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Editor and Publisher
Suzanne L. Stansbury



Art Director
Katherine Watson



Contributing Editor
Alan M. Petrillo

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Everyone has something. You've heard the phrase. It refers to an issue, challenge or struggle that you might be facing. And we've all got them albeit on varying levels. The key is how we react and deal with them that sets us apart.

Travis Mills' "something" has changed his life, and the lives of countless others, for the better. This year's Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC) Keynote Speaker is simply a force of nature. In his New York Times bestseller, "Tough as They Come" it was obvious that his mission was not only to fight for his country and all it stands for, but to fight for his fellow veterans.

But in case you don't know anything about him, Retired United States Army Staff Sergeant Travis Mills of the 82nd Airborne is a recalibrated warrior, motivational speaker, actor, author and advocate for veterans and amputees. And despite losing portions of both arms and legs from an IED while on his third tour of duty in Afghanistan, he has found a way to overcome the ample challenges he's been dealt, defy the odds and give back in a way few of us can ever imagine. His motto, "Never give up. Never quit" is how he truly lives his life.

I have no doubt that his Keynote, Tuesday, September 20 at the Atlantic City Convention Center will be inspirational and moving. Sergeant Mills will share his journey, with his signature humor, while helping us all put our lives into perspective. He may not know much about carwashing, but he certainly knows a lot about overcoming insurmountable odds and coming out the other end stronger, wiser and repurposed.



Suzanne L. Stansbury

To help Sergeant Mills continue to give back to his fellow veterans

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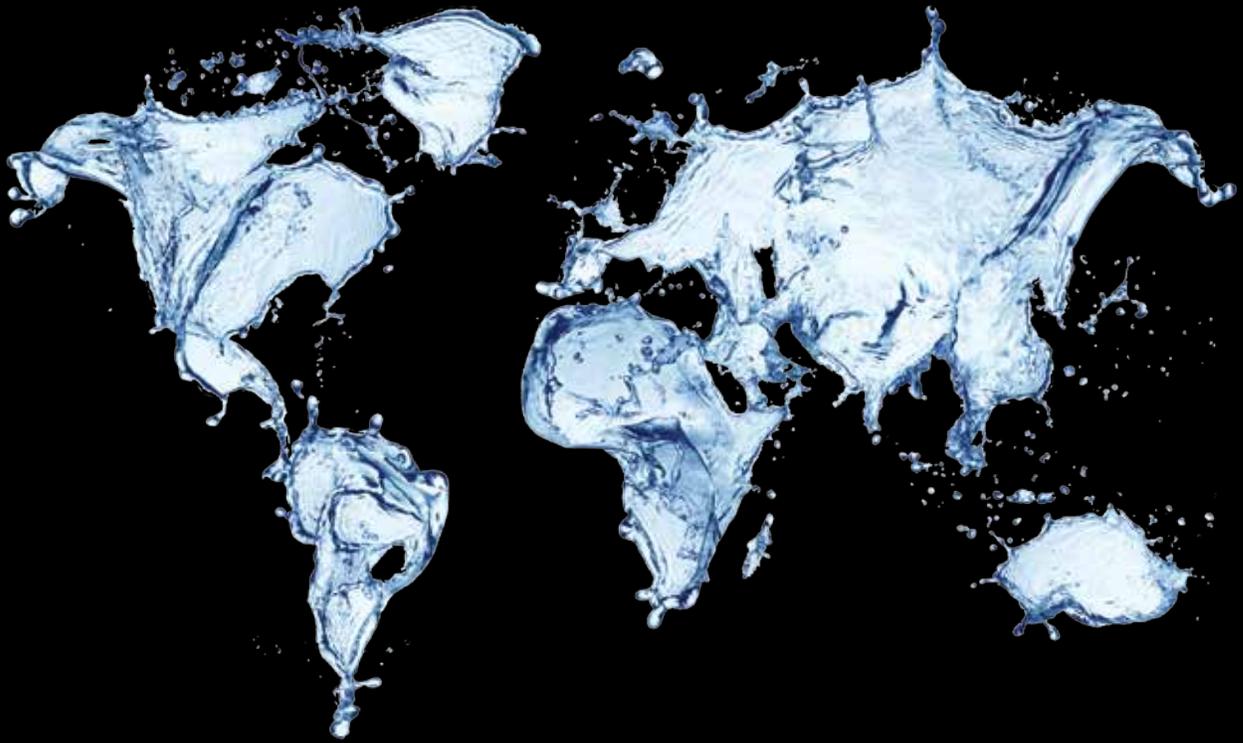
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Picture Perfect!

You are looking at 393 years of industry knowledge among five life-long friends. The knowledge and experience they share is noteworthy, as is their friendship. These leaders were photographed at The Carwash Show® 2022 in Nashville this past May. (L to R: Bill Martin, Bob Hodge, Bruce Milen, Tom Hoffman, Sr. and Fred Grauer). **NC**

*Photo courtesy of Tom Hoffman, Sr.



Iconic Car Wash Sign One Step Closer to Landmark Status

Seattle's iconic Elephant Car Wash, in the city's Denny Triangle neighborhood, closed in October 2020 after opening its door in 1951. One of its two well-known signs went to the Seattle Museum of History and Industry and the smaller sign was gifted to Amazon. It is the smaller sign that just received approval by the City of Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board to be considered as an official landmark.

The sign is currently being restored and the potential new location for the sign, should it become a landmark, will be at 7th and Blanchard in the city, which will enable public viewing. We will follow up after the August 17 public meeting for next steps if so voted. **NC**



Kindness Matters

At the Hoffman Car Wash on Hoosick Street in Troy egress can be challenging. Tom Hoffman, Sr., however, believes that by placing this sign near the exit motorists notice it and yield – sometimes. “It makes a difference,” he said. “I’ve had someone tell me that.” The company began using the phrase in 2020 and have incorporated it into their marketing. **NC**



CORRECTION

Please note that in our summer cover story Jessica Price Easter's phone number was misprinted. It is 501/590-9210. Our apologies. **NC**

WASH VOLUME INDEX

Our Wash Volume Index through June for the most part was up with a high in New England and a dip in upstate New York. We asked our contributors to speak briefly on the last quarter of washing in their necks of the woods.

Doug Rieck on the Jersey Shore noted that comparing 2021 to 2022 with his three locations he is down between 5 and 6 percent in volume and the same income as in 2021 because of price hikes. He said the weather in his market was a determining factor due to a weak salt/snow season and two weeks of rain during pollen season. His saving grace was a price increase. He noted that consumers have been understanding about price increases so far, but will be less so after back to school and the mid-terms.

Dave DuGoff in the Mid-Atlantic says his gut feeling is that our industry is strong and customers are loyal and willing to pay the increases that are being passed along. While 2022 has better gross sales than 2021, net revenue is down significantly — everything costs more! That said, he believes that a good living can be made in carwashing.

Steve Weekes in upstate New York said that winter over winter was pretty close, but you could not beat last year's pollen season. This year's had just a couple sparse, great days that ended quickly. Last year's summer saw a wet June and that this year it's been much drier so he might gain some ground over the next quarter.

Dave Ellard in New England agreed with Steve Weekes. Last year he said the pollen season was tremendous, but this year less so because of many cloudy and damp days. He noted that it did not rain a lot in inches, but many drizzly days occurred. However, the weather in June was more favorable for carwashing and overall a very good year in his market. **NC**

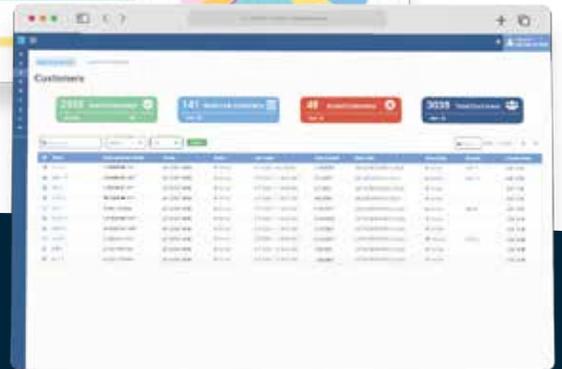
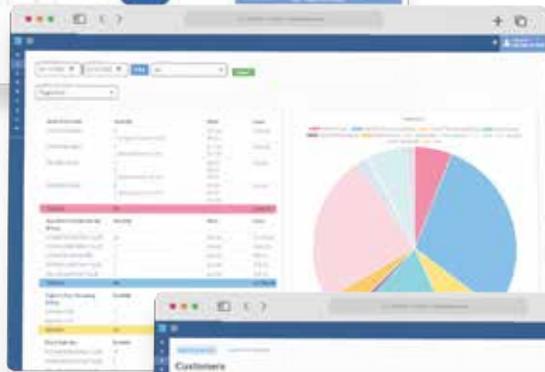
Thanks to operators Doug Rieck (NJ), Dave DuGoff (MD), Steve Weekes (NY) and Dave Ellard (MA) for their input.

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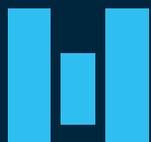


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AMPLIFY PRESENTS ST. JUDE WITH \$100,000 DONATION



Photo credit: (left to right) James Harris, III; Brett Collins; Jessica Kortas; Paul Fazio; Bill Martin; Jeff Pavone and Lanese Barnett.

Amplify Car Wash Advisors, Scottsdale, AZ, a national mergers and acquisitions and capital advisory firm, presented a \$100,000 donation to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital® at The Car Wash Show 2022, hosted by the International Carwash Association, in Nashville, TN, in May. At the event, the advisory firm announced its corporate partnership with St. Jude and delivered on its pledge of a minimum donation of \$100,000 in 2022, said a company press release.

Inspired by his industry peers, Paul Fazio, chief executive officer of Sonny's, The Car Wash Factory, Tamarac, FL, matched the St. Jude donation, bringing the total to \$200,000. "When Bill told me of Amplify Car Wash Advisors' plans to support St. Jude, I was incredibly moved, and felt this encounter did not happen by chance," said Fazio. "My wife and I have family with deep roots to this great organization for decades through ALSAC, the fundraising and awareness organization for St. Jude. I am thrilled to now be in a position to give in a significant way."

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital is leading the way the world understands, treats, and defeats childhood cancer and other life-threatening diseases. Treatments invented at St. Jude have helped push the overall childhood cancer survival rate from 20 percent to more than 80 percent since the hospital opened 60 years ago. Because the majority of St. Jude funding comes from generous donors, St. Jude has the freedom to focus on what matters most — saving kids regardless of their financial situation, said the release.

Amplify Car Wash Advisors Partner Bill Martin shared that he and his business partner, Jeff Pavone, decided to make a commitment to St. Jude after attending the Motor City Wash Works annual charity event supporting St. Jude. "Bill and I are so fortunate to be part of the carwash industry and we've made it a mission of our firm to give back. Paul's matching \$100,000 donation, and Motor City's ongoing support of St. Jude, is a testament to how truly blessed we are to be part of such an amazing community," said Pavone.

Richard C. Shadyac Jr., president and CEO of ALSAC, added, "Partnerships like this, with industries and businesses driven by purpose, help St. Jude Children's Research Hospital advance its six-year, record \$12.9 billion strategic plan that furthers patient care and research to help more of the 400,000 kids around the world with cancer each year. We are so grateful for this support." **NC**

For more information visit: amplifywash.com and amplifywash.com/podcast, stjude.org, sonnydirect.com and motorcitywashworks.com

AMPLIFY CAR WASH ADVISORS ADDS TO TEAM

Amplify Car Wash Advisors, Scottsdale, AZ, a national mergers and acquisitions and capital advisory firm, has expanded its team with the addition of five new members, according to a company press release.

"The carwash space has experienced unprecedented mergers and acquisitions activity," said Jeff Pavone, partner at Amplify Car Wash Advisors. "And with that, our firm is growing to keep pace with the needs of our clients. For a company that is only about two years old, we are truly honored to continue attracting such high-level, well-respected talent to our team."

Jeff Fazio, a fourth generation carwasher, joined as vice president of mergers and acquisitions, southeast region. His grandfather, Sonny Fazio, founded Sonny's Enterprises, which is now the largest carwash equipment manufacturer in the world. Jeff Fazio was with Sonny's for 12 years in tunnel equipment sales, including national account sales; he participated in more than 200 carwash projects during that time, said the release. "I joined the Amplify Car Wash Advisors team hoping to share with others some of what the Fazio's have learned in our family's 70+ years in the industry," said Fazio. "I have a deep connection to the South-

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east and I am looking forward to drawing on my experience and relationships to help carwash owners navigate their path.”

Chris Niro also joined Amplify as vice president of business and legal affairs, bringing a strong background in complex commercial transactions, corporate formation and governance and brand (intellectual property) development experience to the team, said the release. Niro is also a seasoned litigator appearing in federal and state courts around the country in commercial and intellectual property matters. He is a graduate of DePaul University College of Law. “Coming from a law firm in Chicago, I’m blown away by the carwash space,” said Niro. “Even as the industry is experiencing a major shift from fragmented ‘mom-and-pop’ operations to more corporate Fortune-500 types, there is still a sense of community where even competitors can be friends which is certainly unique and I’m excited to now join.”

Kellie Martin joined as director of client relations where she will spearhead new client outreach through strategic marketing campaigns as well as focus on the full spectrum client experience. Prior to joining Amplify Car Wash Advisors, Martin co-founded a communications firm providing clients nationwide with expertise in political campaign outreach. “Satisfied clients are the touchstone of any business,” said Martin. “I look forward to bringing my decades of communications and client relationship expertise to my new role at Amplify Car Wash Advisors.”

Additionally, Brandon Reuter joined the firm as a business analyst. Reuter worked as an information technology expert at Microsoft Corporation, with experience in business systems and analytics. Reuter was also a corporate trainer for Landry’s luxury restaurant concept, Mastro’s Ocean Club, where he helped create company standards and curriculum focusing on business efficiency and customer service.

Former Amplify Car Wash Advisors intern, Stanley Cai, joined the team full time as a mergers and acquisitions analyst. Cai is a graduate of Arizona State University with a Bachelor of Science in economics. **NC**

For more information visit at amplifywash.com and amplifywash.com/podcast

AMPLIFY CAR WASH ADVISORS ANNOUNCES JAX KAR WASH ACQUIRES OASIS CAR WASH

Amplify Car Wash Advisors, Scottsdale, AZ, a national mergers and acquisitions and capital advisory firm, announced that Oasis Car Wash has joined the Jax Kar Wash brand. Jax Kar Wash partnered with TRP Capital Partners, a middle-market private equity firm, earlier this year. Oasis Car Wash is the second carwash acquisition for the company.

“We are in a new phase of growth for Jax Kar Wash,” said Jason Milen, chief executive officer of Jax Kar Wash. “When we visited Oasis, we were immediately impressed by the quality of their operations and knew they would be a great addition to the Jax family.”

Oasis Car Wash has five locations, four in Michigan and



one in Indiana. The brand was started in 1998 by partners Larry Ruby and Dallas Hawkins. “Turning over a business you started from one shovel of dirt 25 years ago and grew to several locations is a difficult and even uncomfortable process,” said Hawkins. “So, when it came time for Larry and me to sell, we chose Amplify Car Wash Advisors to guide us through the process because of their strong reputation and leadership in the industry. Their team was professional and did a great job walking us through each step.”

This is the second Amplify Car Wash Advisors and Jax Kar Wash deal, according to the company press release. “Working with the Milens and Steve [Carrel] just a few months ago to facilitate Jax Kar Wash’s partnership with TRP Capital, it’s exciting to see the Jax brand continue to grow and how we can be a part of that growth,” said Jeff Pavone, partner at Amplify Car Wash Advisors. Amplify Car Wash Advisors represented the seller in the transaction.

Ruby echoed that Jax Kar Wash was a good fit to take over the Oasis brand. “Joining Jax and TRP will be a nice deal for the employees on our side,” said Ruby. “Our customers will benefit from the improvements a larger operator is able to make, too. All in all, this is a good opportunity for everyone involved. Now, Dallas and I are looking forward to catching our breath and enjoying a little downtime as we let the transition sink in.” **NC**

For more information visit amplifywash.com and amplifywash.com/podcast

GREEN CLEAN EXPANDS MARKET REACH



Green Clean Express Auto Wash, Columbus, OH, has expanded into North Carolina opening its largest express wash in Elizabeth City. This site joins an existing portfolio of 12 locations throughout Charlottesville and Richmond, VA, according to a company press release.

In addition to promoting the new site, Green Clean took the opportunity to raise \$5,246.35 for the Food Bank of the Albemarle to help further their mission of fighting hunger and poverty in a 15-county area in northeast North Carolina. “We’re very

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pleased with the outpouring of support from the Elizabeth City community during our construction phase and most recently our Grand Opening,” said John Roush, Express Wash Concepts CEO. “We look forward to being an active member of the Elizabeth City community, and will continue to look for ways that we can air impactful organizations such as the Foodbank of the Albemarle,” he added. “We want our presence to mean something to the communities in which we operate.” **NC**

For more information visit greencleanexpress.com

JOSE COSTA NAMED MAGNOLIA WASH HOLDINGS' CEO



Jose Costa

Jose Costa has been appointed CEO of Magnolia Wash Holdings, Charlotte, NC, an express carwash operator with nearly 70 locations across Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. Costa is the company's first CEO and will oversee Magnolia's continued growth and expansion throughout the Southeast. “Jose is the proven leader Magnolia Wash Holdings needs to take the enter-

prise to the next level,” said Sean Epps, partner at A&M Capital Opportunities (“AMCO”). “His track record leading and growing best-in-class multi-unit retail organizations makes him uniquely qualified to capitalize on Magnolia's entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to investing in innovation and quality. Jose has an unmatched talent for identifying and executing on new growth opportunities, and we are excited to see him translate his experience into the high-growth carwash market.”

Costa has a proven track record of leading large multi-unit retail organizations across multiple end-markets, according to the company press release. “The express carwash industry is rapidly growing, and I believe Magnolia Wash Holdings is in a prime position to lead the way with an unwavering focus on customer experience and quality,” said Costa. “The company has built a reputation for operational excellence and innovative technology that delivers a premium experience for consumers and teammates. I look forward to driving Magnolia's continued expansion and building upon the pillars of investment, innovation, sustainability and communication that give the company the management structure, training and superior operations that set it apart in the industry.”

In 2020, Frank Bennett and Brooks Moyer recapitalized Express Wash Holdings with AMCO and subsequently created

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Magnolia to pursue a multi-pronged growth strategy in the Southeast U.S. The company is affiliated with Alvarez & Marsal Capital (“A&M Capital”), a multi-strategy private equity investment firm. **NC**

For more information visit magnoliawashholdings.com and alvarezandmarsal.com

MOO MOO EXPRESS RAISES \$9,000 FOR NEIGHBORHOOD BRIDGES GAHANNA



Moo Moo Express Car Wash, Columbus, OH, celebrated the Grand Opening of its 23rd Central Ohio express carwash location with 10 days of free carwashes and a monetary donation campaign for Neighborhood Bridges Gahanna, according to a company press release. Throughout the Grand Opening Moo Moo gave away more than 1,800 free washes at a retail value of more than \$32,400. The wash also collected \$9,000 in monetary donations for the organization to help further their mission of bridging communities with schools in providing basic needs, removing barriers and seeking equity for students so they can engage and succeed in school and life, said the release. “We are thankful that we could leverage our Grand Opening to raise money for such an important community resource,” said John Roush, Express Wash Concepts CEO. “We will continue to look for ways that we can provide assistance to the Gahanna community that has shown us so much love and support.”

Neighborhood Bridges is a 501 © (3) charitable organization that responds to the growing rate of poverty in suburban and rural America. It serves 34 communities in Ohio and Alabama.

ChemQuest, Moo Moo’s chemical supplier, also donated \$1,000 to the effort. **NC**

For more information visit expresswashconcepts.com and neighborhoodbridges.org

CLEAN EXPRESS IS A 2022 TOP WORKPLACE

Clean Express Auto Wash, Columbus, OH, has been awarded a 2022 Top Workplaces honor by cleveland.com and The Plain Dealer, according to a company press release. The list is based on anonymous employee feedback gathered through a third-party survey, Energage. This honor was based on positive feedback on alignment, execution and connection, the release stated. “During this very challenging time, Top Workplaces has proven to be a beacon of light for organizations, as well as a sign of resiliency and strong business performance,” said Eric Rubino, Energage CEO.

According to Clean Express Auto Wash Founder, John Roush, there are more than 300 team members. “Being recognized as a Top Workplace thanks to our team members is pretty humbling, and this is a very proud moment for our young company,” he said. “Our goal is to continue to be recognized as a repeat top workplace for years to come.” **NC**

For more information visit cleanexpresswash.com

SPLASH ACQUIRES UPSTATE NY’S WASH BOSS



Splash Car Wash, Milford, CT, has acquired Wash Boss, an express wash located in Rensselaer, NY. Wash Boss marks Splash’s 33rd wash in New York and its initial entry into the Albany market. Wash Boss was developed and operated by Jim, Kim and Peter Enzien, who opened the wash in 2020. “We are so pleased to acquire this great wash. Moreover, we’re excited to add Jim and Kim to our team,” said Splash CEO Mark Curtis. “The Enzien’s are clearly great developers, and we look to continue to develop new washes with their help.”

Jim Enzien, co-owner of Wash Boss, added, “It was great working with the Splash team to get this transaction done. We’re confident that our employees will mesh with Splash’s award-winning culture and be treated well after the sale.

“This combination with Splash provides our team with even greater career opportunities in the larger Splash network.”

Additional Expansion Ahead

Splash has also announced zoning approval for two new express wash sites in Shelburne, VT, and Newburgh, NY. Both sites are expected to open in early 2023. Splash’s newest express site, located in East Haven, CT, opened this summer. The company is affiliated with Palladin Consumer Retail Partners, a private equity firm with extensive experience investing in and building leading consumer brands. **NC**

For more information visit splashcarwashes.com and pcrp.com



Keynote Speaker Travis Mills

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An Interview with NRCC Keynoter & Recalibrated Warrior Travis Mills

By Suzanne L. Stansbury

On April 10, 2012, United States Army Staff Sergeant Travis Mills of the 82nd Airborne was critically injured on his third tour of duty in Afghanistan. He was hit by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) and lost portions of both legs and arms. He is one of only five quadruple amputees from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to survive his injuries.

