engage D&T to serve as our independent auditor for 2002, our Audit Committee considered whether D&T's independence and objectivity as our auditor would be affected by our engagement of Deloitte Consulting in connection with our SRC project. In connection with our Audit Committee's consideration of such matters, D&T made, and our Audit Committee relied on, certain representations to the effect that (i) D&T had publicly announced and was actively pursuing the separation of Deloitte Consulting from D&T and expected to complete such separation before December 31, 2002, and (ii) under the applicable auditor independence standards in effect at the time we considered the engagement of D&T as our independent auditor, our engagement of Deloitte Consulting in connection with our SRC project would not be deemed to impair D&T's independence for purposes of providing audit services to us.

During fiscal year 2002 and through May 6, 2003, there were no disagreements between us and D&T on any matter of accounting principles or practices, financial statement disclosure, or auditing scope or procedure, which disagreements, if not resolved to D&T's satisfaction, would have caused D&T to make reference to the subject matter of the disagreement in connection with its report. We engaged D&T as our independent auditor effective as of May 31, 2002 and, accordingly, D&T did not render services to us with respect to accounting principles or practices, financial statement disclosure or auditing scope or procedure during the fiscal year ended December 31, 2001. None of the reportable events described under Item 304(a)(1)(v) of Regulation S-K occurred within our two most recent fiscal years and through May 6, 2003. The audit report of D&T on the consolidated financial statements of us and our subsidiaries as of and for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2002 did not contain an adverse opinion or disclaimer of opinion, nor was it qualified or modified as to uncertainty, audit scope, or accounting principles. As described above, we engaged D&T as our independent auditor effective as of May 31, 2002 and, accordingly, D&T did not render audit services with respect to the consolidated financial statements of us and our subsidiaries as of and for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2001. We provided D&T with a copy of the foregoing disclosures. Attached as Exhibit 16.1 to the Form 8-K filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on May 7, 2003 is a copy of D&T's letter, dated May 6, 2003, stating its agreement with such statements. During fiscal years 2001 and 2002 and through May 6, 2003, we did not consult with KPMG with respect to the application of accounting principles to a specified transaction, either completed or proposed, or the type of audit opinion that might be rendered on our consolidated financial statements, or any other matters or reportable events listed in Item 304(a)(2)(i) and (ii) of Regulation S-K.

Table of Contents**AUDIT FEES**

As discussed above, on May 6, 2003, our Audit Committee selected KPMG to serve as our independent auditor and to perform audit services for our fiscal year 2003. Prior to engaging KPMG to serve as our independent auditor, our Audit Committee considered whether KPMG's independence and objectivity as our auditor would be affected by our engagement of KPMG to provide certain non-audit services. The Audit Committee determined that KPMG's independence and objectivity would not be impaired, and approved the continued engagement of KPMG to complete such services. Prior to May 6, 2003, D&T served as our independent auditor.

The following table sets forth: (i) the aggregate fees billed for professional services rendered by D&T and KPMG for the audits of our financial statements for fiscal years 2002 and 2003, respectively; (ii) the aggregate fees billed in 2003 by KPMG for audit-related services for internal control documentation assistance and attest services in connection with finance portfolio sale transactions; (iii) the aggregate fees billed in 2002 by D&T for tax consulting and tax compliance and in 2003 by KPMG for tax consulting; and (iv) the aggregate fees billed in 2002 by D&T principally for financial information systems implementation project management services in connection with our SRC project and to a lesser degree for investigative services, and in 2003 by KPMG for state unclaimed property audit assistance and forensic accounting services:

<u>Fee Category:</u>	<u>Fiscal 2002⁽¹⁾</u>	<u>Fiscal 2003⁽²⁾</u>
Audit Fees	\$ 1,818,000	\$ 1,955,000
Audit-Related Fees		\$ 738,000
Tax Fees	\$ 945,000	\$ 681,000
All Other Fees	\$ 3,077,000 ⁽³⁾	\$ 386,000
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Total Fees	\$ 5,840,000	\$ 3,760,000
Ratio of Tax and All Other Fees to Audit and Audit-Related Fees	2.2:1	0.4:1
Percentage of Aggregate Fees which were Audit or Audit-Related	31%	72%

(1) Column reflects only fees billed by Deloitte & Touche, LLP, who served as our principal independent auditor during 2002.

(2) Column reflects only fees billed by KPMG, LLP, who served as our principal independent auditor during 2003.

(3) Includes \$3,059,000 of fees billed in connection with services rendered by Deloitte Consulting in connection with our SRC project, which for the reasons described above the Audit Committee concluded would not impair D&T's independence.