

'DAN's Got My Back'

Chattahoochee Scuba Shows Why Not Even A Flood Can Stop It

BY SCOTT JONES

For Joshua Blair of Chattahoochee Scuba in Columbus, Ga., doing business has its own unique set of hurdles. Since he took over the dive store in 2005, his business has weathered staffing problems, a tornado and a flood.

Having business partners Blair can count on has helped the store grow, and being a DAN® Business Member, he says, gives the store a major advantage. Blair, who is a DAN Instructor Trainer, even calls his store a DAN "branch office."

"At first, we weren't a DAN Business Member, and I realized what a mistake that was," Blair said. "Being affiliated with DAN benefits our store and our students. We require all of our students to sign up for the DAN Student Membership Program, and we insist divers traveling with us have DAN insurance coverage also."

Blair promotes DAN to his customers, and DAN course materials have flown off the shelves this year.

He says he enjoys working directly with Sam Merrill, his DAN Business Membership liaison. "It's a business relationship, but it's also a personal one," he said. "She calls us every couple of weeks to check in, and I appreciate that personal attention."

In early 2007 when a tornado struck the store, collapsing the store's roof, flooding the interior and leaving major damage, Blair wasn't surprised to get a call from Merrill asking how DAN could help. Once she learned about the damages, Merrill coordinated aid and replaced products.

Store Manager Stephanie Johnson said DAN staff didn't just talk about being concerned for the store. "They showed it," Johnson said. "DAN staff were there when we needed them, just like they are there for divers who need them. Our situ-



Joshua Blair (right), owner of Chattahoochee Scuba in Columbus, Ga., and store manager Stephanie Johnson say safety is a big seller. Says Blair: "Being affiliated with DAN benefits our store and our students. We require all of our students to sign up for the DAN Student Membership Program, and we insist divers traveling with us have DAN insurance coverage also."

ation was a little out of the ordinary, but it's great to see that the people we stand behind every day stood behind us when we needed them."

Chattahoochee Scuba has become an active Business Member, taking advantage of the Points program. "Through that program, we've earned not one, not two, but three DAN oxygen units," Blair said. "We are very fortunate to be able to have this level of safety equipment. Some stores don't even have one oxygen unit to take with them on dive trips, and we have three.

"We also received two Coast Guardian first aid kits as well. They've really been

a big help, especially with our staff and customers. When they see us loading up the big kits, it lets them know that we focus on safety. Thank you, DAN."

Blair is enthusiastic about his store's growing relationship with DAN. "It's amazing that with so much happening in our industry, I know that I can count on DAN," he said. "When I need them, I know that DAN's got my back."



DAN Member SCOTT JONES is a dive journalist who has been diving and writing about it for 20-plus years. He is currently editor of Divenewswire, a press-release service with wide distribution in the dive industry and Diverwire, a website geared toward scuba divers.

About The Author