His road to a “recalibrated” life, as he calls it, has not been an easy one. But his new mission has brought him great joy, service and accomplishment. His motto, “Never give up, Never quit,” is clearly fitting. He has taken a really bad Monday at the office, as he jokingly recounts, and shared his story with audiences across the country, authored the New York Times bestseller, “Tough As They Come” and become a fierce advocate for veterans and amputees.

We got a chance to interview Sergeant Mills, this year’s Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC) Keynote Speaker, for a deeper dig into his journey and incredible story of courage, service and survival.

SS: First, Staff Sergeant Mills, thank you for your service to our country and for fulfilling your calling and helping so many overcome great challenges. And thank you for making the time to speak to our attendees and share your story of fearlessness, survival and determination.

There were many sections of your bestseller, “Tough As They Come,” that had an affect on me. But one really stood out. I recently had to deal with the impact of a garage fire. I found myself saying to many, “It could have been so much worse.” I’m guessing that you would have said, however, “It will get better.”

Such a simple turn of words, but so impactful — and positive. And like many others facing challenges, according to your philosophy, it all comes down to the choices you make.

In your book you reference your childhood in Michigan and the great level of responsibility you and your siblings were bestowed. You said you were given a job to do and you figured out how to do the job. It appears that strong work ethic has carried you through life (and served you extremely well in service). Has it, and did you ever question it?

TM: There is no question that having a strong work ethic has served me well throughout my life, both before, during and after my military career. But just like anyone else, I have good days and bad days. I have times where my work ethic feels a little harder to tap into than others. That’s normal, that’s part of being human. No one feels their A-Game all the time. But what I do try to do when I’m not quite feeling as motivated as maybe I’d like to, is to take a minute to be grateful for everything I have. And while I don’t have arms and legs, my life is



United States Army Staff
Sergeant Travis Mills
of the 82nd Airborne

very full, and what I do have is my life...and I know many of our country’s service men and women have given the ultimate sacrifice. When you think about that for a minute, it’s easy to get perspective and find a second wind.

SS: You mention in your book that you had to set realistic goals after your injury in order to move forward. You seem like a bit of an overachiever, if you’ll indulge me, so how hard was “realistic” goal setting for you? And, how important was it at the same time?

TM: Ha! Great question. Some might say that my goals weren’t realistic, but to me, they were. They were hard, I always wanted to do more, more than the doctors recommended, but I think that mentality helped me heal a little faster. I think it helped me feel mentally that I was doing everything I could to get my life back, and then some. Everyone’s ‘hard effort’ is different, but you can’t lie to yourself. You know if you’re pushing yourself and you know if you’re really not. I think it’s important to hold yourself accountable to give your best effort in anything you do.

SS: After your two+ year recovery at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Maryland, basically re-learning everything from walking to picking up a credit card, you say you still face daily challenges but you refuse to quit or refer to yourself as a “wounded warrior.” How do you continue to tackle those daily challenges?

TM: One at a time. That’s it, really. What is the problem that needs solving right now? Focus on that, get it done, and move

Continued on page 20...

32nd NRCC September 19-21!

The 32nd Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC), September 19-21, at the Atlantic City Convention Center (ACCC) should be on your radar to attend. The 350+ exhibits and diverse educational lineup is a highlight for operators in the Northeast, as well as outside the market. The host hotel for the show is the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino on Atlantic City's iconic boardwalk, a short Jitney shuttle ride to the ACCC. This year's NRCC is hosted by the New England Carwash Association and co-chaired by Dave Ellard and John Shalbey, Jr.

Here's what's in store for attendees:

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

2:00-5:00p.m.

Registration at ACCC

3:30-6:00p.m. **All seminars are at the ACCC!*

Virtual Wash Tour

Moderated by Tom Hoffman, Jr.

Sites Include:

- Flagship Car Wash, owner Guy Paolozzi, MD/VA
- Rainforest Car Wash, Giles Family, Ohio
- Sudzy Salmon, owner Jason Woodward, Eagle River, AK

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

7:30-8:45a.m.

Early Bird/Breakfast moderated by Patrick Mosesso

This show favorite is a candid, unscripted panel discussion with seasoned operators who will answer any and all questions relating to carwashing in an informal panel discussion. You will be able to ask and text questions at the event, as well as provide them prior to the event at info@nrccshow.com

Panelists Include:

- Mike Shullman, Russell Speeders, Norwalk, CT
- Amanda Kubarek, K & S Car Wash, Auburn, NY
- Victor Thomas, Washsense Group LLC, Easthampton, NJ
- Mike Ashley, Virginia Carwash Industries, Inc., Toms Brook, VA

9:00-9:45a.m.

How to Create a Carwash Mentoring Program

Whether you run one wash or 50, you can put a mentoring program together that will help motivate and retain your staff. Carla Thompson, Human Resource Manager with Mister Car Wash, will explain the relevancy and show you just how easy it is to do so you and your team can reap the long-term benefits.

10:00-10:45a.m.

How to Foster a Talent-ful Carwash

You might say that Jason Woodward of Sudzy Salmon Car Washes in Eagle River, AK, is not only talented, but "talent-ful." In an age when finding, and securing, employees is at a premium, this Alaska car-washer's cup runneth over. His innovative approach to recruitment, empowerment and employee retention will provide much food for thought and concepts you may want to implement at your wash.

11:00-11:45a.m.

Keynoter Travis Mills

New York Times bestselling author of "Tough as They Come," Travis Mills, is this year's Keynote Speaker. Mills, a retired United States Army Staff Sergeant of the 82nd Airborne, is a recalibrated warrior, motivational speaker, actor, author and advocate for veterans and amputees. Despite losing portions of both arms and legs from an IED while on active duty in Afghanistan, he continues to overcome life's challenges, breaking physical barriers and defying the odds.

Mills and his wife Kelsey founded the Travis Mills Foundation, a nonprofit organization, formed to benefit and assist post 9/11 veterans who have been injured in active duty or as a result of their service to our nation.

The Mills Group LLC was started shortly after, affording Mills the opportunity to speak to companies and organizations nationwide inspiring all to overcome life's challenges and adversity. His story has been featured on Fox News, The O'Reilly Factor, CNN and The Ellen DeGeneres Show. Sergeant Mills will share his courageous story with us and explain his personal motto, "Never give up. Never quit."

Sponsors:



12:00-1:00p.m.

Award's Luncheon

1:00-6:00p.m.

Exhibits

6:00-7:00p.m.

Welcome Reception

The all-inclusive Welcome Reception, in the Lower Level of the Atlantic City Convention Center, is open to all attendees no matter their level of registration. It features "Jersey" snacks, beer & wine and is an opportunity to catch up and relax before heading out to dinner.

Sponsor:



Continued ...

on. Soon enough, you'll have solved a lot of problems, and that builds confidence to help you solve the next one.

SS: In your book you write that your faith, service to your country and your love of family have and will always pull you through adversity.

What advice can you give to someone who may not have all of that behind him/her?

TM: You can use any adversity as an excuse to why you couldn't do something, or you can use it as a reason, as a motivation to do that very same thing. That's a choice we all make, every day. Having people and faith behind you makes it easier, but even without those things, the choice of how you react to challenges in life is exactly that...it's a choice that you have complete ownership of.

SS: What has your journey since the accident taught you that our attendees can take home with them and possibly use to strengthen their resolve, relationships and businesses?

TM: You might assume I don't know much about ancient Greek philosophy, and you'd be 100 percent right about that, I don't, but there is one old Greek guy I do know something about. His name was Epictetus, he was a Stoic philosopher. He said a lot of smart things, including this...

People are disturbed not by the things that happen, but by their opinion of the things that happen.

And really, what that means is, it's not what happens TO you that matters, what matters most is how you react to those things, your attitude toward those things...and make no mistake about it...that reaction is completely your choice.

That bomb in Afghanistan took my arms, and it took my

legs...and I can't change that...but it was completely up to me if it would take the rest of my life.

SS: From your book we know that your favorite meal is steak, preferably wood-fired, with cheesecake for dessert. What other interesting tidbits can you share about Travis Mills?

TM: That has been updated actually. My favorite meal now is steak and cheesecake from The White Duck Brew Pub in Winthrop, Maine...which I now own! Yum!

SS: Our attendees will also see during your Keynote that you use humor to put people at ease. How important is humor in everyone's daily life?

TM: Yes, I try to use humor to disarm every situation I'm in, just to make it a fair playing field, you know?

If I can laugh at my situation, and I do, all the time...hopefully, you can find a way to laugh at your own. It's way more fun than crying.

SS: You and your wife, Kelsey, founded the Travis Mills Foundation in 2013. The Foundation's mission is to benefit and assist post 9/11 veterans who have been injured in active duty or as a result of their service. How important to your "recalibration" has that work been for you?

TM: My uniform doesn't fit me like it used to, but my work through the incredible people at the Travis Mills Foundation gives me a similar sense of purpose, of meaning, of service to others that I felt during my time in active service.

SS: The Foundation provides veterans and their families an all-inclusive, all-expenses paid, barrier-free vacation to Maine, where you live, where they can participate in adaptive activities, connect with other veteran families and reset in the Pine Tree State.

What have been the takeaways from those families?

TM: I like to think it's life-changing, but if not that, at least it's really, really high quality family time...and who doesn't need more of that?

SS: How has that work impacted you and Kelsey?

TM: It's made us stronger as a couple. I recommend it to every couple. Find a way to serve others, together, and I think you can't help but to grow closer through that kind of experience. We both get a lot of meaning out of it, that's for sure.

SS: You are now in the process of renovating the former Maine Chance Lodge (owned by cosmetics pioneer Elizabeth Arden from 1878-1966) into a retreat center for wounded and disabled veterans and their families. What types of classes and activities will you have available?

TM: We have many, both for the veterans, and for their families. We offer five to six day retreats for the whole family at no cost to the family at all, where they can fish, swim, kayak...you name it. And we have programs that are more traditionally therapeutic for the veteran. There is a lot of information at our website, www.travismillsfoundation.org

Continued ...

32nd NRCC September 19-21! ... *continued from page 19*

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

8:00-9:30a.m.

Marketing Experts Talk Growing Your Club and Building Your Brand

Beth Martin, VP of Marketing at Express Wash Concepts, OH, will lead panelists:

- Nick Lopez, President of Bubble Bath Services, TX,
- Wade Keith, Brand Manager of Breeze Thru Car Wash, WY/CO and
- Kacy Erdelyi, VP of Marketing with Spark Car Wash, NJ, in a lively discussion on these key topics.

This event includes breakfast.

9:30a.m.-1:30p.m.

Exhibits

For more information and to register for the event and secure your hotel visit nrccshow.com or call 800.868.8590.

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SS: Where does the funding come from, and how can our attendees help with financial support?

TM: Every dollar we raise starts in ... someone's heart. It all comes from someone saying to them self, "I want to help these brave men and women who have served our country." Sometimes that comes in the form of a small personal donation, and sometimes it comes in the form of a larger corporate donation, but it all starts from simply wanting to help, and every single dollar matters. You can check out "Get Involved" at the website, www.travismillsfoundation.org.

SS: After you complete the renovation and open the Lodge back up, what is next on your drawing board?

TM: Fill the place up, maximize the potential to help people, and hopefully, quickly get to the point where we have to grow again!

SS: Sergeant Mills, thank you again for your service and time, and for inspiring so many. Please continue to lead with love and determination and courage and humor. Your Keynote will be inspiring! **NC**

Suzanne L. Stansbury is the Editor/Publisher of the Northeast Carwasher magazine.



For More Information

The Travis Mills Foundation is a nonprofit organization formed to benefit and assist post 9/11 veterans who have been injured in active duty or as a result of their service to our nation.

The Travis Mills Group LLC enables Retired US Army Staff Sergeant Travis Mills to consult with and speak to companies and organizations inspiring all to overcome life's challenges and adversity.

Sergeant Mills has been featured on Fox News' Happening Now with Jenna Lee, The O'Reilly Factor with Bill O'Reilly, CNN with Barbara Starr and The Ellen DeGeneres Show. He is also the New York Times best selling author of "Touch As They Come." And, he is an Ambassador of the Gary Sinise Foundation, a charity and veterans service organization that offers a variety of programs, services and events for wounded veterans of the military. **NC**

To learn more and donate visit travismillsfoundation.org

To learn more about the Gary Sinise Foundation visit garysinisefoundation.org

Meet The 2022 NRCC Co-Chairs Dave Ellard & John Shalbey, Jr.

A lot of hard work and planning goes into producing the Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC). Each year one of the participating associations hosts the event. This year it is the New England Carwash Association (NECA) led by co-chairs Dave Ellard of Triple Play Car Wash and John Shalbey, Jr. of Rojo Car Wash. Let's learn a little more this duo!

Q. How did you get into the carwashing business?

DE: A BIG LOAN!!! But to add more color to that answer, during my 30 years of corporate business travel, I would do my weekend errands that included going to the carwash with the family vehicles. I would sit in line and naively think what an easy business this appears to be. So, one day, I decided to build one.

JS: I was born into the carwashing business. My father started Rojo Car Wash in 1967. Upon graduating from college, my father passed, and I came right into the business.

Q. What was the craziest day you have had in this industry?

DE: We marketed a free carwash if the New England Patriots won the Super Bowl. THEY DID!! and between social media and old-fashioned radio and TV, the deal spread like wildfire. We had a fun and very busy day.



Dave Ellard

John Shalbey, Jr.

JS: The craziest day I have had in this industry was a busy Friday afternoon during the winter. My conveyor motor separated from the mounting plate, and everything was rusted in place. We had customers screaming at us, employees getting fed up with the screaming customers and no new bolts to remount the motor.

Q. What do you like most and least about this industry?

DE: I like the friendly competition, the family nature of the business, the camaraderie of other operators and suppliers and working with the public. I'm less favorable to the dependency of the weather and operating a seven-day-a-week business.

Continued on page 42 ...

car wash entrance

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Top 10 Statements You Want to Confidently Answer “Yes” to When Selling Your Carwash

By Lanese Barnett

If you are thinking about selling your business, there is a good chance selling is not your area of expertise. You are busy running your business! But if you can answer “Yes” to these 10 statements below, you are in good shape.

1. I know what my business is worth.
2. I understand all the options available to me and feel confident about my decision to sell.
3. My business’ strengths are being showcased and marketed to their full potential.
4. I know what buyers are willing to pay for, and what factors make them more risk-averse.
5. I know what other carwashes have been sold for in my market.
6. I have a vetted buyer pool interested in my business, and I am running a competitive bid process to get maximum value.
7. I know whom I am doing business with, and I trust them.
8. My interests are being protected; the terms and conditions in the deal are fair to me.
9. I am comfortable with the plan for my employees and my legacy.
10. I know what to expect the day after I sign the papers.

If you answered “No” or aren’t crystal clear on each of these statements, we highly recommend that you engage with an experienced carwash mergers and acquisitions (M&A) advisor to help you. Just like your customers search for a carwash they trust to care for their prized vehicle, you should hire a reputable M&A advisor to care for your business as you make this big transition. You want an advisor with their finger on the pulse of the market who knows exactly what buyers are looking for. Insider knowledge will help guide you through the transaction process and get you the most value for your business. Remember this: buyers typically know more about buying than you do about selling.

Here’s what to look for when selecting a carwash M&A advisor. You want an experienced firm that will:

- ✓ **Listen to your goals and walk you through all of your options;** whether you are looking for a full sale, a majority sale but want to stay in and roll forward with a bigger platform for a second bite of the apple later, or a minority sale to bring on a capital partner and really scale your business. It’s important to find the right path for you.

- ✓ **Provide you with a playbook outlining just what buyers are looking for.** A few examples we share with our clients about what buyers want to see: clean books and records, a solid leadership team and organizational structure, dialed-in operators, strong monthly plan membership sales (if you have them), well-maintained equipment, clean facilities, and staff in uniform. Understanding how to best market your business could make the difference in millions of dollars.

- ✓ **Prepare and deliver quality marketing materials** that tell your business’s unique story to a carefully vetted buyer list. For example, if you have a development pipeline or newly opened sites, you want to best showcase the future opportunity available to potential buyers. Often buyers are looking for a brand they can get behind to really step on the gas to scale quickly. You don’t want just anyone telling your story. Having an advisory firm with real carwash operations experience makes a huge difference.

- ✓ **Conduct an efficient and effective competitive bid process,** confidentially, while allowing you to focus on your business. Even if you know what number you are looking for and have a buyer identified, running a competitive bid process is the best way to ensure you get the most for your business. This process doesn’t take much more time than selling direct, and the advantages and protections you gain are significant.

- ✓ **Know how to negotiate the best terms on your behalf;** specifically, when it comes to holdBacks, addBacks, and non-competes. For example, every \$1 of addBacks could be worth \$10-15; that amount is material!

In short, you are an expert in carwash operations, and when it comes time to sell or scale, you want solid advice from an experienced carwash M&A expert so you can maximize the value of your business.

NC



Lanese Barnett

By Lanese Barnett, Senior Vice President of Business Development at Amplify Car Wash Advisors. Reach Lanese at LBarnett@AmplifyWash.com or connect on LinkedIn.



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However, now is not the time to stand still. Meet with our team of car wash M&A experts to learn about your options for selling or scaling your car wash. Ready to start the conversation now? Contact us at Info@AmplifyWash.com.

Meet with Car Wash M&A Experts in Booth #701



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SBA Financing for Contaminated Sites

By Michael Ford

A good friend of mine once told me, “If it’s glowing, keep on going.” What he was referring to was contaminated properties. In his opinion, investing in contaminated sites is not worth your time or effort. Many commercial bankers have the same reaction. When it comes to the subject of financing land that has any contamination or is under remediation, it’s historically been a “hard no” for most traditional bankers. However, as the pool of available land becomes smaller, more carwash investors have begun investigating the options around buying and financing contaminated land. Sites like former gas stations, automotive repair facilities and lube centers are often the properties of interest. These facilities can be located in highly-population areas with major traffic counts. While acquiring these sites can be a viable business strategy, contaminated soil or groundwater can pose a serious challenge for both carwash developers and bankers.

From the lending standpoint, funding without some type of federal guaranty can carry too much risk for most banks. This is where the Small Business Administration (SBA) can help relieve lenders’ concerns about exposure. The SBA gives up to a 75 percent guaranty to financial institutions lending to sites with environmental issues. However, there are several things that must happen before financial institutions can fund a site using one of the SBA’s lending programs. A basic outline of the SBA’s guidelines is noted below.

SBA Environmental Guidelines

The SBA requires an environmental investigation of all commercial property where a security interest is pledged. In other words, if you’re financing major construction on an existing site or building a whole new facility, the SBA is going to require a security interest in the property and an environmental investigation. This investigation starts with a simple questionnaire about the property. If there is no indication of contamination, no additional investigation may be required. However, if there are any signs the property has had a historical use where hazardous substances were present, additional investigation is needed. For ALL environmentally-sensitive sites, like former gas stations, the SBA requires a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (aka Phase I ESA) regardless of the loan amount.

What is a Phase I Environmental Report?

A Phase I Environmental Report is a physical and historical report of the environmental conditions of a subject property. A Phase I ESA identifies recognized environmental conditions (REC’s) that could impact the value or usability of a specific property.

When you have a Phase I ESA completed on your land, it will include several steps. First, the environmental professional physically inspects the site to observe the current conditions and looks for signs of past events (staining from spills, old hazardous material containers...). After that, there is a review of federal, state and local databases to find out if the location had above-ground or underground storage tanks.

Other records are examined too. The assessor will review fire department records for potential environmental claims, aerial photographs for former uses (i.e. tanker truck storage or other potential high-risk activities) and title and judicial records for any environmental liens that may have been placed against the property. This inspection also includes a database search of surrounding properties to confirm there have not been spills that could potentially leach and contaminate the subject site.

The process for a Phase I ESA can take about two weeks on a property with little history of development. However, in most cases, the preparation of the report can take a number of weeks. On average, the total time for Phase I ESA is around three to four weeks.

After the Phase I ESA Is Completed

After the Phase I ESA is completed, you could be finished with all environmental assessments. This is determined by the findings in the report. The report will either conclude no further investigation is needed, or state that further investigation is warranted. If the SBA Lender wants to go forward with the loan, they must follow the recommendations of the environmental professional. Common recommendations can include a Phase II assessment.

What is a Phase II ESA Assessment?

Once the high potential of contaminants has been discovered on the property, a Phase II ESA assessment must be completed. The report evaluates whether hazardous substances, like petroleum products, are affecting the property and the scope of the contamination. The Phase II ESA typically includes physical ground boring. Soil samples will be examined at a lab for any traces of unwanted substances.

A Phase II ESA assessment will evaluate whether there is a business risk or not. Like with Phase I, this ESA stage can last from a few weeks to months to complete the tests.

After the Phase II ESA is completed, the SBA requires lenders to document:

Continued ...



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- a) Whether the contamination quantities exceed the reportable or actionable levels,
- b) Whether remediation is necessary,
- c) An estimate of any remediation costs and
- d) The projected completion date of any remediation.

If the Phase II ESA concludes that environmental risk is minimal and that no further investigation is required, the project can be approved and funded with an SBA loan.

At What Cost?

There is no fee to fill out an Environmental Questionnaire. The questionnaire takes less than an hour of your time to complete. When you need a Phase I ESA, the cost generally ranges from \$2,000 to \$2,500 for the report. If there is a suspected case of contamination, then you will move to a Phase II ESA. The costs for these tests and reports are significantly higher. Generally, you can expect to pay from \$7,000 to more than \$20,000. In addition, if site remediation is needed, it can be very expensive. Depending on the severity of the contamination, the cost could be millions of dollars and it can take many years to clean up a property.

SBA loans may not be approved or disbursed if there is known contamination or on-going remediation at the property unless the risks have been minimized to the satisfaction of the SBA.

When Can SBA Loans be Funded if Contamination Exists?

