

## **Tough guy with a tender heart**

In 2001, Mark Barnett was diagnosed with cancer. Throughout his 3-year treatment, he received several blood transfusions. He realized then just how important blood donors really are. He decided that when he was ready and able, he would give back. During a weekend last June, Mark hosted one of the largest blood drives that United Blood Services/Rio Grande in El Paso, Texas had ever seen. Mark's "Blood Brothers" campaign netted more than 360 blood donations—many from bikers—during the summer, when blood donations become scarce.

Mark's family owns the Barnett Harley Davidson dealership. It's one of the largest Harley dealerships in the country and has long hosted three blood drives a year averaging 35 blood donations each. When Mark stepped in, the result was a staggering 900 percent increase. His strategy was to create "an event" and to bring lots of publicity to the need for blood. And what an event it was! Mark printed and mailed more than 5,000 postcards and teamed up with local TV and radio stations to promote and cover the event. He approached several of his suppliers requesting giveaways like T-shirts and bandanas so that everyone could walk away a winner. At the drive he had food booths and dished up banana splits for anyone who gave blood. To top it off, Barnett Harley Davidson donated an \$18,000 Harley for a drawing among those who participated in the blood drive.

"It can happen to anyone like it happened to me," Mark says. "You don't realize how important having blood on the hospital shelves is until you need it. I want to make sure that no one ever needs to worry about that."

