

Buy American Mention of the Week

American cars should run on American tires

By Roger Simmermaker

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You can't bolster American independence by fostering foreign dependency. But that's exactly what you would be doing if you were to buy Cooper brand tires next time the tread runs thin on the ones that are on your car now.

On Wednesday, June 12, Cooper Tire and Rubber Company was swept up by Apollo Tyres of India for \$2.5 billion in cash, leaving Goodyear as the sole remaining major tire company in America.

That's right. Every other major company you can name is foreign owned except for Goodyear, which also owns the Kelly-Springfield and Dunlop brands. Bridgestone/Firestone is based in Japan. Michelin (which also owns the American-sounding BF Goodrich) is based in France. Continental is a German-owned brand.

It is correct that all of the above foreign brands make at least some of their tires in the United States, but their profits unfortunately accrue to foreign countries to reward foreign owners, foreign investors, and foreign stockholders. And the taxes on those profits are paid to the treasuries of foreign governments instead of our national treasury. That's something to keep in mind the next time you hear about the oversized budget deficit and lack of adequate tax receipts in our nation's capital.

A March 6, 2013 Harris poll found that buying American is still highly valued even though we live in an increasingly global economy. When asked the question "Which of the following best describes how important you feel it is to Buy American?" seventy percent of Americans responded when the product type was 'Automobiles'.

One has to wonder if these same Americans realize their purchasing decisions directly affect the globalized nature of the marketplace in which they live. It would seem logical that if most Americans want to buy American cars, they would also want as many American parts as possible on those cars to keep them as American as possible.

Car buyers have little choice over which tires come with their new car, truck, or SUV, but they do have control over which brand goes on the car once the initial ones wear out. That's where Cooper Tire and Rubber Company makes its money, because Cooper is primarily focused on replacement tires. Cooper's tire brand lineup includes Cooper, Mastercraft, Starfire, Roadmaster, and Avon brands.

But buying the right brand of tire has more to do with just where the jobs are, where profits go, where the taxes are paid, who gets rewarded for their investment, and which companies and national economies reap future streams of income for their ownership ventures. Buying the right brand of tire (or the right brand of any product) determines who has the power to influence and decide how our national economy is run.

Now that India will have a major foothold in our market, they will no doubt want a major say how our national economy is run. The sprawling foreign-owned Apollo Tyres, after spending \$2.5 billion in cash for the acquisition of Cooper, will no doubt lobby our legislators for their benefit.

What's more, our ability to proudly proclaim our national independence is at stake as we now stand on the threshold of losing the entire tire industry to distant, foreign owners. Exactly how is America an independent nation if our manufacturing base is under foreign ownership, foreign influence, and foreign control?

I have to say that I have had good luck with Cooper brand tires in the past (as well as Goodyear and Kelly-Springfield), and I still have them on one of our family cars now, but one thing is for sure: this brand that focuses on replacement tires will be replaced with a Goodyear brand when the current Coopers I have run thin.

In my opinion, if I continued to buy Cooper tires or any other foreign brand, contributing to the possible future demise of America's remaining major tire company (Goodyear), I would certainly feel a little bit less authentic have less to celebrate and when Independence Day rolls around next year. Let's keep American brands like Goodyear in American hands.

Roger Simmermaker is the author of *How Americans Can Buy American* and the award-winning *My Company 'Tis of Thee: 50 Patriotic American Companies American Consumers Should Know About* ([Axiom Business Book Awards](#)), and writes 'Buy American Mention of the Week' articles for wnd.com and his website www.howtobuyamerican.com. Roger has a degree in Electronics Engineering Technology, is president of his local Machinists Union, has been a frequent guest on Fox News, CNN, and MSNBC, and has been quoted in The Wall Street Journal, USA Today, New York Times, and Business Week among many other publications.