There are several ways to be approved for funding for properties that have contamination or are under remediation. They are as follows:

- a) **Indemnification** — The entity or individual providing the indemnification must use the SBA Indemnification Agreement and must have sufficient assets to honor an indemnification. Typical types of firms providing indemnification are oil companies and larger developers.
- b) **Completed Remediation** — The governmental entity with jurisdiction, normally the State Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), must affirm in writing that active remediation is completed. This can be acceptable even if active monitoring may still be required.
- c) **Minimal Contamination** — Funding is possible if the contamination is considered minimal and the person or entity responsible for the remediation has sufficient resources to cover the cost of the remediation and the remediation is to be completed in less than a year. This is common with asbestos contamination or when sub-soil contamination is very limited.

Continued ...

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- d) **Clean-up Funds** — If a Governmental Entity has approved funding for the remediation costs, and the amount allocated is sufficient to cover the costs of remediation, approval and funding of an SBA loan may be allowed.
- e) **Escrow Account** — If an escrow account is available that equals a minimum of 150 percent of the total estimated cost of required remediation and is controlled by the Lender, SBA loan approval and disbursement may be considered.
- f) **No Further Action** — The governmental entity with jurisdiction issues a “no further action letter” or “closure letter” stating no further Remediation or monitoring is required. This is the most desirable of all the options listed. If there has been past environmental events, it is recommended to ask the seller if they can provide a “no further action letter” from the State EPA.

With the reduction in the quantity of virgin land in prime locations, companies have begun turning to environmental firms and remediation specialists to evaluate and clean properties so they can be reused. However, fixing the land is often time-consuming and costly. Identifying the cost and timing of remediation is a critical step in understanding if it's worth the

effort. Furthermore, identifying whether the project can be financed is critical to both the property developer now and for potential buyers down the road (financing will most likely be needed if you want to be able to sell the property in the future).

If you are considering developing a property that potentially has a high risk of contamination, make sure you engage a qualified environmental firm and speak with your lender to see if they have an appetite for funding sites under remediation. Financing is possible if the contamination is quantified (both time and cost), if the funding for remediation is identified (both source and amount) and if you have a flexible lender willing to step out of the traditional bankers box to support a good business decision.

NC



Michael Ford is the Managing Director of Coast Commercial Credit, a firm specializing in financing for the carwash industry. You can reach him at 800/400-0365 or MikeF@CoastCC.com

Source: U.S. Small Business Administration Standard Operating Procedure Manual (SOP) 50 10 06

Michael Ford

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What is a Brand, Anyway?

By Beth Martin

Join me in a stroll down memory lane, back to when you were in the beginning stages of becoming a carwash operator. You likely spent countless hours researching high-traffic locations, zoning requirements, the industry's best equipment, mapped out a strategic pricing strategy, perfected a team training plan, and finally moved on to the creative part — the overall branding of your business. Whether you enlisted the help of marketing experts, family or friends, or simply executed from your own personal vision — it's likely your wash's overall branding tied your whole concept together — from your business logo, staff uniforms, wash package names, exterior and tunnel signage, to print and digital advertising concepts, to name a few.

Fast forward several months — to several years — and think about how your branding has evolved. Or has it?

It's easy to fall into a marketing pitfall of establishing a business' overall branding, and then letting it become stagnant. As you become busy with the day-to-day operations of servicing customers, you may become complacent and take for granted that your branding doesn't need to evolve. After all — your logos are set, your ads reflect the messaging you are comfortable with, and your social media consistently displays hashtags or recognizable taglines. But there's so much more to branding!

While branding at its core is defined as a way of identifying your business, and how your customers recognize and experience your business — branding should be thought about as a long-term, evolving strategic plan. The goal? To continuously boost your wash's recognition and reputation, ultimately resulting in an ever-growing customer base. This can be done in an ongoing, authentic way by paying attention to the "REE" approach to brand marketing — which pays particular attention to a brand's recognition, evolution and engagement. It's important to constantly be paying attention to and addressing all three in meaningful, positive and engaging ways.

Recognition

At first glance, creating a recognizable brand may seem simple. But it's so much more than a logo, and relies heavily on the overall experience your customer experiences while onsite. A successful brand encompasses an overall approach to communications, sales, and products by promoting products and services in a way that consistently highlights the overall brand. Despite our best efforts, and unless you have an unlimited marketing budget, favorable brand recognition often happens organically and can take months to years to cultivate. Take note of your current onsite branding and ask yourself this question: Does it all tie in together? From onsite and tunnel signage, branded air fresheners and drying towels, to your marketing brochures and advertising campaigns, do they all complement one another?

Beth Martin will be leading a marketing panel on Evolving Your Brand and Boosting Club Sales at this year's NRCC! Register at nrccshow.com

Are consumer trends changing and are you paying attention? And most importantly, are your team members participating positively in your overall branding by delivering a memorable, positive customer experience?

The main goal should be to create a brand that triggers your customers to think of your business automatically and favorably when they see a logo, tagline, packaging or audio cue from a radio commercial. Our Central Ohio-based Moo Moo Express Car Wash brand uses the tagline of "Do You Moo?" in many of our advertising campaigns. We reinforce that tagline with our sports sponsorships and add in the name of the sports team in our secondary messaging.

Our Columbus Blue Jackets messaging, for example, is as follows: Do You Moo? The CBJ Do! When it's time to switch over to baseball season, our Columbus Clippers messaging is Do You Moo? The Columbus Clippers Do! Our onsite messaging, radio and digital advertising campaigns, and arena signage all reinforce this messaging, and customer data indicates that this messaging resonates with them. Tie-ins with our semi and professional sports teams make sense in our Central Ohio markets but may not make sense in your local market. Take the time to understand your particular market, paying close attention to current consumer behavior and trends, and adjust as necessary.

Evolution

You finally reach a point where you have created a great brand that appears to be resonating with your current and potential customers. Now comes the critical point of ensuring that your brand continues to evolve! Brand evolution, by definition, is the ongoing process of refining a brand based on evolving consumer and market behaviors. This is best determined based on customer and general industry feedback.

In 2020, Express Wash Concepts opened its inaugural express carwash brand in the Greater Cleveland market — CLEAn



Being home grown and operated, Express Wash Concepts emphasizes its Cleveland roots in all Cleveland-based CLEAn Express Auto Wash marketing.



Flying Ace Express Car Wash relies on community-based brand ambassadors to help drive traffic to their 10 Greater Dayton express wash locations.

Express Auto Wash. The brand purposefully drew upon the area's deep "CLE" pride, and all marketing materials, including the business logo, monument signage, taglines and marketing materials all boasted the CLE emphasis. A year later, when our brand expanded into the Pittsburgh and Toledo markets, certain branding and marketing tweaks were necessary to phase out the CLE emphasis. Today, Clean Express Auto Wash is a strong, multi-market brand that is purposefully, yet subtly, altered depending on the market. We involved each market's team

Continued ...



Green Clean Express Auto Wash draws upon its coastal Hampton Roads, VA-based roots to emphasize "Clean & Green" in its branding initiatives.

Women in Carwashing

The 7th **Women in Carwash™** conference will be held **January 15-17, 2023** at the **B Ocean Resort** in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

The carwash business is changing and evolving and has become a great career opportunity for women.

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We can't wait to see you in January!

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For more information and to register please contact:
Brenda Jane Johnstone
 Phone: 1.204.489.4215 email: bjj@womenincarwash.com

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members and customers throughout the process, and will continue to evolve the Clean Express brand as the brand matures and consumer sentiment changes.

Engagement

Perhaps the most critical piece to an overall marketing branding strategy involves engagement, which is the process of building and sustaining a commitment to a brand from its customers. The most successful companies have found that the main way to increase a customer's brand loyalty is through consistent inter-

action and engagement.

The good news is, thanks to digital engagement strategies today it's easier than ever to connect, or reconnect, with our existing and potential customers. There's one caveat — however. As mentioned earlier, engagement for existing customers must first take place onsite, and most importantly leave the customer with the most favorable impression of your business as possible. As most marketing professionals would testify — you cannot “outmarket” a poor onsite customer experience! Make it a goal with your onsite team to connect with

as many customers as possible to ask about their wash experience. If a customer is unsatisfied, correct it on the spot. After speaking with your customers, ask them to follow up and review your business online to help drive new customers to your business.

Consistently involving your customers in contests, promotions, community events and in advertising campaigns is another way to increase overall engagement in your brand. At each of our five Express Wash Concepts carwash brands, for example, we regularly hold social media contests to involve our customers in naming our washes, seek customer insight on which non-profits should be on our radar for upcoming campaigns, and even have a robust Secret Shopper program that customers are invited to apply to take part in. We use social media contests to gather customer insight and data to reward our team members. For example, ask for customer comments on why they choose to wash at a particular location, explain a time we provided exemplary customer service, and more. Engaging and creating customer “brand ambassadors” to help assist your onsite team members will amplify your marketing and branding efforts, and will always be worth the time and financial investment.

The ultimate goal of brand marketing is to develop a loyal customer base that sticks with you over time, but this cannot be done without realizing that branding is an ongoing, evolving process. By paying careful attention to your brand's recognition, evolution and engagement on a regular basis, you are one step closer to ensuring the ongoing success of your carwash. **NC**

Beth Martin is the Vice President of Marketing at Express Wash Concepts, the 70+ location parent company of Central Ohio-based Moo Moo Express Car Wash and Bee Clean Express Car



Beth Martin

Wash, Greater Dayton, Ohio and Richmond, Indiana-based Flying Ace Express Car Wash, Cleveland and Toledo, Ohio and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania-based Clean Express Auto Wash, and Virginia and North Carolina-based Green Clean Express Auto Wash.

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"I was focused on running my business every day. An exit strategy was not something I was planning. When the opportunity to sell arose, I was not prepared. It's absolutely a process you don't want to tackle alone. With the help of Vinny Carfora and his team, a step-by-step plan was devised and executed. With their owner/operator experience, I was fully able to understand the true value of my washes in the market at that time. Four years later, I look back and still feel it was the right offer, at the right time, with the right guidance. Thanks Car Wash King! I look forward to working with you again!"

- Pettey Hardin, Tidal Wave Auto Spa

"Vinny is an owner/operator who understands all aspects of the business and uses that expertise to advise clients on how to build their business and add value in order to properly get them ready for market. Vinny has been in the industry so long, he has direct access to key contacts on the both the buy and sell side making him the "go to" person for transactions in the car wash industry - many of which never make it to the public market."

- Paul Fazio, Sonny's Enterprises

"When you talk about someone with a tremendous knowledge of the car wash industry along with a true understanding of car wash real estate, Vinny Carfora is the first person that comes to mind. The Car Wash King team brings a unique perspective with their operator knowledge and understanding of both the financial and operational side of car washes. They make the entire process seamless and put you at ease throughout. They believe in providing a road map for success for each and every transaction. The team of experts at Car Wash King lives and breathes the car wash business and is someone that you want on your side to help you achieve the best results throughout the entire buying or selling process"

- Brett Overman, Zips Car Wash

"Choosing Vinny Carfora as our listing agent was an excellent choice. His knowledge of the industry, as well as car wash acquisitions helped to prepare us for every step of the process. When it comes to buying or selling, there is no better choice!"

- Barrett Webb, Mister B's

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Jessica Lodispoto
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Is it Shark Week, Yet?

By Doug Rieck

There are many ways to mark the passage of time in summer at the Jersey Shore. The most important mark being the 4th of July weekend, which begins the madness of summer. My next personal favorite is Shark Week on television in mid July. Sharks just go along with the shore and summer. Ask the mayor of "Amity Island!" There are a few Bull sharks in the bay and several years ago I saw one cruising around about 15 feet in front of our dock. The sighting was verified by others. A friend was on a Stand Up Paddleboard and motivated out of the area. My kids and family still swim in the bay, it's safe. My point in this whole diversion is that within 60 days, or fewer, the Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC) is going to be rolling into Atlantic City starting on September 19th. It's time to make your hotel reservations, if you have not already done so, and get your show tickets. Our lodgings are right on the Boardwalk at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino. The show itself is at the Atlantic City Convention Center, a quick Jitney ride from the hotel, which is by the Expressway entrance and Outlet stores. Every shore local will tell you that September at the shore is perfect with the best weather and fewer crowds. I can't promise a shark sighting, but be assured they are out there! I can promise fresh caught Jersey fish, and a great carwash show full of the latest wash innovations and an educational lineup like no other including Recalibrated Warrior Travis Mills. You can read more about him in this issue's cover story, but he is inspirational and a must-see!

Our hotel room block is very reasonable and it's an easy drive from anywhere in the Northeast to AC. Take advantage of it and book the 2022 NRCC today at nrccshow.com or call 800/868-8590 if you have any questions!

Wanting More

I'm still excited after the national show in Nashville and I want more! It was wonderful to be part of a big show again and Nashville is my favorite location. It's close for East Coasters, and is a great walking city with a lot going on. Hotel prices are steep in Nashville, but the airfare is less so (or at least it was in May).

What did I see there? Equipment wise, there have been a lot of refinements, minor changes and just the passage of time and more mature products since the start of COVID. I did not see anything that was a "must buy" because of the show, though. What I did see clarified my thoughts on future changes on how to better wash cars. What was surprising was that on many pieces of equipment the delivery timelines are still way out there. It makes sense, but I really had not thought about delivery times still being such a huge issue. Prior to the show, I had purchased several new washers for my Laundromat and delivery was made easily within two weeks. Not so with carwash equipment.

We are fortunate in that all of our industries' washing equipment is really good stuff. The most important part of the

decision is which company and distributor can install and support you over its lifespan.

The show floor in Nashville was valuable for many reasons, but one was in determining the affiliations, ownerships and relationships of our suppliers. Just because we were in COVID lockdowns and did not get out, the march of private equity into our industry certainly was not stymied. This has served to make our supply chain more logical and provide more strength to it. Sometimes it just seems strange but as always life is about change. In any case, regardless of whose shirt was being worn, it was great to see old friends.

Attending the educational sessions was exceptional. There were such a number of varied sessions it took some thought as to which to attend. The International Carwash Association (ICA) deserves credit for putting together a good education package. Perhaps, too much attention was paid to the Express Wash with Free Vac format, though. It does make sense because that is where the money is, but the other industry segments should not be overlooked.

One of the surprises to me was the extent to which Private Equity is involved in our industry in both manufacturing and owning carwashes. A comment from a friend was that private equity is in the middle of a hostile takeover of the carwash industry. What we should remember is that our industry started on a Mom & Pop family run model. There is a place for us small guys if we continue to run good washes in good locations. That is one of the advantages of the family-run washes in the Northeast. We already own the killer locations. We just need to continue working at them. That is why attending trade shows and networking continues to be invaluable. I do not know the stats, but I suspect we still make up the bulk of cars being washed today.

One of my thoughts after this show is that a great location can make a poor operator do well, and a good operator do great. A poor location robs both operators. One of the most important parts of your wash is its location. I disagree with one of the wash location theories espoused by some at some sessions. We are not fast food or car dealerships and close competition does not work or help any carwash. I think that three-mile spacing is ok. Within a mile, never. What makes a difference for carwashing is weather. In the Northeast, most of us are closed with bad weather from 45 to 60 days a year. We need the peak volumes to build a reserve.

Triple Dip La Niña

This year many meteorologists are forecasting a very rare Triple Dip La Niña for us. This is only the third time since 1950 this has been recorded since records were started. This means more drought for the Southwest, greater Hurricane activity in the Atlantic and in the Northeast lousy carwash weather. The

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last is my personal observation. Living on the water, on an island, La Niñas bring worse carwash weather, more unsettled and higher precipitation. I sincerely hope I am wrong, though. Hooray for snow, ice, and always more sun.

Ceramics!

One of the upgrades at my washes has been shifting over to the Ceramics being used in my top washes. I admit that I'm behind others in doing so, but am very pleased with the customer response and the product itself. I drove to Florida in May to pick up my daughter from college. I expected a lot of bugs on the front of my truck. There were not many when I got down and upon return to my carwash the front grill still looked good. The few bugs washed off easily. In other words, on my 2000-plus mile I-95 Ceramic bug test, my ceramics application worked very well. I think the Ceramic products are one of the best new products out there. They work well and bring in additional revenue.

Changing my Changer

I try to avoid mentioning specific products in this column, but I am going to do so now. At my Laundromat, I have a 35-year-old Rowe BC 1400 changer. It's a workhorse, but an old one. Over 10 years ago, I converted it to a Mars Bill

acceptor. Easy conversion, the only bad part was that the old coin dispensers remained. They just kept getting older and worse and required constant attention and cleaning. I ordered the American Changer conversion kit with new Mars and American changer controls and hoppers. I installed it. It took much more time than I thought it would, and part of it is because I had an older welded case machine. This required some work with a grinder but was well worth it. The front of the changer is in a Laundromat and has an unmarked stainless steel front. It looks new. Now the inside of the machine is new. So far, after a week of running it, I love it. I got a new changer without having to break concrete and install one. The only distressing part was that I ordered it in January and got it in July. I understand that the timeline is much better now. If you still have an old unit there is an answer and you can have the pleasure of walking those elderly parts to the dumpster. **NC**



Doug Rieck

Doug Rieck operates Magic Wash in Manahawkin, NJ. He is the Immediate Past President of the Car Wash Operators of New Jersey. You can reach him at 609/597-SUDS or dougriecck@gmail.com

The advertisement features the Celtic Bank logo at the top, with the tagline "Leader in Car Wash Financing". Below this, it lists services: "BUY, ROLL, UPGRADE OR REFINANCE YOUR WASH". Three key benefits are highlighted: "As little as 10% down", "Terms of 10 to 25 years", and "Up to \$5M in funding". A large "1/2" is prominently displayed. A circular portrait of Richard Gaetano, SVP, is shown on the left. Contact information for Richard Gaetano is provided, including his phone number, email, and a note about meeting face-to-face at the NRCC tradeshow booth #644. The ad also includes a disclaimer: "Applications are subject to credit approval. Rates, loan amount, and terms may vary based on your creditworthiness and are subject to change." and the Member FDIC logo.



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It's Time to Master Your Mindset!

By JoAnna Brandi

I am in deep thinking mode here. It's hot, muggy and almost storming outside. I can hear thunder coming from the west.

I'm thinking about being a leader and how challenging that is these days.

Even though I keep myself on a thin diet of news, the "what's going on out there" seeps into my consciousness, just like it must seep into yours. As compas-

sionate humans, it's painful for us to see what's going on in the world today. Global, national and neighborhood horror in real time.

It's easy to lose your balance at a time like this. Shock. Anger. Grief. Despair. All throw your primal brain into action and kick the executive functions to the curb. That means to BE a Positive Leader at

a time like this, you'd best have a pretty good set of emotional intelligence skills.

The powerful emotions we feel at a time like this must be felt — but not fueled! That's where your Positive Leadership Practice comes in. If you read my column in every issue, I'll bet some of these might already be things you know and practice. If not, jump on board and challenge yourself to create a 3:1 high performance positivity to negativity ratio. Looking for high performance? Boost it up to 5:1!

So on this muggy day, I'm thinking about the following.

Leadership is Self-Leadership

All leaders lead by example. Positive Leaders are conscious. They pay attention to how they live their lives. They — and maybe you — are growing and evolving in their leadership roles. They empower and enable others to create an experience culture fueled by positivity. They set good examples.

Issues in our world are boiling over and the current discourse is unhealthy. Instead of smart people collaborating on solutions, we have chaos.

As a Positive and Customer Focused Leader, it's your responsibility to make sure what's going on "out there" doesn't pollute what you're supposed to be doing "in here." Your job is to inspire, elevate and activate the very best in yourself and others. Especially at a time like this.

Inventory Your Feelings

Take a few moments to identify your feelings. The more specifically you can describe your emotions, the more likely it is that you will be able to use them to your advantage or choose ones more appropriate for the tasks and the time at hand. Make good friends with yourself.

Emotions move us — they put our energy into motion. Fear causes us to escape. Joy causes us to play. Sadness to withdraw. Interest to explore. Hope causes us to yearn for positive change.



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Anger causes us to attack. Love causes us to expand. It's easy to see what emotions you want to create more of if you are looking to protect your business.

What Will You Choose?

If you don't want to perpetuate the fear, the anger and the grief, create a reason why people should take their focus off what's on the news and put it on making a positive difference in their world. Love causes us to expand. I find the easiest way to get to Love is through Gratitude.

Maybe you will too.

Here's the science. Gratitude allows you to bring the executive functions of your pre-frontal cortex back online after anger has derailed it. It gives you access to your whole brain, not just the primal parts. This is really important to understand.

While a little anger is motivating and certainly will help push you through the early stages of change, too much of it simply makes you stupid.

Without access to logic or reason, which is your birthright as a human being, you behave "like a beast." I certainly know what that feels like. It's not the way I want to present myself to the world.

Positive Leaders know how to access the better angels of

their nature. Gratitude operates to shift our biochemistries into a beneficial state. Gratitude opens our hearts. Gratitude is medicine for our grieving souls.

Take a "Time In"

Close your eyes. Deepen and slow your breath. Place a hand on your heart. Breathe in and out through that hand and your heart. Bring to mind something for which you are deeply grateful. See it, feel it, imagine yourself touching it, smell it, taste it. Mmmmm. Enjoy it, treasure it.

Be aware of the smile creeping across your face. Feel your face soften. Give yourself 30 seconds right here, just in this moment.

Allow yourself to feel goodness even in a time of sadness.

Take this practice into your next meeting (even if it's a one to one.) Help those who work with you shift from feeling helpless to feeling useful.

Fifty to 70 percent of how employees perceive the climate is due to the actions of the leader. Leaders set the mood. It's perfectly okay for you to feel your feelings — do it with the intention of letting them flow through you, rather than letting them get stuck on anger, outrage and fear.

Continued ...

Did You Know That Happiness Is A Habit?

- That it's ...
- A process not a place
- A skill that can be learned and practiced
- A "Work ethic" for some
- A choice that changes your brain for the good
- A muscle you exercise
- Doesn't just feel good, it's good for you
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Brandi
1/4
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JoAnna's Gems ... continued

It's time for all leaders to step up — most especially you Positive Energizers. Elevate. Uplift. Inspire.

Use Gratitude as medicine for the soul. Shine the light on what is right.

Our hearts keep getting broken open. Wide open. Again and again.

What an opportunity to spread goodness and love into the world.

Let's do our part.

NC

*JoAnna Brandi is a certified Chief Happiness Officer working mostly in the business world to help companies keep employees and customers happy by creating more positive cultures and practices. She is the author of three books including the delightfully illustrated "54 Ways to Stay Happy in a Changing, Challenging and Sometimes Negative World." You can find her on the web at ReturnOnHappiness.com if you are looking for her work in the business world; and PositiveEnergizer.com if you are interested in her online leadership course – *The Practice of Positive Leadership: Use the Science of Happiness to Engage Your Employees and Keep Your Customers Happy*.*

If you want a copy of my **BE Attitudes (for Positive Leaders in Difficult Times)** send me an email, "Be Attitudes" in subject line, and I'll get it to you! JoAnna@ReturnOnHappiness.com



JoAnna Brandi



Meet The 2022 NRCC Co-Chairs ... continued from p. 22

JS: What I like most about this industry is the close-knit community of operators. Even though the industry is changing drastically, it still feels like a small business community. The thing I like least about the industry is an unreasonable, rude customer. Even though I shouldn't, I get fired up when I witness customers berating my team in a rude, condescending manner.

Q. What is one fun fact most don't know about you?

DE: I was born in New Mexico, and sometimes I can be fun!

JS: I served in the Army Reserves throughout college and for a little while after until my Father passed.

Q. Last book read?

DE: "One Second After" (by William Forstchen). It's fiction, but based on really possible social reactions if we lost our modern technology. It's a must read.

JS: "Can't Hurt Me: Master Your Mind and Defy the Odds" (by David Goggins)

Q. Favorite hobby?

DE: I enjoy sports cars and taking them to the road courses for track days. I am presently driving a new C8 Corvette. It's a lot of fun.

JS: I love to cook for my family and friends.

Q. If you could invite anyone to dinner, who would it be and why?

DE: Clarence Thomas. Could there be a better example of success in this American Dream? He came from the poorest and most humble background. He educated himself, learned a new language (English) and worked hard to make it to the Supreme Court. He's an example for everyone.

JS: If it could be someone from the past, I would choose Winston Churchill. He is so intriguing and has a unique personality that balanced being tough, smart, funny and resilient.

Q. Why should someone attend this year's show?

DE: The Industry is HOT!! New products, supplier consolidations making more integrated offerings, educational sessions, peer networking, great restaurants. How can you get all that anywhere else within a day's drive from your wash?

JS: Someone should attend this year's carwash show because they will have the opportunity to network and learn about the industry with some of the best minds in carwashing. Also, the NRCC has an unbelievable Keynote speaker and Staff Sergeant Mills' story will motivate anyone and everyone to be a better version of themselves.

NC

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It's All In the Details

By Gary Sokoloski

Many times, the directions or instructions for equipment gets lost when doing an installation. All things are not equal when it comes to sizing and voltage drop when running electrical lines. In some instances, unique issues can present when calculating the proper wire and conductor sizing for the equipment and where it is placed on a site. In a recent installation, the electrical contractor did not factor the distance between the electrical source and the device it was going to into place. They also did not follow the directions on the type of conductors to use in the installation. Often, it does pay to read the directions and follow instructions.

In this recent case, we were installing vacuum cleaners at approximately 400 feet from the electrical panel which was on the

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The difference in ampacity between a stranded and solid core wire can be significant...

”

opposite side of the building. The paperwork and name plate on the vacuum called for a single phase 30 amp circuit. All things being equal, this should have been #10 stranded wire. The electrician got it half right and provided a 30 amp breaker but pulled solid core wire. The difference in ampacity between a stranded and solid

core wire can be significant, especially when used for motors. The equipment turned on and tested fine but after about a month a motor went bad. This is odd, but we replaced it. About two weeks later, another motor went bad, this is almost unheard of so when we dug a little deeper we found that the wire that was used was incorrect and while the circuit breaker was not tripping the voltage drop due to the length of the run, the wrong wire was only generating about 98 volts when it should have been 120 volts. After many discussions and arguments with the electrical contractor, new “stranded” wires were added and the voltage went up and the issue went away.

The same issue happens more than most people are aware of with low-voltage circuits used for controls in our carwashes. Just because it is only a 24-volt A/C or D/C circuit does not mean that the laws of electricity do not apply. The longer the distance is from your source to the device, the more consideration needs to be taken on the wire and conduit sizing for many applications. This happens more often with drier motor control centers that are at the opposite end of a building from the carwash controller. Many think, “Its just a signal wire.” While that is its function, please consider the distance from the source and the ampacity it will carry when sizing for these circuits. I always think of the fuse or circuit breaker that trips on the hottest day of the year. Maybe it is because of how it is wired?

So, when sizing up your next electrical project, make sure to give clear and understandable instructions to whomever is doing the electrical work. Also, make sure to take into consideration the distance from your power source to the device and account for any V.D. (voltage drop) that may happen. Voltage Drop is a more common issue than most people realize and can be prevented with the right planning.

NC

Gary Sokoloski owns Centerline Carwash Sales and Service in Wales, ME. You can reach him at 207/375-4593 office, 774/248-0171 cell or gscarwash@gmail.com



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Dear Venus and Mars,
Will the record-high gas prices impact your volumes?



Venus Says

We have certainly felt the rise in gas prices, not just in day-to-day revenue, but also with our operating costs. As the rise in gas really hit us over the summer months, we were somewhat prepared. We have grown to expect a dip in our summer revenue anyway. As self-serve owners in a rural community, we see summer and early fall as some of our lowest volume months.

Like many of you, we see our greatest revenue here on the East Coast during the Winter months. The salt and de-ice mixtures give a lovely gray hue to cars making their owners want to wash the “salt” off their cars in order to protect the investment in their vehicle. We actually call or text each other when we see the wintery salt mixture being applied to the road. I don’t think regular non-carwash people do that.

Opposite of that, in the summer there are more folks washing cars at home in order to cool off and have a fun activity in their driveway. There are also charity washes in front of local businesses in our particular area.

I was not prepared for the continuous drop in revenue we still see due to the state of the economy, however, and we have started wondering if there will be a long-term trend going forward.

The gas prices are affecting our operations and our long-term strategy. As we move forward, there will have to be price increases to account for the additional costs for providing our service. We are walking a fine line and maybe when the snow begins to fall we will use our expenses at each location to really fine-tune where we need to be to make a profit.

These times will make us better business people, though. If we think of this as a teaching moment, we all have something to learn. A better strategy, a sharper pencil. etc. We have survived worse times and this is no different. If you survived COVID-19, you’ve got this!

NC

Mars Says

As I write this column the gas prices are hovering right around the \$5 per gallon mark for regular 87 octane. Although in the past week or two there has been a slight decline which is surprising as we are in the busy summer travel season.

The last time we saw gas prices anywhere near this was back in 2008. Back then, we saw a fairly big drop in volume due to it. Things are a little different now as back then we didn’t have memberships. In 2008, we were primarily full services and the added expense to consumers certainly resulted in lower volumes.

Nowadays, we are heavily invested in the unlimited wash club model. So far, we have not seen a fall off of membership but in fact, an increase. It is a low-ticket purchase which provides tremendous value to the consumer. I feel the higher ticket services such as interior cleaning and express detailing will suffer, but not the express exterior model.

Ultimately, though, other increased expenditures due to the rapid rise in inflation could eventually start to affect all aspects of the carwash industry. Gas prices are just one added expense that is on the rise. Consumers are seeing added costs at the supermarket and retail and shipping expenses are way up, just to name a few.

But time will tell just how our industry weathers this storm. One thing I can say with confidence is that people are not driving less. It seems everywhere I go in the Tri-state area traffic is worse than I’ve seen it in many years. So, if people are driving more their cars will continue to get dirty which means the demand will still be there. What type of wash they choose to purchase, and how often, we’ll have to see as time goes on.

Continue to market your business and provide the best service possible. If you’re not already offering a membership program, that may be the difference in whether your volume is impacted or not.

NC



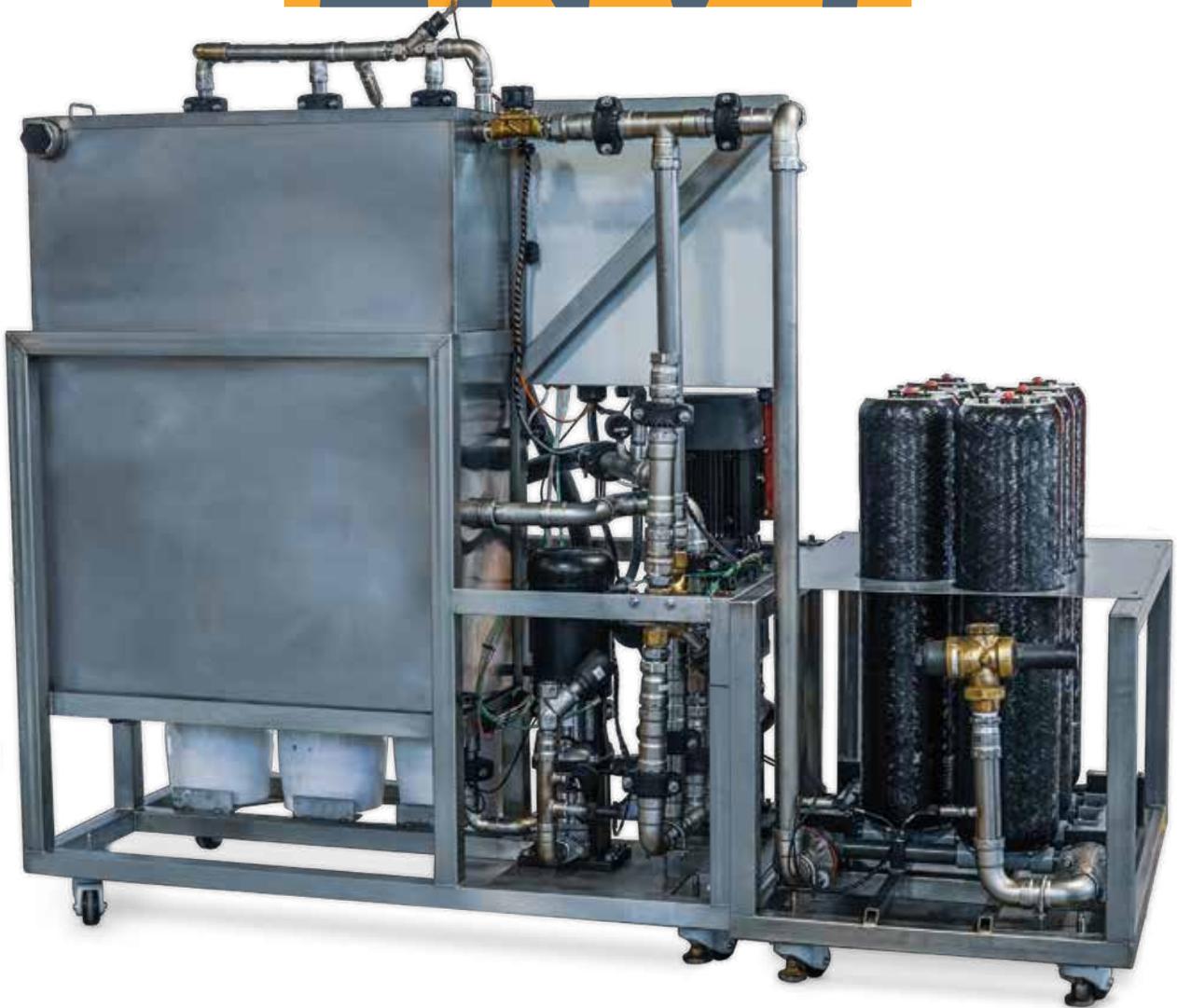
Paul Vallario

Venus and Mars, aka Heather Ashley and Paul Vallario, are carwash industry veterans. Heather Ashley is a past President of the Mid-Atlantic Carwash Association. She is also co-owner of Virginia Car Wash Industries, Inc. and Shenandoah Valley Coin Laundries, and Ashley’s Shenandoah Valley Rental Properties in Toms Brook, VA. You can reach Heather at mhashley@gmail.com, as well as LinkedIn and Twitter @hrashley or www.thecarwashblog.com. Paul Vallario owns LI Car Wash Consultants. He is also a New York State Car Wash Association board member. You can reach him at iwashcars@optonline.net or 631/484-5829.

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How to Pick out the Right Towel Over the Phone or Online

By Valerie Sweeney

Some products are easy to order over the phone, especially when you know exactly what you want. But what if you don't know? People usually call around to other vendors because they are either price shopping or they are not happy with the product they received. What if you don't like your towels? Maybe it's the feel, maybe it's the quality. How can you be sure to get the towel you really want?

If you're lucky enough to head to Atlantic City to the Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC), September 19-21, at the Atlantic City Convention Center or to the national show, then picking out towels can be very easy just by visiting the different booths of the towel vendors. For those who can't go to the show, or if you are looking to make a change in-between shows, then you will have to pick up the phone and talk to your towel vendor, or hop online to see what is available.

Here are some tips on how to get the towel you want.

Size

It's important to know the size of the towel. For the most part, carwashes are looking for the standard body towel size which is 16" x 27" (hand towel). This size might vary by an inch or two, but it's the most popular size. If you don't like that size, then you will need to describe what size you want. For example, if you need larger towels because you wash trucks and other larger vehicles, then you might want a small bath towel (20" x 40"). If your towels are square, then they are probably ½ bath towels, around 22" x 22" or 24" x 24".

Thickness

Do you like the thickness of your current towel or do you want something thinner/thicker, etc. Most towel vendors measure thickness by the weight per dozen. Body towels that are 16" x 27" usually range in weights between 2.5 pounds per dozen and 4.5 pounds per dozen. The most common weights are three pounds and four pounds per dozen. If you know the weight per dozen, then you can say to your vendor, "I currently use a three lb. towel, but I want something thicker." If you don't know the weight, then it can be a little harder to describe on the phone since thickness can be relative.

Pile

Is the pile on the towel important? If so, you need to vocalize that to your vendor. Most towel vendors carry several different styles of towels, so they may have one that matches what you are looking for. Some carwashes like a low pile or sheared look because they tend to be less linty, while most carwashes choose a standard nap. The majority of carwash towel vendors have detailed pictures of their towels online, so you should be able to see the nap of the towel fairly clearly.

Are you picky about color? Blue, green, red, and white are the most popular color towels in the industry. However, if you only like a particular shade of blue, you need to let your vendor know. For example, some carwashes will only use navy or dark blue. If that is important to you, then tell your vendor you are looking for "dark blue," not just "blue." Although monitors can vary and color may not be exact, you can always view your color choices online as well.

Price

Price is important to everyone, but for some carwashes the lowest price prevails over the quality. If you are set on spending a certain amount of money on your towels, let your towel vendor know your range, and they can try and help you find the best towel in your price range. Sometimes, towels go on clearance, or perhaps they are looking to move a certain color.

If you know what you want, and can vocalize your preferences to your vendor, then you should be able to get the towel that works for you. Once you find a towel you like, stick with it. If you get a batch of towels that don't work for you, articulate that over the phone to your vendor with the factors that made it not the right towel. The more specific you are, the easier it will be to guide you to the best towel for you and your wash.

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Valerie Sweeney

Valerie Sweeney is a towel consultant with ERC Wiping Products. You can reach her at 800/225-9473 or erc@ercwipe.com

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

The Carwash Association Pennsylvania (CAP) is witnessing a surge in interest and membership. It is exciting for CAP to share in and promote the camaraderie of being a "carwasher in PA" on any scale.

August and September are busy times for CAP as our members get together at various annual events. This includes the CAP Baseball Outing on August 25 at the Phillies vs. Reds game in Philadelphia. Then, in September, the CAP Annual Vendor Reception & Dinner, with keynote speaker David Begin, will take place in Hershey on September 14. This is followed by the CAP Golf Outing on September 15 in Carlisle. New to our roster of CAP events, the CAP New Investor Seminar will take place just before the reception and dinner.

So... how are we doing in PA? Really well! Most of our members are sharing steady and positive sales, despite increases in wholesale cost of goods and supply chain issues across the spectrum. In 2022, though not quite as strong as 2021, most will say sales are trending up and there has been a positive shift by the consumer toward the retail carwash. We are seeing positive demographic shifts in many markets, along with post-COVID lifestyle changes (work from home vs. working at the office). This flexibility is allowing consumers to take care of life's chores during the weekdays, instead of what once was limited to the weekends.

With this change in consumer lifestyle, and populous shift increases in many markets here in PA, CAP is hearing of up to 100 new carwash sites coming into the state by year end 2023! Collectively, this is a good thing. Though some may be concerned about crowding in certain markets, most operators are embracing competition by stepping up their game to maintain their place in the market. One CAP member recently shared, "We've been washing cars for over 50 years in this community, our customers are faithful, and appreciate the family-owned business." That's the spirit! There are not enough carwashes in the market to wash every car in every market, in my opinion. All of our PA operators are resilient and continue to meet the challenges to meet the needs of the consumers in their communities.

In closing, let me leave you with this, pollen is the new snow. Many of our members are sharing that numbers in late spring were comparable to snowy winter months. And with that, there is always a silver lining — or in this case a yellowish-green one — to look for amid the roadblocks and setbacks life may throw at us.

I welcome every carwash professional to attend a CAP event this year — go to our website www.pacarwash.org for more details — and come see what makes the Commonwealth an exceptional place to plant and grow a carwash business. I look forward to the opportunity to see many new faces this year!

Stay well.



Dave Edwards, CAP President

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Look for Recaps on our Fall Events In the 2023 Winter Issue!



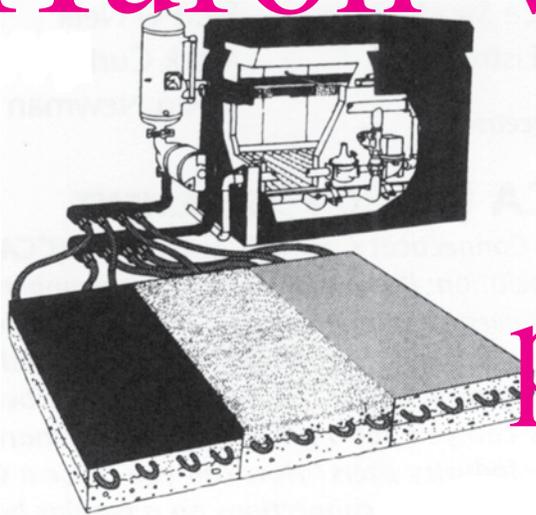
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CCA MISSION STATEMENT

The Connecticut Carwash Association (CCA) is a member-driven association: it exists solely to serve members' needs, protect members' best interests, and to be responsive to members' requests. The list of tangible CCA membership benefits is long (and growing), but the list of intangible benefits is even longer. How can you put a price tag on the camaraderie you enjoy with your industry peers? How can you place a value on having the ability to make connections on a regular basis with other carwash operators who can help you through tough times? What price would you be willing to pay to have the chance to learn from our industry's most successful operators? Stay active in your local industry trade association.

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

The country is in turmoil.

Political parties are divided.

You can't get a new or used car that doesn't cost you your 1st, 2nd and/or 3rd born child. And when you fill up your car — it costs the same as filling up your boat — if you still have one!

Restaurants close early with one server for 20 tables. Chicken wings, if you can get them, are \$5 a piece. Yet, the carwash industry is still exploding and growing.

Washing your car is now a "maintenance item" since we are all keeping our vehicles longer. And, as you know, a clean car always runs BETTER! So, being in this industry is a blessing, yet, as owners we can't rest on our laurels despite the crazy just outside our car-washing world. It's time to take what we are doing to the next level. We must now be Renaissance Car Wash Owner/Operators and take our array of talents and areas of knowledge and raise the bar on the following:

- *Uniforms: crisp, clean and professional.*
- *Training: more, more and better.*
- *Smiles/Courtesy: If you have a great employee who isn't a talker give him/her a "Thank You" sign to flash at customers, but make that employee smile while they are doing it!*

Push Your Limits

We are evolving into worldly operators going outside the box with ideas, services, training and professionalism. In this age of scaled-back customer service, we must scale up with smiles and laughs and everything we've got to stand out and excel at our craft. Letting our customers know that we are breathing new life into their car at every single wash will go far and in the long run we will profit from it.

And don't forget kindness and gratitude. Thank your customers every day and thank your employees for coming into work with a smile on their face. We are the new Renaissance generation of carwashes and the sky's the limit!

See you at the Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC) September 19-21, at the Atlantic City Convention Center! Register at nrccshow.com



Bob J. Rossini

Bob Rossini, CCA President

GET ON BOARD!

The CCA is looking for operators interested in serving on our board or on a committee. If interested, contact Suzanne Stansbury, our Executive Director, at 518/280-4767 today!

Splash Recognized as National Top Workplace

Splash Car Wash, Milford, CT, was nationally recognized as a Top Workplace by Top Workplaces/Energage, according to a company press release. "We are so honored by this recognition," said Splash CEO Mark Curtis. "Splash is passionate about making sure our employees feel like what they do matters, and that translates to our customers. How we treat our team members is how they will treat our customers. We treat them as the critical ingredient to our success because they are."

According to the release, Splash looks for people with a personality and attitude that meshes with the company's culture and the existing team. The ability to do the job is very important, but so too is making sure they will be a good fit.

Many Splash employees have been with the company for more than 10 years with a large number still at the company for over two decades. "We try to do things for our crews and their families beyond just a paycheck," added Brett Robinson, Director of Personnel at Splash, "like renting out Quassy Park for a day each summer. We shut down the carwashes early and invite our crew and their families to enjoy the park's attractions and a barbecue dinner. Things like this mean a lot to them."

Splash Car Wash was started in 1981 by Mark Curtis and

Chris Fisher with a single location in Greenwich. Since that time, Curtis and Fisher have developed more than 70 locations, and currently operate 47 carwash tunnels in Connecticut,

Vermont and New York. Many sites include detailing operations, seven locations provide oil change services, and one location has a Laundromat.

Splash has been named "Best Carwash" by numerous publications over 40 times and has been recognized as a "Top 10 Workplace" 7 times by Hearst Publications. Four General Managers employed by Splash have been recognized as "Most Valuable Carwasher" by *Professional Carwashing & Detailing* magazine. Splash has also been awarded the US Chambers of Commerce's prestigious "Blue Chip Enterprise Award" and has been inducted into the Connecticut Business Hall of Fame.

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Splash's Director of Personnel, Brett Robinson, proudly displays the wash's latest honor.

For more information visit splashcarwashes.com

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Elections, Assembly 2022 Session Update



By P.J. Cimini & Nicole Tomassetti

The entire General Assembly, as well as the Governor and all state-wide Constitutional offices, are up for re-election in November. Governor Ned Lamont is the endorsed Democrat running for re-election and the challenger is the Republican Bob Stefanowski, who ran against Lamont in 2018. Stefanowski named Fairfield State Representative Laura Devlin as his running mate for Lieutenant Governor, while current Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz is running again as Gov. Lamont’s running mate.

Current State Treasurer, Democrat Shawn Wooden, current State Comptroller Kevin Lembo and current Secretary of the State Denise Merrill did not seek re-election this cycle, which makes three constitutional offices with open seats up for grabs in the fall. Comptroller Lembo resigned in December 2021 and his replacement, Comptroller Natalie Braswell announced she will not run for the seat and Secretary of the State Denise Merrill also retired at the end of June 2022 for family reasons.

Primaries

Democratic and Republican primaries for those challenging endorsed candidates were held on August 9, 2022, prior to the printing of this issue. The endorsed and primarying candidates for Constitutional offices within each party are noted below:

New Laws in 2022

A number of new laws were enacted in this past legislative session which will have an impact on the carwash industry in Connecticut.

Captive Audience Meetings

A Connecticut bill banning “captive audience meetings” (SB 163) (An Act protecting employee freedom of speech and conscience) was signed by Gov. Lamont (D) on May 15 making Connecticut the second state to ban mandatory meetings of this sort, following Oregon in 2009. The Biden Administration’s National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has begun a campaign to prohibit them at the federal level. The new law took effect on July 1. This act generally prohibits employers from disciplining or discharging (i.e., penalizing) an employee or threatening to do so because the employee refused to attend employer-sponsored meetings, listen to speeches, or view communications primarily intended to convey the employer’s opinion about religious or political matters, including decisions to join labor organizations (i.e., “captive audience meetings”). The prohibition applies to private-sector employers, the state, and its political subdivisions, and it covers meetings with the employer or its agent, representative or a designee.

Endorsed and Primarying Candidates for Constitutional Offices

	Endorsed Democrat	Primarying Democrat(s)	Endorsed Republican	Primarying Republican(s)
Governor	Ned Lamont*	n/a	Bob Stefanowski	n/a
Lieutenant Governor	Susan Bysiewicz*	n/a	Laura Devlin	n/a
Attorney General	William Tong*	n/a	Jessica Kordas	n/a
State Comptroller	Sean Scanlon	n/a	Mary Fay	n/a
State Treasurer	Erik Russell	Dita Bhargava Karen DuBois-Walton	Harry Arora	n/a
Secretary of the State	Stephanie Thomas	Maritza Bond	Dominic Rapini	Rep. Terri Wood Brock Weber

*indicates incumbent

The act also expands a law that prohibits employers from penalizing employees for exercising their First Amendment rights under the U.S. Constitution, or similar rights under the Connecticut Constitution, to also prohibit employers from threatening to penalize employees for doing so. By law and unchanged by the act, employees may exercise these rights as long as it does not substantially or materially interfere with their bona fide job performance or working relationship with their employer.

The act makes certain exceptions to both its prohibition on penalizing employees for refusing to attend captive audience meetings and the law's prohibition on penalizing employees for exercising their constitutional rights. Among other things, these exceptions explicitly allow employers to communicate information required by law or that the employees need to perform their jobs. It also exempts certain religious organizations' speech on religious matters made to their own employees.

In addition, the act changes the enforcement provision that applies to the law on employee constitutional rights by limiting potential awards to lost wages or compensation, with no punitive damages. It also applies this enforcement mechanism to the act's prohibition on penalizing employees for refusing to attend captive audience meetings. Employers who violate the act's provisions are also liable.

Minimum Wage Now \$14/Hr.

On July 1 the state's minimum wage increased from the rate of \$13 per hour to \$14 per hour. The change is the result of legislation signed into law that schedules several increases in the minimum wage over a five-year period. Signed into law by Governor Lamont in 2019 (Public Act 19-4) which required the minimum wage to increase five times over a five-year period, from the then-rate of \$10.10 per hour to:

- \$11 on October 1, 2019
- \$12 on September 1, 2020
- \$13 on August 1, 2021
- \$14 on July 1, 2022
- \$15 on June 1, 2023

Ultimately, beginning on January 1, 2024, that same law requires the minimum wage to become indexed to the employment cost index, which is calculated by the U.S. Department of Labor, and for the first time in Connecticut the rate will grow according to economic indicators.

Consumer Data Privacy

Carwash owners who use data in their marketing, payments and processing systems will want to review a new law that establishes a framework for controlling and processing personal data. Among other things, it (1) sets responsibilities and privacy protection standards for data controllers (those that determine the purpose and means of processing personal data) and processors (those that process data for a controller) and (2) gives consumers the right to access, correct, delete, and obtain a copy of personal data and to opt out of the processing

of personal data for certain purposes (e.g., targeted advertising).

The law's requirements generally apply to individuals and entities that do business in Connecticut or produce products or services targeting Connecticut residents. More specifically, it applies to those that, during the preceding year, controlled or processed personal data of at least (1) 100,000 consumers, excluding personal data controlled or processed solely for completing a payment transaction, or (2) 25,000 consumers and derived more than 25 percent of their gross revenue from selling personal data. It exempts various entities (e.g., state and local governments) and specified information and data (e.g., certain health records) (PA 22-15, effective on July 1, 2023).

Diesel Tax Increased

The state's diesel fuel tax was increased on July 1 to 49.2 cents per gallon, a nearly 23 percent increase from the previous 40.1-cent rate. The annual adjustment in the diesel fuel tax is calculated by a formula that factors in the average wholesale price of diesel fuel over the prior year. This year saw a larger than normal increase from last year and the way the tax is calculated has been the same since 2007 creating concerns about the impact on inflation and price hikes on everything carried by trucks.

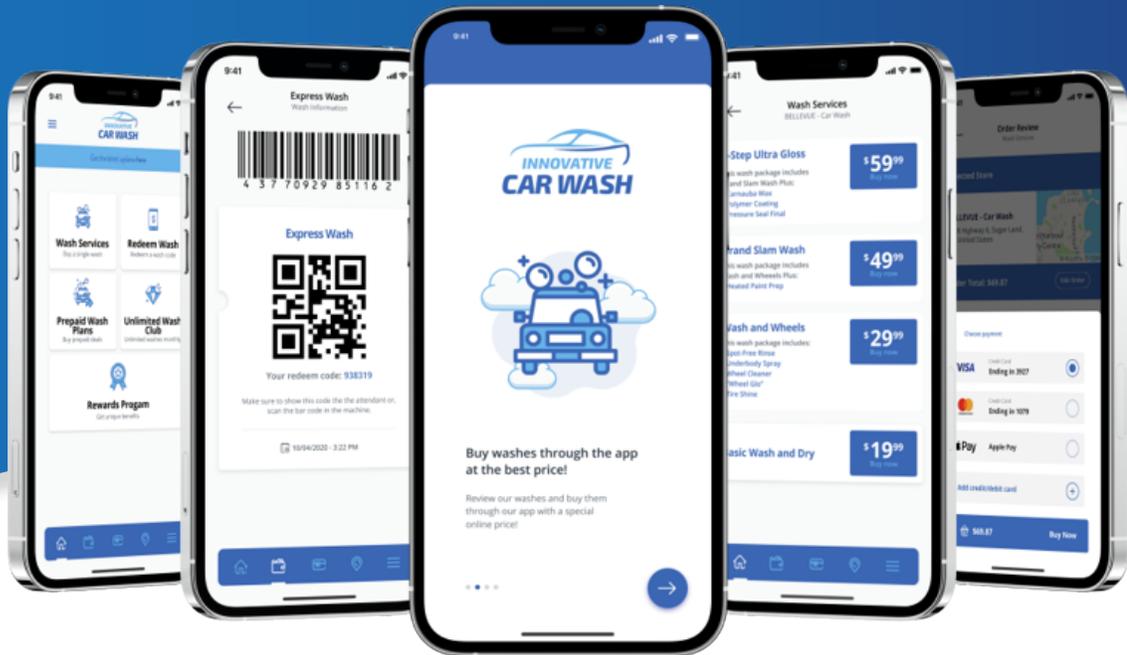
Clean Transportation Laws

Because carwash owners are laser focused on motor vehicles, it's important to be aware of the new law that will increase electric vehicle (EV) adoption in an effort to reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions. Among other things, the new law:

- Establishes grant programs for traffic signal modernization, zero-emission school buses, and zero-emission medium- and heavy-duty trucks.
- Allows the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection commissioner to adopt California's emission standards for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles.
- Sets targets for transitioning to zero-emission school buses, requiring that 100 percent of buses be zero-emission by (a) January 1, 2030, in school districts entirely within, or that contain, an environmental justice community as of July 1, 2022, and (b) January 1, 2040, in other districts.
- Modifies the Connecticut Hydrogen and Electric Automobile Purchase Rebate (CHEAPR) program, including by (a) expanding eligibility to businesses, municipalities, nonprofits, and e-bikes; (b) allowing incentives for electric bicycles; and (c) increasing its funding by directing all of the greenhouse gas reduction fee and part of Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative funds to it.
- Provides property tax exemptions for zero-emission school buses and certain EV charging infrastructure
- Establishes the "right to charge" in condominiums, common interest communities, and rental properties by setting conditions under which requests for installing EV charging stations must be approved (PA 22-25, most provisions effective October 1, 2022).

Continued...

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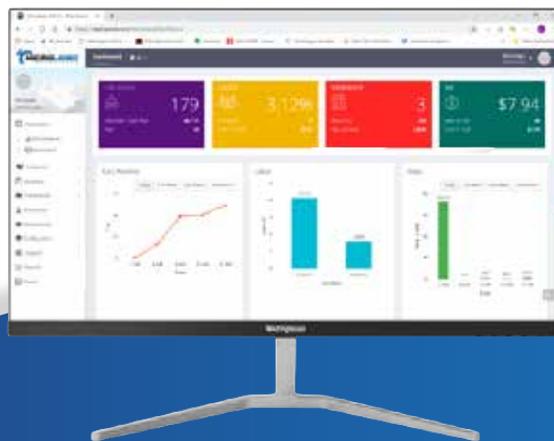
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The State Legislature also reserved up to \$75 million in an existing bond authorization to fund the traffic signal grant program and authorized an additional \$20 million in bonds to fund the school bus matching grant program (HB 5506 (§§ 318 & 348), effective July 1).

New Job Creation Incentives

For carwash owners expanding or growing their businesses, there is an important new program that establishes the new Job-sCT tax rebate program under which carwash businesses and other companies may earn rebates against the insurance premiums, corporation business, and pass-through entity (PE) taxes for reaching certain job creation targets. The rebate is based on:

- The number of new full-time equivalent employees (FTEs) the business creates and maintains
- The FTEs’ average wage and
- The state income tax that would be paid on this average wage for a single filer.

Generally, the (1) business must create and maintain at least 25 new FTEs to claim a rebate, and (2) rebate equals 25 percent of the state income tax paid by the new FTEs (50 percent for FTEs in an opportunity zone or distressed municipality). The act caps the aggregate rebate amount awarded at \$40 million per fiscal year (HB 5506, as amended, effective July 1, and applicable to taxable years commencing on or after January 1, 2023).

Clean Energy Program Expansion

The Legislature expanded two state clean energy programs: the Non-Residential Energy Solutions program (NRES) and the Shared Clean Energy Facility (SCEF) program. Under these programs, Eversource and United Illuminating enter long-term contracts with selected renewable energy projects (e.g., solar projects) and participating customers may benefit by offsetting their energy use. The new law generally doubles the size of these programs by lifting the caps on the amount of energy available under them. The new law also (1) increases the maximum size of individual projects under the programs, (2) allows commercial and industrial customers in the NRES program to use their entire rooftops to site projects, and (3) increases the proportion of SCEF projects that must benefit low-income customers (PA 22-14, most provisions effective October 1, 2022).

Unemployment Insurance System Upgrade

The State has launched a new Department of Labor Unemployment System, called ReEmployCT, that will replace the current 40-year-old unemployment system. ReEmployCT serves approximately 115,000 businesses in Connecticut who pay into the Unemployment Trust Fund, as well as unemployed workers who are eligible for benefits. ReEmployCT replaces several unemployment systems in use at the agency. It provides a single sign-on for claimants; brings features online to help claimants and employers reduce the

need to mail or fax documents; and it reduces the number of times some companies must file their wage records. The system also improves CTDOL functions by reducing manual processing and providing better data about unemployment. Unlike the prior system, ReEmployCT is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Design and planning of ReEmployCT began in 2016 with the initial implementation expected to happen in May 2021. Due to the Pandemic and historically high unemployment filings between March 2020 to September 2021, that launch was rescheduled for July 5. Additional information about ReEmployCT is available at www.reemployct.com.

New CT Paid Leave Authority Distributes \$81M in Benefits

The new Connecticut Paid Leave Authority distributed \$81.2 million to 16,396 workers in the first six months of benefits availability. The authority received 44,127 leave applications through the first six months of operation, approving 19,699 (60 percent) of the 32,701 decided claims while denying 13,002 (40 percent).

Connecticut Paid Leave Benefits

WEEKLY BENEFIT PAID	WEEKLY WAGES	ANNUAL WAGES	% OF CTPL PAYMENTS
Maximum \$780 Benefit	\$997 or Higher	\$51,844 or higher	54.63%
Between \$500-\$799	\$530-\$996	\$27,560-\$51,792	31.09%
Between \$250-\$499	\$263-\$529	\$13,676-\$27,508	11.97%
Less than \$250	\$179-\$262	\$9,300-\$13,624	3.31%

Source: Connecticut Paid Leave Authority

Approved leave averaged 6.79 weeks, with an average weekly benefit payment of \$562.

The undecided claims — 26 percent of all applications — were either under review, awaiting final documentation, or were submitted well in advance of the target leave date. Approved leave averaged 6.79 weeks according to the authority’s first annual report, with an average weekly benefit payment of \$562.01. Half of the received applications were for an employee’s own illness or injury, followed by bonding with a newborn (20 percent), pregnancy/childbirth (17 percent), and caring for a family member (12 percent). Leave applications for family violence, adoption/foster care, organ donation, bone marrow donation, and military family leave made up the balance of claims. Under legislation narrowly approved by the General Assembly in 2019, about 1.5 million Connecticut private sector employees must pay the 0.5 percent payroll tax that funds the program’s benefits and bureaucracy. Most public sector workers are exempt from the tax — which the authority began collecting Jan. 1, 2021, with benefit payouts beginning Jan. 1, 2022. Workers are eligible for up to 12 weeks of paid leave for a number of qualifying reasons, including a serious health condition of an employee or their

family member, as well as a birth or adoption, among other life events. Program benefits are capped at 60 times the state's hourly minimum wage — now \$14 as of July 1 — or \$840 a week.

MyCT Savings Launched

Comptroller Natalie Braswell launched MyCT Savings, a new retirement savings option for the more than 600,000 Connecticut private-sector workers who aren't offered a plan through their employer. Last April, letters were sent to approximately 30,000 Connecticut employers informing them of the MyCT Savings program, and the requirements to participate. Employers are required to register if they have more than five employees and do not currently offer a qualified retirement savings option. Participation for employees is voluntary — they can choose to remain enrolled or even opt out and then re-enroll later. The regular contributions to a Roth IRA help save for retirement and the account is portable; if a participant changes jobs, their account follows them.

MyCT Savings is designed to be easy and flexible for both the employer and employee. Employer registration is quick, and the program seamlessly integrates into any payroll process. A pilot program began in October, enrolling several employers to test processes and gain feedback. Participants have found it easy to enroll and maintain and are already seeing the benefits for their workers. Businesses statewide are now able to offer this program to their employees.

Health Insurance Exchange Abandons Fee Hike

The state health insurance exchange has abandoned a controversial proposal hiking the assessment rate on fully-insured health insurance plans from 1.65 to 1.80 percent. The Access Health CT board delayed an April 20 vote on the assessment change — essentially a tax increase — after CBIA submitted comments opposing the plan. The proposed \$2.8 million assessment hike would have raised premium costs for small businesses and their employees. The Access Health CT board voted to remove the assessment from its fiscal 2023-2024 budget. The exchange will now draw from its reserves to cover the \$2.8 million budget deficit. The exchange's finance committee, which recommended the assessment hike, justified the measure based on a decline in assessment revenues over the last three fiscal years. Access Health CT's operating expenses are projected to outpace revenues an average \$2.8 million through fiscal year 2025.

NC



P.J. Cimini

P.J. Cimini, Esq. is the CCA's Lobbyist and a partner in Capitol Strategies Group, LLC, in Hartford. Nicole Tomassetti is an Associate at Capitol Strategies Group. You can reach P.J. at 860/983-2581 or pj@csgct.com. You can reach Nicole at 203/213-2602 or Nicole@csgct.com



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OFFICERS

Dino Nicoletta, President

Asbury Circle Car Wash, 707 Hwy 35, Neptune, NJ 07753
732/898-9900 Cell
dinodnico@gmail.com

Dan Saidel, Vice President

Premier Car Wash, 175 Essex Ave., Metuchen, NJ 08840
201/736-9626 Cell
dan@premiercarwashnj.com

Mike Prudente, treasurer

Summit Car Wash & Detail Center
100 Springfield Ave., Summit, NJ 07901
908/273-0830 Phone • 201/602-3132 Cell
908/273-8038 Fax
hotwax100@hotmail.com

Suzanne Stansbury, executive director

2214 Budd Terrace, Niskayuna, NY 12309
518/280-4767 Phone/Fax
suzanne.stansbury@icloud.com

Doug Rieck, Immediate Past President

Magic Wash, 578 Mill Creek Rd, Manahawkin, NJ 08050
609/597-7837 Phone • 609/597-9427 Fax
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*deceased

CWONJ.COM

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

As we enter the fall season we are all focused on getting our tunnels ready for hopefully a very busy winter washing season, but instead, in this issue, I would like to continue to push the efforts necessary for passing the bill on making carwashes in New Jersey an essential business. During COVID many non-essential businesses had been ordered to close including carwashes. It was this event that motivated the Car Wash Operators of New Jersey's (CWONJ) board to retain The Princeton Public Affairs Group (PPAG) to help pass a bill mandating carwashes be categorized as an "essential business." With CWONJ having one of the largest memberships of all of the associations in the Northeast, I urge operators and owners to get involved and reach out to their Legislators to pass this bill. The bill is now in front of the Legislature as bill A3703. Visit cwonj.com for links to your local representatives and form letters you can use to follow when contacting them. Any form of communication with your Legislator is acceptable and recorded, i.e., email, phone, fax or US postal service. We are close to having this bill passed, but we need the support of all New Jersey carwashers to help drag it across the finish line.



Dino Nicoletta, CWONJ President

Karvelas Plays In Children's Specialized Hospital Foundation Outing

Former Car Wash Operators of New Jersey (CWONJ) President, Doug Karvelas of Broad Street Car Wash in Hamilton, played in the June 20 Children's Specialized Hospital Foundation's 6th Annual Golf Open at the Metedeconk National Golf Club in Jackson Township. The event raises money and awareness for the hospital and its mission. Karvelas has been a supporter and player for years. He is pictured with Joe Gaziano, a defensive end for the Los Angeles Chargers, at this year's outing. **NC**



www.childrens-specialized.org



CWONJ Bus Tour Features Newark Sites

The Car Wash Operators of New Jersey (CWONJ) toured three carwash sites on Tuesday, May 24, in the Newark, NJ, market. Approximately 50 participated in the day's event that highlighted Wash Hounds in Bayonne, Supreme Car Wash in Newark and Soaring of Elmwood. "The weather held out, the bus was full and the washes each had their own flavor," according to CWONJ President Dino Nicoletta. "There was a lot to see and learn on this tour."

The event also featured a sit-down lunch at Fernandes Steak House on Fleming Avenue, a local Newark favorite. The restaurant

is nestled in a former bank and is known for its rodizio (all you can eat style) and endless parade of Brazilian meats. "In addition to the three great sites we toured, our lunch hit it out of the park," said Nicoletta. "If you missed this one, you really missed out."

The event was sponsored by Bus Tour Sponsor DRB Systems and Lunch Sponsors NCS/Vacutech and EverWash. "It's thanks to our generous sponsors that we can hold such a first-class event. I thank them on behalf of the membership and board," said Nicoletta.

NC

Continue for more tour photos on pages 64-67!

Wash Hounds, Bayonne



Wash Hounds owner Brad Levie welcomed the group with an impressive greeting at the kiosk.



Wash Hounds in Bayonne is next to a massive CubeSmart self storage facility.



The site features state-of-the-art options from DRB at its auto cashier like the ability to provide texting information.



Magic Wash's Doug Rieck and Auto Shine's Amin Khalifa.



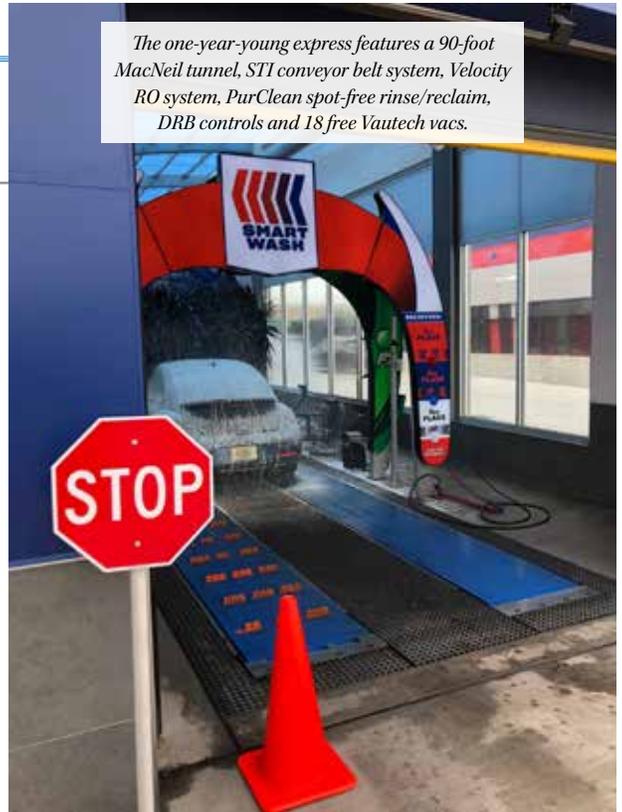
NCS' George Ribeiro, area Manager Chris Blazon and NCS' Cody Lawler.

CWONJ Bus Tour Features Newark Sites ... continued

Wash Hounds, Bayonne ... continued



The one-year-young express features a 90-foot MacNeil tunnel, STI conveyor belt system, Velocity RO system, PurClean spot-free rinse/reclaim, DRB controls and 18 free Vautech vacs.



The tunnel is bright and colorful.

Supreme Car Wash, Newark



This vintage sign adds to the site's charm.



Owner and CWONJ Board Member Richie Boudakian.



The site uses EverWash to drive its Unlimited program.

CWONJ Past Presidents Doug Rieck and Stu Markowitz and Posh's Rafael Birshtein.



Supreme Car Wash, Newark ... continued



Ample signage makes options easy to select.

The 115-foot tunnel boasts a Sonny's conveyor extension with tire shine, a Belanger SpinLite unit, DRB controls and EverWash unlimited program in addition to ZEP chemical. It also features Motor City Dry N' shine and WFI in the back room.



Eleven new windows were added to brighten up the tunnel.



Express and Mini Details are available at varying price points.



The wash has undergone extensive renovations recently including the addition of Glasboard.

Continue for more tour photos!

Soaring, Elmwood

Soaring owner Erion Lenas.



The eye-catching site's design sets it apart from its competition.



The site's design graduates two full-service bays and a detailing bay option into the service plan.



Of course, free vacs are incorporated into the site's options.



Tom Fuller of Team Car Wash, Stu Markowitz with Posh and Soaring's manager strike a pose.



The site takes advantage of a long chain link fence to promote everything from courtesy to employment availability.



Ample signage, like this truck bed clean-out request, make it easy for customers to know the do's and don'ts.

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1/4 p. 67

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A “Team” Effort

By Suzanne L. Stansbury

Tom Fuller, 56, is his own boss for the first time in his career.

And he likes it — a lot. But more importantly, he likes the culture he is building at his soon to be 10 Team Car Washes in New Jersey and he intends to nurture and grow the brand, at least for now.

Fuller, who worked on Wall Street for 29 years, decided he wanted to dip his toe into carwashing in the fall of 2019 thanks to a nudge from a friend. But it wasn't because he loved cars, owned luxury vehicles, dreamed of running a wash or was even mechanically inclined, it was, as you might now guess, all about the numbers for Fuller. “What I like about the carwash business is that it generates a lot of cash with a high cash flow margin if run properly,” he said. “In a full-serve wash, for every dollar that comes through the door, if run correctly, .33 cents goes to you and that's attractive.”

Fuller began his due diligence in carwashing by making calls and making friends to learn all he could about how to run a successful wash, and as you might guess, he got a lot of differing opinions. “The first thing you hear about carwashing (from a non carwasher) is that it's an absentee-owner business,” said Fuller. “But you soon learn that there is no such thing as a successful carwash with an absentee owner. It is an extremely hands-on, detail-oriented business. You have to be super focused on the details and that's kind of what I've always done — focused on the details.”

So, in December of 2019 (yes, just a few months into



Team Car Wash owner Tom Fuller.



Team Piscataway.



Team Westfield.





The wash in Summit has a storied history with customer service like no other. The site has been renovated and re-equipped and a Club plan added.



his research), Fuller decided it was time to purchase his first wash. “I could continue making phone calls for the next two to three years or put some money to work and either sink or swim and either learn it and be able to do this, or lose some of my money and life will go on,” he said.

His first acquisition was the former Showcase Car Wash in Piscataway, which he closed on in February of 2020, a down-on-its-heels site with a traffic count of 25,000. He said that at one point the site did 80,000 cars annually, but had only hit 42,000 in recent years. “The wash’s volume didn’t decline because of a shift in the neighborhood or a new competitor,” he said, “the previous owner just didn’t reinvest in the site.”

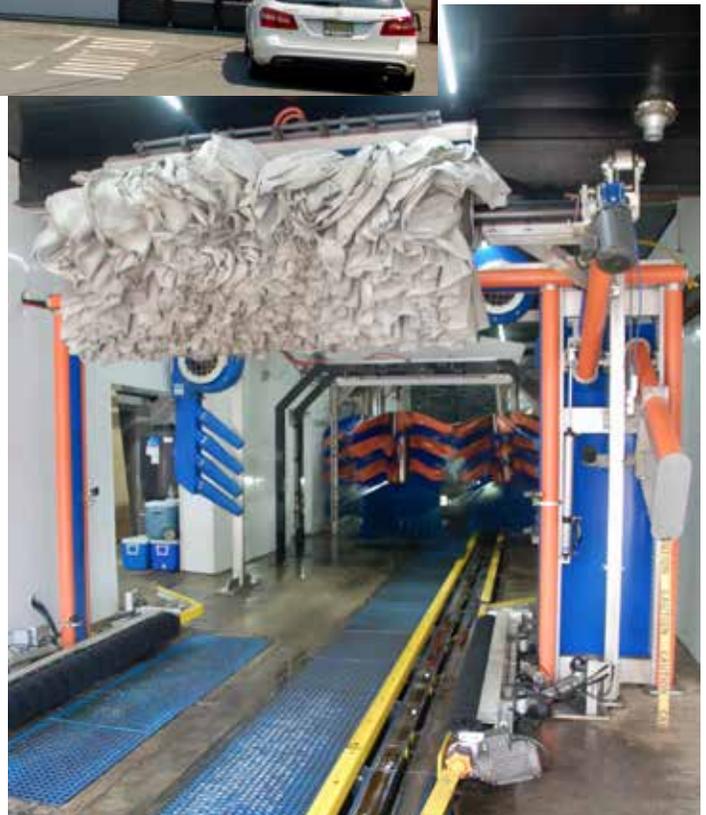
The good news for Fuller was that the 120-foot tunnel had great bones, accessibility, stacking and the potential to wash a lot of cars. The bad news was that a Valet Auto Wash, owned by Chris Vernon, was going in a mile and a half down the road. “Valet Auto Wash is absolutely gorgeous,” noted Fuller, “but it’s off the road and tucked in the back of a shopping plaza with zero visibility from the main road, and it’s hard to get in and out.”

Fuller also realized that converting the long-time full serve to an express model, what many operators are doing to cut down on labor, didn’t make sense since the new competitor was an express wash (with a flex option). Luckily for Fuller, his reinvestment into the site, and implementation of a Club plan, is paying off. “We are doing about 7,500 cars a month here and have gone from zero Club members to well over 2,000.” The site’s volume is also up to 90,000 in a relatively short time frame.

A “TEAM” Approach

If you know a little bit about Tom Fuller, you’ll understand why he named his washes “Team.” An avid exercise enthusiast and long-distance event lover, he excels in overcoming obstacles and pushing his limits. He frequently endures

Continued...



A “Team” Effort ... *continued*

the rigors of a Tough Mudder, an endurance event series where participants attempt 10-12 mile long obstacle courses that often play on common human fears like fire, water, electricity and heights. They also require you to work as a “team” to finish the event. “If there’s a long-distance event, I’ll do it,” said Fuller. And that could include an overnight event, like a Tough Mudder, where he will do 50 miles and 100 obstacles in a 24-hour period of time.

So, it’s certainly not lost on Fuller that to operate a successful carwash business you need to amass and nurture a cohesive team. You also need to admit when you don’t know what you don’t know. “I’m one person, and I can’t run four or six or eight washes by myself,” he said. “The only way to be successful at this is to put a group or a ‘team’ of people together.”

One of his key employees is Jim Burkhardt, a former Green Beret and Delta Force (special operations force of the US Army) unit member who worked with Fuller on Wall Street. What he lacks in carwashing experience, I’m guessing he makes up in discipline and precision. “Jim is my Head of Operations and my right hand man,” said Fuller. “He is key to the success of this operation.”

As I mentioned earlier, Fuller set out early on making some key friends in the industry and understood the value in that outreach. “The biggest mistake I could make when getting into this industry was to think that I knew everything there was to know about carwashing, and that I’d do it all right,” said Fuller. “When you do that you are not open to learning something new or to someone else’s ideas. I always have an open mind.”

Bullish on Labor

Despite an extremely tight labor market, Fuller has been able to use that challenge to his advantage. “COVID created an opportunity to secure high-caliber people from the hospitality industry,” he said. “They might not know anything about the carwashing industry, but they know a lot about customer service.”

Some of his managers have come from the restaurant industry and know a thing or two about process and customer service. “It’s simi-

lar to when the POS goes down and there’s a line and you can’t process tickets. One of my managers said his stress level was at a three compared to the 10 it was at when he worked in the restaurant business.” His Piscataway manager brought 15 years of experience to the job from management experience at Applebee’s.

In addition to exploring like-minded industries, he has worked with a headhunter out of Florida to secure a few management positions with moderate success.

Fuller also recruits from within his current ranks and says that has worked extremely well. “We just haven’t had difficulty finding employees,” he noted. “We basically find a lot of them through our existing employees. You’re always going to lose people to landscaping jobs during the summer, so we offer existing employees \$500 if they can bring us someone who can last for three months. From our perspective, it’s well worth it.”

Fuller pays minimum wage, initially, and his growing volumes are producing generous tips. He also provides “minimum essential”

Continued...



The Woodbridge site is one of four full-seves in Fuller’s growing footprint. It is also the most successful site, according to Fuller.



Ample, concise and colorful signage abounds tying in the orange and blue color scheme.



A “Team” Effort ... *continued*

health care coverage for those who work 30+ hours/week since he employs more than 50. “To control labor costs we don’t try to cut people’s hours, we work hard to drive volumes higher which is beneficial for our employees and myself.”

But paying his salaried team more than the industry standard is really what has attracted a different caliber of employee to Team Car Wash. “We really haven’t had difficulty finding employees,” recounts Fuller.

Process Oriented

Fuller’s attention to detail background from his years in finance is serving him well in carwashing. “If you don’t have a service element in place you won’t be successful,” he said. “You need to be focused on great customer service in the back, putting out a really clean car efficiently and providing exceptional customer service at the cash register, as well. It’s very important. You have to be focused on the process. If you continue to stay focused on the details, you can be really successful in carwashing.”

Getting to understand and feel comfortable with the equipment behind much of that process, however, has been his greatest challenge. “I’m spending an inordinate amount of time trying to understand the nuances of the equipment and what we should be putting in and why,” said Fuller. “There’s a ton to learn, but I’ve been visiting other sites and talking with other operators and gathering information.

“I go find people who know a lot more than I do, write it all down and formulate my own opinion.”

Reinvestment Key

In addition to securing a top-notch management team, keeping your line workers happy and engaged is important to Fuller. By reinvesting in the soon-to-be 10 sites he has acquired, and showing his commitment to the success of each operation, he has demonstrated to his staff that he’s here to stay. “What you find is when there’s been an absentee owner and someone new comes in and invests a lot of money in the business and really cares about it, your staff, who may have been there for 10-25 years, sees what you are doing and that you are putting money into the business and it invigorates them.”

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Know Your Market

Each of Fuller’s 10 washes has its own personality and market demographics which he takes into account when setting pricing and expectations. “Woodbridge is the most successful wash I own,” he said. “We have a huge Club there and wash an unbelievable amount of cars, and it’s a full serve. That is what the market there wants.” Summit, another full-serve location, is quickly closing the gap since undergoing a renovation and introducing a Club last year. The recently acquired East Brunswick express exterior has the highest car counts in the chain.”

He noted that at his Piscataway, Summit, Westfield and Woodbridge locations, all full-serve sites, he employs 100. “No one in these markets wants to vacuum their own car,” he said. “That’s not what these markets are.”

He also operates express sites he calls “Team Expresses” in Roselle, East Brunswick, Monmouth Junction, Ocean and Marlboro. Site number 10, in Scotch Plains, received zoning board approval in July and construction will start in the fourth quarter. The sites have an array of MacNeil, Hanna, Motor City and Econocraft equipment with Simoniz USA chemical and DRB controls. In fact, he hired a former DRB employee to oversee that aspect of the business.

One of the most sought after purchases Fuller landed, the former Summit Car Wash in Summit, might also have been his biggest challenge to date. “Summit’s a 50-year-old wash that was kind of stuck in a time warp,” he recounted. “It had a surface conveyor, no computer, no Club and 28 employees, and many of them had been there a long time.”

Changing the wash’s equipment out, as well as the culture, was tough. The result, however, has been a 50 percent increase in volume and the formation of a Club program. “We modernized the facility and added all new equipment, but you can’t replicate the level of customer service that the previous owners offered.

“There’s never going to be another Mike Prudente (one of Summit’s long-time owners), who was there from 1972-2020,” Fuller noted. “Mike and Gerry (Maietta) ran really profitable and successful washes for years and they were certainly doing something right. There are definitely some things you can learn from them and how they trained their employees to go above and beyond.” (Maietta passed away in 2020. His two sons, Danny and Kenny, were also partners in Summit and still own Madison Car Wash in Madison with Prudente).

Goal Oriented

Fuller’s initial goal was to own eight-10 washes in his first two years. With that accomplished he said that his goals are always evolving. “I want to get to 12-15,” he noted. “We did four transactions in 2020, only one in 2021 with the acquisition in Roselle, but we were able to do three last month with East Brunswick, Monmouth Junction and Ocean. It comes in waves.”

He added, “I am more in love with carwashing than I ever was. It’s a tremendous business and it’s a great opportunity. For now, my goal is to continue to grow.” NC

Suzanne L. Stansbury is the Editor/Publisher of the Northeast Carwasher magazine.



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Budget Passes, Carwash Bill to be Addressed in September

By Sam Weinstein

On June 30, Governor Phil Murphy (D) was joined by Legislative leaders to sign the Fiscal Year 2023 (FY2023) Budget. The budget, which appropriates \$50.6 billion in state funds and \$24.08 billion in federal funds, was bolstered by better-than-expected tax revenues and the windfalls generated from federal funding as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Originally unveiled by Governor Murphy in March, the budget represents the culmination of the budget-making process, wherein Legislators, state leaders and agencies, stakeholders, and members of the public advocate before the Legislature to ensure that their funding priorities are addressed.

The budget itself is the largest in state history and increases spending on items ranging from a \$2 billion direct property-tax rebate program to public school aid. Of note, the FY2023 Budget appropriates:

- \$6.8 billion toward the State Surplus
- \$475.57 million in state funding for the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for the upcoming fiscal year and

- \$1.89 billion in state funding for the Department of Transportation (DOT) for the upcoming fiscal year.

Following the passage of the budget, the Legislature is expected to meet on an as-needed basis until after Labor Day, when regular activity will resume. After Labor Day, the Car Wash Operators of New Jersey (CWONJ), along with Princeton Public Affairs Group, Inc. (PPAG), will engage the Legislature to seek the passage of:

- A3703 (Dunn R-25), which permits car wash businesses to operate during state of emergency or public health emergencies.

The CWONJ board has been working tirelessly to ensure that Legislators are made aware of this bill and its significance. They hosted carwash tours this past summer to better educate legislators.



Sam Weinstein

NC
Sam Weinstein is a lobbyist/strategic advisor/government affairs for Princeton Public Affairs Group (PPAG) in Trenton, NJ, the association's lobbying firm. You can reach Sam at sam@ppag.com

Remembering call-in weather reports A Moment in Time

By Doug Rieck

Weather has always played a role in this industry. In the olden days of full service, it had a greater importance for scheduling because of the large crews needed. In the late 1980's, the Carwash Operators of New Jersey (CWONJ) had a call-in weather service for its members. The association retained the services of radio Meteorologist George Prouflis. Any paid members could call him for daily local forecasts and questions. This was a pretty good deal for the carwashes who used it. In this time period, there was no public access to Radar or forecasts other than television or radio broadcasts. There were no cell phones with weather Apps or computer access. The Weather Channel was founded in 1982, but that still meant you had to have a television set and cable at your carwash.

Today's instant access on cell phones makes this seem archaic, but at the time it was cutting edge and a huge member benefit.

NC

Doug Rieck is the Immediate Past President of the Car Wash Operators of New Jersey.



Golf Recap in Winter Issue



Look for a recap of the association's 20th Children's Specialized Hospital Annual Golf Outing, at Suburban Golf Club in Union. Proceeds from the August 1 event go to the hospital, the largest pediatric rehabilitation hospital in the country. You can learn more at childrens-specialized.org.

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pfmosesso@gmail.com

Immediate Past President - Mat Paisner
ScrubADub
172 Worcester Road Natick, MA 1760
W: 508-650-1155 x241 M: 315-254-8118 F: 508-655-9261
mat@scrubadub.com

VP/Operators - Jeffrey Katseff
Turnpike Car Wash
80 1/2 Newbury Street, Rte 1 Peabody, MA 1960
w: 978-535-3348 M: 978-808-4188 F: 978-535-8802
jeffreykatseff@gmail.com

VP/Suppliers - Chris Zona
AutoWash Technologies
P O Box 999 Hanover, MA 02339
W: 888-767-9274 x858 M: 617-688-7891
Czona@autowash.net

Treasurer - John Shalby Jr.
Rojo Company
69 Providence Highway Norwood, MA 2062
W: 781-762-8280 M: 781-589-2130 F: 781-762-1465
john@rojocarwash.com

OPERATOR DIRECTORS

Tony Lombardo - Scrub-It Car Wash
89 N. Main Street Carver, MA 2330
W: 508-866-4775 M: 774-319-6851
scrubitcarwash@gmail.com

Derek Mourad - Neponset Circle Car Wash
815 Gallivan Boulevard Dorchester, MA 2122
W: 617/288-1581 M: 617/288-2257
info@neponsetcirclecarwash.com

Chris Onimet - Fitzys Car & Pet Wash
85 Worcester Street Grafton, MA 01536
w: 508-839-5250 M: 508-615-5986
couimet@fitzyscarandpetwash.com

Felix Taranto - Triton Wash Car Care Center
581 Main Street Wilmington, MA 01887
W: 978/658-3100 M: 617-293-3825 F: 978/658-4780
ft@tritonwash.com

Chris Vercollone - Briteway Car Wash
424 Washington Street, Norwell, MA 02161
W: 781-934-7300 X 8142 M: 774-454-3068
cvercollone@vercenterprises.com

SUPPLIER DIRECTORS

Jeff Arimento - Car Wash Pros LLC
PO Box 892 100 Park Street Ayer, MA 01432
W: 978-942-5757 M: 978-429-1056
jarimento@tcwpros.com

Matt D'Souza - Washify Services
1208 VFW Parkway Ste 305 West Roxbury, MA 02132
W: 617-350-0837 M: 857-350-0837 F: 508-861-0468
matt@washify.com

Brian Stanikmas - Simoniz USA
63E Charlton Road Spencer, MA 01562
W: 800-227-5536 x 237 M: 774-696-6714
bstanikmas@simoniz.com

Michael Snow - Maintenance Tech
235 Riverside Industrial Parkway Portland, ME 04103
W: 207/775-1516 M: 207/899-6245 F: 207/797-7233
michael@carwashtec.com

Executive Director - Sherri Oken, CAE
NECA c/o The Association Advantage LLC
591 North Avenue, Suite 3-2, Wakefield, MA 01880-1617
781/245-7400 F: 781/245-6487
info@newenglandcarwash.org
www.newenglandcarwash.org

We are more than halfway through the year, dealing with inflation, supply chain disruptions, labor shortages, living with COVID-19 and yet our industry continues to be robust. Competition has never looked so different from recent years as new investors blaze new trails with a much different outlook for the industry. What used to be "territories" for building new washes have changed to a new set of metrics for deciding where to build new carwash sites. Valuations for buying carwashes has never been so high, fueling the rush for market share.

What is a single site operator to do to prepare for, or to compete with, a current competitor or the possibility of a new competitor? So, I took a step back to look at my own operations, did a "walk-around," and tried to look through the eyes of my customers. Is the site looking its best? Painted, seal coated, fresh signs with all machines in great working order? I have adjusted our menu prices to combat the increased costs of supplies, utilities and labor. I modified some of the services I provide and use staffing as efficiently as possible to maintain profitability. Focusing on customer service is probably the most important factor in creating a positive experience for our customers.

What better way to learn about current ideas than the New England Carwash Association's (NECA) annual bus tour this past June? The event sold out quickly, with two buses filled to capacity, and was perfect for networking between operators and vendors while we toured three carwash sites offering a mix of carwash layouts. This event also was very successful because of the generosity of the carwash locations showcasing their carwash sites and allowing attendees to physically tour the sites. Everyone was able to pick up many ideas to compare with their own sites. Operators and vendors were able to assess a variety of equipment and services as every carwash has a different business model. The event ended with a great social event at The Guild Brewery in Pawtucket, RI, where everyone enjoyed beer, barbecue and for the first time ever, a live bluegrass band! See page 82 for more on our spring event.

I hope you had a great summer and look forward to seeing many of you at the NECA Golf Outing on September 13, at the Marlboro Country Club, or at the Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC) in Atlantic City, NJ, September 19-21. You can register and view the agenda at nrccshow.com. The NECA is this year's host association so make sure you attend!




Patrick Mosesso, NECA President

Congrats to the 2022 NECA Scholarship Recipients



The New England Carwash Association (NECA) is pleased to introduce its 2022 Scholarship recipients. Since 2011, including this year, the association has awarded \$30,000 in scholarships to deserving member company employees or their children.

Each year, one scholarship is awarded in memory of Tom Rando to an applicant who embodies the values and talents of Tom Rando, an entrepreneur, innovator and respected industry leader. The 2022 Thomas Rando Scholarship recipient is Olivia Simons, whose dad Rick works for RoJo Carwash. Olivia is a rising sophomore at Bridgewater State University where



Olivia Simons

she is majoring in business management with the hope of owning a business. She completed her first year on the Dean's

list while working two jobs and commuting from home to pay for her tuition, already exhibiting her entrepreneurial spirit.

Marion Calabro, whose dad Ken works for Haffner's Energy, also has been awarded a 2022 NECA scholarship. After



Marion Calabro

graduating with honors from high school, she earned a BA in History from Worcester State University. While working in residential services for young adults impacted by mental illness, her desire to be a nurse galvanized and this fall she will be entering the BS Nursing Program at the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences with the goal of addressing barriers vulnerable populations have in accessing health and mental health care.

The NECA Scholarship Committee is confident that these outstanding young people will be successful, and are pleased to be of some small assistance. **NC**

Oh, Yes I Can!

Valentina Zona, aspiring carwasher and daughter of Chris Zona and Kerri Loughlin, is insisting on eating her dad's sea salt chocolate chip cookie from the Vischer Ferry Store in Upstate New York after dad brought it home from the June 1 New York State Car Wash Association (NYSCWA) Carwash Tour & Meeting. She might just have to come on the next tour and enjoy another! **NC**



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contact: Daniel Armstrong

802/229-4976 vtlazerwash@gmail.com **NC**

Call for Nominations

Would you like to get much more involved in the operation of the New England Carwash Association (NECA) and the work it does on behalf of the carwash industry? There are openings for Operator and Supplier members on the 2023 Board of Directors. Each term is for one year, renewable by mutual agreement for a total of three terms. Please nominate yourself or a colleague by contacting Mat Paisner, Immediate Past President, at 508/650-1155 x241 or

mat@scrubadub.com

Participation in the work of the NECA is a membership privilege open to all employees of member companies. Those who are actively involved make strategic decisions about the direction of the Association and the profession on the membership's behalf. Most importantly, participation is a networking opportunity, an excellent way to make industry contacts and tap into the collective knowledge of the NECA community.



Board of Directors Eligibility

- Owner or full-time employee of a member company in good standing
- Interest in becoming more involved in the activities of the NECA
- Desire to have an influence on the future of the industry and NECA
- Willingness to be a full participant in the work of the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors meets in person six times a year. Dates are set in advance so that Board members can plan ahead. New Board members are inducted in the late fall and officially take office on January 1. Non-profit governance training is provided during the fall transition period and at a new Board orientation lunch.

More Opportunities to Get Involved

Even if you only have an hour or two to spare, there are opportunities throughout the year to get involved and to get to know (and learn from) other NECA members. Make some phone calls, research a possible member service, help out at the special event, share a best practice, identify a speaker for a program, take photos at a meeting. The possibilities are limitless. Contact the NECA office about these micro opportunities at 781/245-7400 or email info@newenglandcarwash.org

NC

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Christopher Zona | Founder

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It's Time to Play Golf!

By Mark Delaney

The New England Carwash Association (NECA) will be teeing it up at Marlborough Country Club on September 13 for its annual golf outing. As you're out there enjoying the weather, drinks and great food, which will be provided in every cart, be aware of golf balls flying as we are bringing back the Golf Cannon this year. This is a wonderful event for both fun and charity, one of our favorites of the year, and we are hoping for yet another great turnout!

Over the years, we have donated nearly \$94,000 to charities as a result of the event. After careful consideration, the NECA Board has decided to again donate the proceeds from this golf outing to support Cradles to Crayons. Their mission remains clear: to provide children from birth through age 12 with the everyday essentials they need to thrive — at home, at school and at play. Their vision is a future free of childhood poverty. Cradles to Crayons launched in Boston in 2002, expanded to Philadelphia in 2006, Chicago in 2016, and have two more sites in the planning stages. (To learn more about Cradles to Crayons visit cradlestocrayons.org)

Make sure to book your foursome on the NECA website in advance. No foursome, no problem. We'll match you up. As always, there will be great prizes for golf achievements as well as a raffle, a live auction, and passport drawing. Make sure to enter the putting contest as there is always a great prize given



away to the winner! We can't wait to see everyone on the course in September.

The NECA appreciates all the 2022 sponsors (see the Outing page on the NECA website, newenglandcarwash.org) and our hard working Outing Committee (Mark Delaney, Felix Taranto, Tony and Taylor Lombardo, Brian Stankimas, Chris Ouimet). **NC** Mark Delaney, with Allston Car Wash in Allston, MA, is the NECA's Golf Outing Chair.



NECA's 22nd Annual Golf Outing
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Brews, Barbecue and Bluegrass a Success

The New England Carwash Association's (NECA) June 14 event, "Brews, Barbecue and Bluegrass" benefited from a picture-perfect day of sunshine.

At noon, two motor coaches departed from The Guild in Pawtucket, RI, for the association's annual spring tour. The first stop was Personal Touch Express Car Wash in Johnston, RI. DRB, represented by Chris McFadden, hosted lunch in their detail bay. Next, the group visited Flash Car Wash in Warwick, RI, where the presenting sponsor was Motor City Wash Works. The final stop was Triple Play North in North Attleboro, MA, where our presenting sponsor was Vacutech. The bus tour was sponsored by Autowash Maintenance and Sonny's Car Wash Services Northeast.

The buses returned to Pawtucket to celebrate in the "The Barn" at The Guild in Pawtucket, RI. Attendees were treated to a barbecue buffet, beverages, tastings (sponsored by AutoWash Technologies) and live bluegrass music (sponsored by Maintenance Technologies). Conversation Stations were sponsored by NCS and by Simoniz who also sponsored the dessert. Informative exhibits were displayed by Merchant Advocate, Cross Insurance and American Changer/Rowe/Triad.

Attendees were able to socialize in an expansive, rustic space, and on the patio where some tried their hands at cornhole.

Additional photos are posted on newenglandcarwash.org where you can click on "View Recap of Last Event" and then select the "image gallery" tab. **NC**

**You can request copies by emailing
info@newenglandcarwash.org**



Flash Car Wash in Warwick, RI, was featured by presenting sponsor Motor City Wash Works.



The Barn at The Guild in Pawtucket, RI, was a fitting spot to kick back and bond with fellow attendees, where AutoWash Technologies sponsored a barbecue buffet, beverages and tastings.

NECA President Patrick Mosesso catches up at Triple Play's exit end.





Personal Touch Express Car Wash in Johnston, RI, was the first stop on the June 14 tour. DRB rep, Chris McFadden, hosted lunch in the wash's detail bay. The tour was sponsored by Autowash Maintenance and Sonny's Car Wash Services Northeast.



Team Burton Car Wash, Aaron Smith and Connie Burton, all the way from Brattleboro, VT, enjoyed the day's events.

More photos on page 84!

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The team from Global Partners strikes a pose.



Adam Korngold with Waves Car Wash, Darold Evans with Sandwich Car Wash, Chris Costa with Sonny's and Jonathan Stevens with Washify enjoy tastings sponsored by AutoWash Technologies.



Danny Paisner of ScrubADub and some reps from NCS enjoyed the Conversation Stations at The Barn sponsored by NCS and Simoniz USA.





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Industry Veteran Chip Downey Passes

Francis "Chip" Xavier Downey, Jr., 64, passed peacefully away on July 17. Born on June 22, 1958 in Boston, MA, to Francis Xavier Downey, Sr. and Brenda (Sullivan) Downey, he spent his career working in the carwashing industry and more than 30 of those years proudly service his own family-run business, Fill-It-Up, Please.



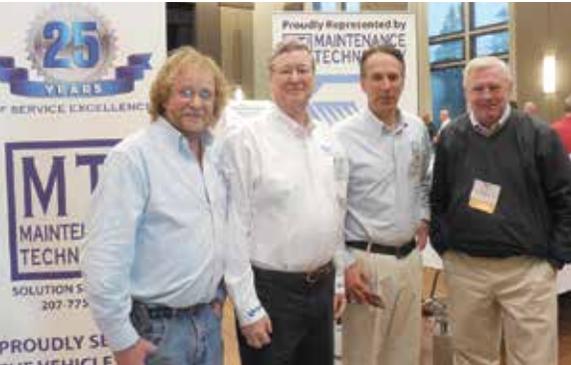
Chip Downey

He is survived by his two children and wife; his mother Brenda of Yarmouth; his six siblings, Daniel (Laurie) Downey of Portland; Brenda Downey of Yarmouth; Susan Flynn of Falmouth; John (Lisa) Downey of Cumberland, Louisa Routh of Yarmouth and Teddy (Margaret) Downey of Falmouth, as well as many nieces, nephews and cousins.

According to his obituary, Chip's legacy will be his kindness and generosity, but most importantly his deep devotion to his family.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorial donations be made to the Joslin Diabetes Center, One Joselin Place, Boston, MA 02215

Our deepest sympathy to the Downey family on their loss.



Chip Downey, far right, in 2018 at the NECA Table Top with Maintenance Tech reps.

Chip grew up in Falmouth, ME, and graduated from Cheverus High School in Portland in 1977. After high school he attended the University of Maine, Orono, where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration in 1981. He was a member of the Delta Upsilon Fraternity. He married Susan (Bickmore) Downey in 1988 and had two children, Francis "Jake" and John.

The Downeys were long-time residents of Cumberland. Chip was a long-time communicant of Holy Martyrs Parish in Falmouth.



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Tuesday, November 1, 2022



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OFFICERS

Walt Hartl, president

Hoffman Car Wash
518/527-4202 • whartl@hoffman-development.com

Steve Weekes, vice president

Sitterly Road Car Wash Services LLC
518/383-8126 • sweekes@nycap.rr.com

Rob Peter, secretary

Lustra Car Care Products
585-754-0005 • rpeter@lustrabear.com

Mike Benmoschè, treasurer

518-588-6829 • mbenmosche@gmail.com

BOARD MEMBERS

Gary Baright, Foam & Wash
914/757-2700 • gbaright@foamandwash.com

Jake Collison, Simoniz USA
978/518-0018 • jcollison@simoniz.com

Christian King, KNC Holdings, Albany
518/783-2100 ext 5 • cking@knc Holdingsinc.com

Chris Kubarek, K & S Car Wash
315/255-1414 • cjkubarek@me.com

Mackenzie Wilock, Spritz Car Wash
518/376-7681 • weekmac@gmail.com

Paul Vallario, Westbury Personal Touch, East Northport
516/333-8808 • iwashcars@optonline.net

PAST PRESIDENTS

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|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Tom Hoffman Sr. | Dan Kailburn |
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| Tom Hoffman Jr. | Steve Knightes |
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*Deceased

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Suzanne L. Stansbury
Ph/F: (518) 280-4767
Suzane.L.Stansbury@gmail.com
P.O. Box 230, Rexford, NY 12148
northeastcarwasher.com

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

During the peak of the COVID-19 Pandemic I sat in my home office, like many people, and typed out my column for this magazine. We were in the middle of the uncertainty of COVID regulations. Could we open? Who was permitted to work? If we could open how could we operate, let alone collect cash from people without being able to talk to customers? What if someone got COVID? What were the rules about when employees could come back to work? Those were trying times, and I would argue they still are for some different reasons. I remember asking the question, "What will stick around after the Pandemic is gone?"

As I sit in the same home office writing this column, it appears that we are not completely out of the woods. The Pandemic wreaked havoc on the economy, but thankfully most carwash operators were able to weather the storm and came out of it wiser and better prepared for the next issue that gets thrown at us (be assured it's not if it happens, but when). The Pandemic forced operators to rethink the way they operate and some changed business models, expanded the use of auto pay stations, increased efforts to grow their club plans and looked at automation to fill the roles once held by entry-level employees. The job market continues to be challenging and rising prices due to supply chain and inflation are squeezing small business all over the country. If you haven't read Lobbyist Bill Crowell's column, flip to his article on page 89, and read it. I'll wait. Now that you're back, you can see in addition to the challenges small business faced as a byproduct of the Pandemic, we now must foot the bill for the unemployment insurance that was paid out when the New York State economy was shut down. Once again, small business is being forced to pick up the tab. I don't blame the state for this entirely, as no one could have foreseen the impact of a global Pandemic. However, moving forward the state must do a better job at being prepared and working with small business to help resolve these issues and come up with different solutions. Lumping another tax on businesses seems to be their only plan.

At our recent Spring General Membership Meeting NYS Public Service Commissioner John B. Howard spoke to our group about the electrification of New York State. The Commissioner spoke on the "All Electric Building Act" that prevents municipalities from issuing new building permits for any commercial or residential building after 12/31/2023, unless the building is completely electric. This is in response to Former Governor Cuomo's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act signed into law in 2019. The Commission is in favor of the plan to help reduce the level of greenhouse gases and help to slow climate change, and regardless of your position on global warming I think we can all agree we would like to leave the planet better off than we found it. The Commissioner understands the burden that this electrification will have on small business and homeowners, however, and by their own admission the NYS power grid will not be prepared for the massive load that will be required to power the NYS economy.

As I write this column NYS announced that we will be the national leader in the fight against climate change! Great, so what's the plan? Saying it and doing it are two different things. We can sit and complain, or we can get active. Commissioner Howard agreed that the electrification regulations will have a significant impact on business and on the citizens of New York, and he urged all of us to speak up. People in elected offices will continue to listen to the loudest voices, and right now that's not us. This is only one regulation tied to the green

Continued on page 91 ...

Keeping an eye on promotion expiration language

Increases In Unemployment Insurance Tax Like Sword of Damocles!

By William Y. Crowell, III

Carwashes and other businesses in New York have significant increases in their unemployment insurance tax rates hanging over their businesses like the sword of Damocles. During the COVID-19 Pandemic a record number of unemployment insurance claims were filed as many businesses were forced to close either temporarily or permanently. The state borrowed funds from the federal government in order to meet the tsunami of unemployment benefit payments.

The New York State Comptroller, Tom DiNapoli has to his credit issued two detailed reports examining the status of the New York State Insurance Trust Fund entitled, “Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund Challenges Ahead” and a follow-up, “Update on New York’s Unemployment Trust Fund.” These reports have focused attention and provided details on these important issues. These reports provide the background for this column.

Employers pay federal and state payroll taxes to finance unemployment insurance benefits. The financial stress on the Unemployment Trust Fund during the COVID-19 Pandemic is demonstrated by this statement in the Comptroller’s second report, “Quarterly benefits paid in New York under the regular UI program grew from \$658.7 million in the fourth quarter of 2019 to \$6.5 billion in the second quarter of 2020.” The skyrocketing benefits required the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund to borrow from the federal government. The amount borrowed reached \$10.2 billion but after repayments the amount dropped to \$8.1 billion. This outstanding amount continues to increase because after the initial waiver period on interest payments ended the federal government is charging interest on the balance due.

With the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund running at a deficit with increasing interest, the question is will employers be responsible not only to pay the accumulating interest and principal debt over time through increased unemployment insurance tax rates? Employers are currently paying the highest allowable tax rates. One carwash operator reported that their tax payments for unemployment insurance quintupled from the pre-pandemic amount. To date no plan has emerged to stabilize the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund.

Some states have set aside monies from the American Rescue Plan Act to use to pay federal loans or to pay down a portion of the loans. Some states are considering using bonds and others are exploring changes to their unemployment systems. The Citizen’s Budget Commission suggested in a report that the state could consider tax credits for small and medium size businesses that would offset higher unemployment insurance tax payments. This approach would shift the obligation to a broader tax base. It is clear without additional assistance employers and the economy will be adversely impacted if the responsibility for repayment is solely placed on employers.

Some business groups are working to find solutions to replenish the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund. The New York State Car Wash Association (NYSCWA), recognizing the impact on its members, is participating in those efforts.

In the closing weeks of the legislative session, legislation specifically targeting carwashes was introduced by Senator Persaud S.9259. This legislation amends the General Business Law to provide that carwashes shall clearly state when a promotion expires in addition to any costs incurred upon the expiration of a promotion and how often those costs will be incurred by a person participating in the

promotion. A violation of this proposed statute is punishable by a civil penalty of \$500 per violation.

The sponsor’s memorandum in support focuses on a lack of information provided to the consumer on both the promotion expiration date and the amount deducted from a bank account or credit card to participate in the promotion. This bill was not acted on this session, but will likely be an issue for future consideration. **NC**



William Y. Crowell, III, Esq. is a partner with Dickinson, Avella & Vidal in Albany. You can reach him at 518/369-7961 or wcrowell@dickinsonavella.com

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Don't Take Wash Safety for Granted

By Meeghan Sheckler

Are you a new owner/operator of a carwash who is entirely new to the industry or have you been in the industry for years? If you grew up in the industry with a family-run wash you know exactly how the industry has evolved over the years. Regardless of how long you have been in professional carwashing, you know how important it is to keep your wash safe. Whether it be your customers, vendors or your valued employees on your property as an owner/operator it is your responsibility to ensure that it is safe for everyone.

I recently attended a safety-training program and there was a 50/50 mix of those in attendance. Some were new to the industry, and some were veterans. The veterans know all the ways around the wash. That can be great for speed and efficiency of getting as many cars through as possible, but it can also be a potential risk. Through the years, these carwash veterans may have also picked up some “bad habits” that have now become standard practice. They know shortcuts or how to do a “quick repair” on a piece of equipment to get through the day until the maintenance person can show up. Who wants to miss out on a line of cars on a sunny Saturday, especially during pollen or snow season?

Unfortunately, those “quick repairs” or shortcuts to save time can come with a steep price. Often that price is not only loss of money but potential injuries that can range from a simple Band-Aid to loss of life. Even modest injuries have “ripple” effects including down time, hiring replacement employees and retraining, to name a few. Studies show for every dollar in direct cost associated with an injured employee, there may be as much as \$50 or more resulting from indirect costs. Stop for a moment and do the math on that impact to your carwash.

As we all know, it is hard to teach an old dog new tricks, especially when it comes to safety. How many times have you heard, “It’s ok, I have done it this way a million times?” What happens when that next time your shortcut causes an injury to one of your employees?

Drive-On Challenges

Have you ever walked around your carwash property and watched your customers driving in? I have seen on multiple occasions a customer in line to enter the tunnel and the attendant is signaling the driver to drive forward and then put his/her car in neutral. As you all know, sometimes it is not that easy. Either the driver does not understand the hand signals and can be confused, or they may be distracted. Do hand signals vary by attendant? That can be very confusing for someone who is used to different signals. As you can imagine, this can pose serious risks as your attendant is standing right in front of the vehicle that can weigh 2,000+ pounds. What if that driver hits the gas by mistake launching at your attendant? Would your attendant

even have time to react? What if the driver of the vehicle puts the car in reverse rather than neutral? I know that you have all experienced this at your wash.

Another potential issue is that two attendants may be talking to each other and not even making eye contact with the driver as the attendant is waiving the customer forward. Again, it is that mentality of, “I do this 100 times a day and nothing has ever happened.” It only takes one time, though.

We live in a world of instant gratification. We have cell phones that allow us to order anything, anywhere. We also have demands in our work lives as well as personal lives. There are so many distractions all around us and we do not know if the driver of the vehicle entering the tunnel is being distracted by anything. Do all of you attendants truly know how powerful that vehicle is in which they are signaling? Do they know that they could be pinned between that vehicle and a piece of equipment or potentially dragged by the vehicle? Any attendant on the line needs to be focused on the vehicles coming in — safely.

Carwashes are a fun place to work and visit with all the flashing lights, cool colored soap and those delicious smells coming through your vents. But the carwash can also be a dangerous place. As a carwash owner/operator it is your responsibility to keep every employee aware of the potential dangers. When you stop and walk away from your wash, look down the tunnel as a car goes through. What do you see? Water, electricity, chemicals and heavy machinery. We all know that each one of those pose a potential problem on its own, let alone mixed all together. Then you add in a vehicle, distracted drivers, and potentially distracted employees. Yikes!

Take a Close Look

What are some things that you can do as a carwash owner/operator to minimize any incidents at the wash? First, take a step back. Conduct a walk around your wash. Are there any potential hazards in the parking lot? Is there any debris, potholes or uneven surfaces? In the winter is there any ice build-up in your self-serve bay? Stand outside your wash and watch some cars go through your tunnel. Not in the sense of just focusing on how to get the cars through faster, but in the sense of going through in the eyes of a new driver. Or someone who may be distracted, either on their phone or crying kids in the back seat. Even the safest, most efficient wash is going to have some room for improvement. At the end of the day, you and your attendants are gambling on the fact that the operator of the car is paying attention to your attendant. Rotate some of your attendants out and have them watch with you and look at what could be a potential danger for them on the line.

Self-Serve Concerns

Self-serve bays pose an entirely different risk. Typically un-



attended, self-serve bays can pose a threat to your customers for several reasons depending on when the customer uses the bay. The customer pulls into the bay, gets out and puts money into the machine and the hose turns on. They are then able to wash their vehicle to their own standards. What if someone damages the building while pulling in? Do you have cameras that will help document the incident? For 24-hour operations, is your lot well lit? Is there adequate lighting in your bay? Are the hoses placed back on the hook or are they left on the ground for someone to drive over or potentially trip over? What does the flooring look like in your self-serve bay? Are there any potential hazards to cause a slip and fall? Do you keep a record of when you salt?

Cameras have helped a lot of owner/operators determine if their wash may have caused damage to a customer's car. They also help deter theft and in some cases against potential false claims of damage. Camera footage can also be used as a great training tool with your employees. As an owner/operator you should be reviewing footage to look for any potential hazards that could be used as an educational tool to help mitigate the risk of an incident in the future.

It is possible to have a safe and efficient carwash. It starts with you as the owner to help identify what the safety hazards could entail. Safety should be on the forefront of every owner's mind. Stop thinking, "This is how we have always done it" or "I have never had any issues before." This is what happens when we become complacent and thinking that nothing will happen to us or our attendants. By keeping safety at the forefront of everyone's mind, you just may prevent a potential tragedy.

The carwash industry has become more aware of the potential hazards at the carwash. Some manufacturers are even making products and software to help mitigate those hazards. Do you use any of these products in your wash? You really can't put a price on your customers' and your employees' lives as they are the center of what you do. If there is one take away from this article, I hope it is that you think seriously about what you could do to make your wash a safer place especially as we enter the winter washing season.

NC

Meeghan Sheckler runs the Cross Insurance Car Wash Solutions Program and works with carwash owner/operators to help ensure that their washes are safe for employees and customers. If you are interested in speaking with Meeghan about your wash or would like help with training or a safety checklist, you can reach her at meeghan.sheckler@crossagency.com or 207/347-1903.



Meeghan Sheckler

President's Letter ... *continued from page 88*

agenda, but we need to let our representatives know that we are willing to work with them on a plan that allows business not only to survive but thrive in a new economy. According to a US News and World Report article published in April, NYS had the highest percentage of population decline in the nation @1.58 percent; almost twice that of Illinois at .89%. New York State needs a wakeup call, and we can't keep hitting the button. Consider getting involved with the NYSCWA today and help us make a real difference.



Walter Hartl, NYSCWA President

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p. 91



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NYSCWA Tour Features Express Models, Electrification Initiative Update



The New York State Car Wash Association (NYSCWA) demonstrated its resilience and value during its Spring Carwash Tour in the Albany market on June 1. Just shy of 60 toured three new express exterior sites and gathered at The Century House in Latham to hear from NY State Commissioner John B. Howard, who spoke on the electrification initiative that will impact the industry.

The event began with a tour of Wash Boss, a 3.8 acre express site that opened in 2021 and until recently was owned by Kim and Jim Enzien. The East Greenbush beauty broke first-year projections washing 140,000 cars. It features MacNeil/NCS equipment, DRB controls, Vacutech vacs and Airlift doors.

Next on the tour was Knockout in Guilderland. This express defied the odds and opened after overcoming COVID supply issues and delays, zoning hurdles, DOT challenges, significant site reconstruction and town opposition to become a true standout location. The wash features MacNeil/NCS, G & G Industrial Lighting, Captive Air, PurClean/PurWater reclaim, Vacutech vacs and DRB controls. It is also one of the longest tunnels in the Northeast coming in at 190 feet. It opened in September of 2020 and is owned by Richard and Sandra Hameroff.

The final site on the tour is the newest Capital District Hoffman Car Wash on Troy-Schenectady Road in Latham. The site opened in the late fall of 2020 after the owners decided that digging two wells beat paying an impact fee to hook into the town's water line. The site boasts unique foam wraparounds using advanced controls to produce a faster, better and safer wash. The \$6 million site features Micrologic, Vacutech vacs, Simoniz chemical and InnovateIt equipment. "Each wash has its own unique elements and flavor," said NYSCWA President Walt Hartl. "That is what makes these tours so valuable and fun. And, hey, the rain held out until the last wash!"

Event sponsors included Bus Tour Sponsor NCS, Dinner Sponsor Micrologic and Hors D'Oeuvre Sponsor DRB.

Guest Speaker Howard

The association had secured industry leader Bill Martin of Metro Express and Amplify Car Wash Advisors out of Boise, ID, to speak after dinner, but due to illness he had to take a rain check until the fall event, so the group pivoted and asked NYS Commissioner John B. Howard to pitch hit. The Commissioner spoke on the state's "All Electric Building Act" (A.8432), which would mandate that a municipality not issue a building permit for any new commercial or residential building submitted after 12/31/23 unless the building is all electric. This Act stems from former Governor Cuomo's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) signed into law in 2019 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent by 2030, and to no less than 85 percent by 2050. He also took questions from attendees who are not in support of the Act. "Commissioner Howard made some good points and helped clarify the issue, but it's not an effort that will be kind

to our industry," said Hartl. "He did advise us to reach out to our local legislators and let them know of our opposition and why. He said we needed to be more than just squeaky wheels, and we will be. Our board will be directed by our trusted Lobbyist, Bill Crowell, and kick off our efforts in the coming weeks."

Long-time NYSCWA board member and Treasurer, Mike Benmoschè, was also honored by President Hartl for his years of unwavering service to the association.

The association's next event is its Fall Carwash Tour & Membership meeting in the Utica market, October 20. The day will also include a tour and meal at the FX Matt Brewing Company in Utica and an address by Bill Martin, who will speak on the industry's evolution and future. For more information visit nyscwa.com. **NC**

**For information on the NYSCWA visit
nyscwa.com or call 518/280-4767.**

Tour photos on pages 94-103!

NYSCWA President, Walt Hartl, presented outgoing and retiring Treasurer Mike Benmoschè with an award on behalf of his tireless years of service to the board and association.



New York State Public Service Commission Commissioner John B. Howard was the event's featured speaker. He spoke on the state's electrification initiative that will impact the industry.



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Wash Boss, East Greenbush



The facade is extremely attractive and sits on 3.8 acres of land in Rensselaer County.



K & S's Mark and Chris Kubarek (Past NYSCWA and current board member, respectfully) had a playful exchange after making the trip from their sites in the Auburn, NY, market.



It was a great day for catching up with old friends as is evidenced by Splash's Mark Curtis, and Hoffman Car Wash's Ron Slone and Tom Hoffman, Sr. Curtis just acquired the Wash Boss site.



A bus load of carwashers eagerly soaked up the new site. The tour was sponsored by NCS while the dinner was sponsored by Micrologic and the Hors D'Oeuvres by DRB.

Continue for more tour photos!

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The 140-foot express site opened during COVID and features DRB controls, Vacutech vacs and MacNeil/NCS equipment.



Jim and Kim Enzien (right) greet a bus full of engaged carwashers as the first stop on the tour.



Much attention to detail was put into this wash's design.



Splash's Dan Petrelle, Unitech's Bob Rossini and the site's manager, Jared VanDerVeer, strike a smiling pose.



Continue for more tour photos!



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Knockout, Guilderland

Rick Hameroff (right) discusses some of his wash's features with NCS's Tom Whited as Splash's Glen Sheeley looks on.



It's a family affair at Knockout Car Wash, (L to R) Noah, Rick, Hunter and Sandra Hameroff. Photo taken for previous article on the wash.



Splash's Dan Petrelle and Glen Sheeley.

To help customers exiting the wash these mini speed bumps are used to keep them away from the wooden fence.



Continue for more tour photos!

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Knockout, Guilderland ... continued



The wash's name is derived from a former property owner whose father trained Cassius Clay (Muhammad Ali) for the Olympics. The Hameroffs loved the story so much that they named the wash Knock Out.



The \$6 express, owned by Rick and Sandra Hameroff, is extremely attractive with a bank of windows to ensure the tunnel is light and bright.



The 20 Vacutech vac stations boast a design that includes a rug holder and compressed air, in addition to a suction holder for the hose.



Continue for more tour photos!

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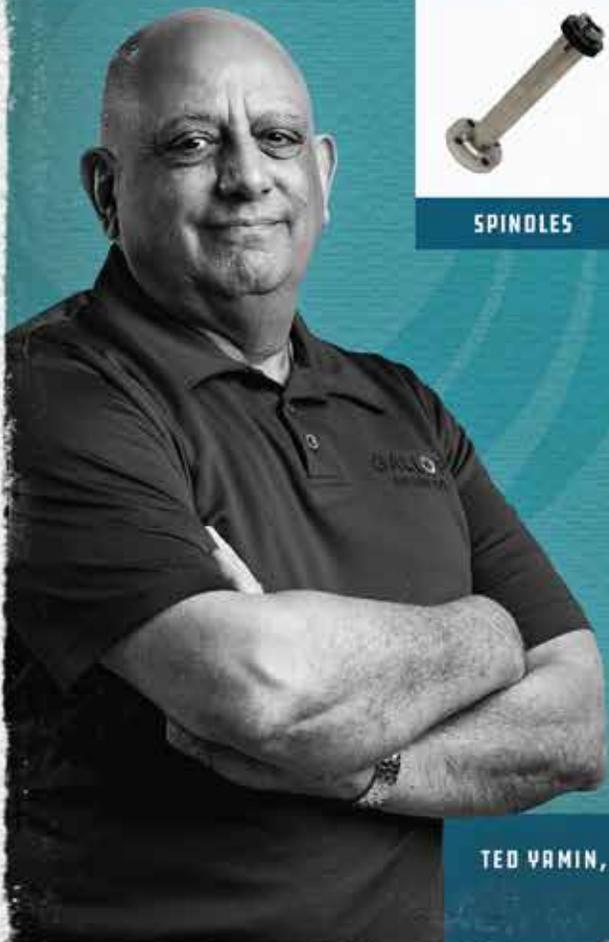
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TED YAMIN, SR. - OWNER - 43 YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY

Hoffman Car Wash, Latham



This site was build mid-COVID and is located on Troy-Schenectady Road in Latham.



Attention to detail is also taken throughout the wash with signage and design. The \$6 million site boasts a 160-foot tunnel.



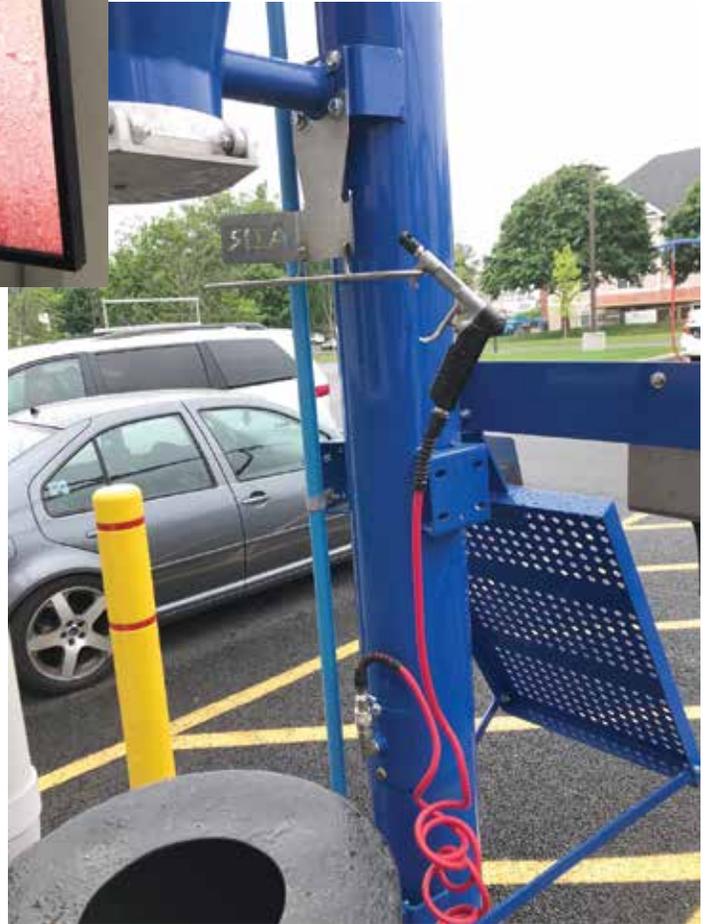
The Hoffman organization pours a great deal of money into its landscaping, according to Tom Hoffman, Sr. In fact, the company is known throughout the industry as having some of the most professionally landscaped and attractive washes in the country. Clearly, it's an honor well bestowed.



The wash uses an exit end display to alert customers of various offerings in a light and fun way. It is also used to introduce the site's manager and help sell Unlimited plans. Practice Kindness is a company-wide motto.



The company's 22nd site (at the time of build) is nestled in a residential and commercial setting so ample signage helps to deter excessive noise.



The wash boasts 23 Vacutech free vacs. Each unit includes an air tool to blow out in tricky spots in a vehicle.



Industry Loses a Rising Star

Anthony A. Manning, 27, passed away suddenly on June 17. Born on February 7, 1995, to Jeffrey Manning and April Foshee of Schenectady, Manning was Colonial Car Wash's General Manager, where he had worked since age 19. He was responsible for overseeing the five-site operation, according to owner Dave Fusco. "Anthony was 19 years old when he started with us as a towel dryer at our full-service location in Schenectady. With his enthusiasm and perseverance, he rapidly worked his way up through our Management Training Program. He was very kind, personable and an extremely dedicated employee. He left this world too soon, as many do. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife and two children. May he rest in peace."

Manning, who participated in a New York State Car Wash Association (NYSCWA) Zoom on the challenges of hiring and retaining employees last year, shared his "boots on the ground" experience. He was eager to help other smaller operations tackle the tough road to securing employees in today's challenging market.

Manning was also honored with winning an Emerging Leader Award from the Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC) in 2021, but was unable to accept the award due to illness. He would have received it at this year's show in September. The honor was passed along to his wife after his passing by Dave Fusco.

Anthony Manning is survived by his fiancé, Bergen Marco



and their two children, Levi and McKenzie Manning.

On behalf of the NYSCWA, and myself, our deepest sympathy goes out to his family and all the employees and customers at Colonial Car Wash that Anthony touched, inspired and led. **NC**

Donations may be made to the Levi & McKenzie Manning Trust Fund to be set up at a later date. Check back at nyscwa.com for that information.

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Splash Car Wash Acquires Wash Boss



Splash Car Wash, Milford, CT, acquired Wash Boss, an express wash located in Rensselaer, NY, in June, according to Splash CEO Mark Curtis. Wash Boss marks Splash's 33rd wash in New York and its initial entry into the Albany market. Wash Boss was developed and operated by Jim, Kim and Peter Enzien, who opened the wash in 2020. "We are so pleased to acquire this great wash," said Curtis. "Moreover, we're excited to add Jim and Kim to our team. The Enziens are clearly great developers, and we look to continue to develop new washes with their help."

Jim Enzien, co-owner of Wash Boss, added, "It was great working with the Splash Team to get this transaction done. We're confident that our employees will mesh with Splash's award-winning culture and be treated well after the sale. This combination with Splash provides our team with even greater career opportunities in the larger Splash network."

Added Kim Enzien, who has been running the daily operations at Wash Boss, "We will be transitioning out of operations but we're very excited about the opportunities the staff will have with the experience Splash has with growing companies, training and nurturing talent," she said. "We are excited to help secure future sites."



In other news, Splash also announced zoning approval for two new express wash sites in Shelburne, VT, and Newburgh, NY. Both sites are expected to begin construction this summer with open dates set in early 2023. Splash's newest express site, located in East Haven, CT, opened in June.

NC

To learn more visit [splashcarwashes.com](https://www.splashcarwashes.com)

ICA Meet Up



Allie and Luke Phillippi of Eden Car Wash & Detail in Eden, NY, and siblings Chris and Amanda Kubarek of K & S Car Wash in Auburn, NY, enjoyed catching up in Nashville, TN, at The Car Wash Show® in May, facilitated by the International Carwash Association (ICA).

NC

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Brooklyn Operator Orlando Transitions Washes

By Alan M. Petrillo

Vinny Orlando, the owner and operator of two Brooklyn car washes, plans on closing his Fort Hamilton Car Wash at 10 Caton Ave., but will continue to operate the Soft Touch Car Wash at 9233 Fourth Ave.

Orlando bought the Fort Hamilton wash in 1995 when it was an exterior-only carwash, and reconfigured it into a flex-serve

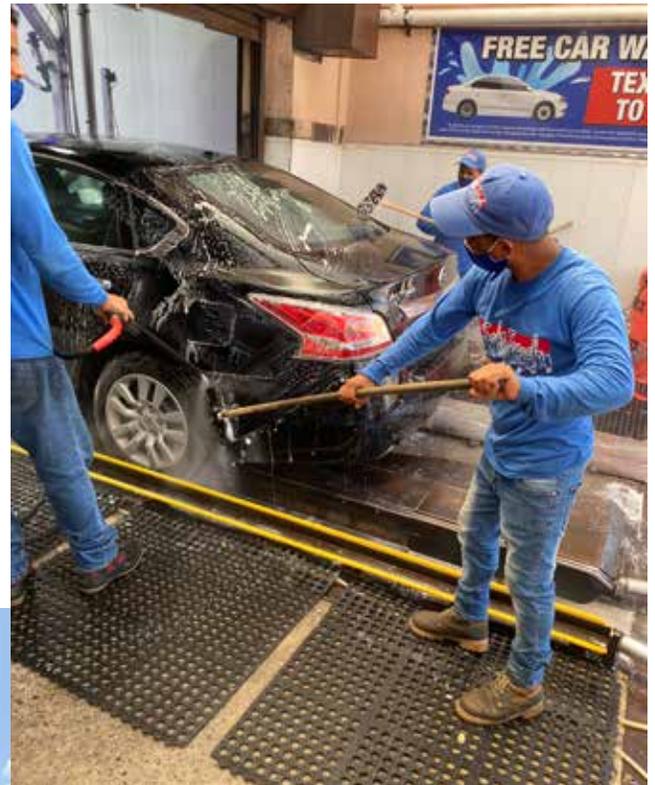
with all MacNeil Wash Systems equipment. “We had a really good run for a number of years, and tried an Unlimited Wash Program for five years but discontinued it because it wasn’t profitable,” Orlando said.



Vinny Orlando has been washing cars since 1995 in Brooklyn.



Vinny Orlando, who operates Fort Hamilton Car Wash in Brooklyn, would like to sell the wash’s tunnel equipment.



Soft Touch employs 14.



Soft Touch Car Wash in the Bay Ridge section of Brooklyn packs a punch in a small envelope; approximately 3,500 square feet, that includes a 90-foot MacNeil tunnel.



“We are in a very competitive area, where we have three other competing carwashes within a mile of our location. Added to that, the COVID-19 Pandemic has had a devastating effect on New York City, which means we have to look toward closing Fort Hamilton Car Wash when our lease expires on August 31.”

Orlando said the property owners are looking to sell the property, so he is thinking about buying the location with an eye toward one of two outcomes. “I’ve considered buying the property for redevelopment, and also about seeking a buyer for the carwash and the property, where I would negotiate with them for the equipment,” he noted.

Orlando said the current price points at Fort Hamilton Car Wash are exterior washes that run from \$15 to \$22, and full-service washes that go from \$18 to \$27. He also runs a daily special from 7 to 9 am where he charges \$7 for an exterior-only wash. “If no one is interested in buying the wash and the property, then I’d consider turning it into an express exterior only,” Orlando said. “We could transition the wash to express very easily and reconfigure the drops on our 24-horsepower vacuum unit. We would be the only express exterior carwash in Brooklyn.”

Orlando’s Soft Touch Car Wash in Bay Ridge is a flex-service wash with a 90-foot tunnel running MacNeil equipment. It also offers both full and express detailing services. “It’s a pretty tight location that has only 3,500 square feet,” Orlando observed, “so we have to stack cars up along Fourth Avenue before bringing them into the entrance. But I am very happy with the performance of Soft Touch and the 14 employees we have there.”

Soft Touch in Bay Ridge has four carwash packages: X-Treme Express at \$19.99, Silver at \$22.99, Gold at \$25.99, and Platinum at \$30.99, as well as a Basic wash at \$19.99 and an Exterior wash at \$16.99.

The Platinum package gets the customer a high-pressure wash, Blue Coral® Triple Treatment, Simoniz® Tire Shine, underbody and side blaster, wheel cleaner Rain-X® Surface Protect, Velocity Clear Coat Protectant, interior vacuum, windows cleaning, towel dry, dash and console cleaned, door jams wiped down, and four mats cleaned, along with a 48-hour clean car guarantee.

Youth Don’t Wash

Orlando said he has seen a marked trend away from car-washing by the younger generation. “There is so much public transportation in New York City that people don’t need to have cars any more,” he pointed out. “Besides, parking is very difficult and expensive, and young people today have a different lifestyle where they will rent a car to go somewhere, or use Uber or Lyft, instead of owning their own vehicle. And high gasoline prices are biting into budgets too, so people who do own vehicles aren’t washing them as much as they used to any more.” **NC**

Alan M. Petrillo is a Tucson, AZ-based journalist, a former upstate New Yorker, and contributing editor of Northeast Carwasher. He writes for a number of national and regional publications, and is the author of six nonfiction books, and three historical mystery/thrillers.

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Learning to Fly Like Superman

By Ray Justice

When I was eight years old, I wanted to be able to fly like Superman. So, I tucked a towel in the back of my shirt, and used it as a cape. Then I **Practiced** many, many times, by jumping out a second story window of our barn and landing in an old straw pile. One day, I realized that goal was not going to happen, but I **Practiced** faithfully, until I wanted to learn something else.

Four Years Later

At 12, I was the new kid in school, and I'd never touched a basketball. In grade school, we played dodge ball and practiced square dancing. But there was no basketball, football or even baseball. Twice a week, in gym class at my new school, we played basketball in season. We lined up against the wall and teams were chosen for that day's match. Each week I would be the only one left standing alone. No one wanted me on their team. They had all seen me attempt to dribble and shoot. You can picture me being completely lost while not having any idea what to do.

Weeks later, my mother handed me a gift. It was a paperback book titled, "Basketball is My Life" by NBA super star Bob Cousy, of the Boston Celtics. I read it, studied it with a need and a hunger to save my life.

The Practice

I cleared some space on the second floor of our rickety old barn, then painted an old Masonite board white and added a hoop. My **Practice** training room was ready to go. In the winter, snow would blow in through the cracks in the walls. And as you can probably guess, there was no heat. The floor had rough, uneven boards where you could see the room below. There was only one electric light bulb that provided just enough light to see at night. I was there every day, in my homemade gym. My imaginary new friend, Bob Cousy, suggested wearing heavy boots while practicing. Then I'd feel like I was flying in a game. I **Practiced** every day for the next four years, all so I would not be the worst or the only one left to be placed on a team. Within a year I was not the last one picked. And with yearly progression, three years later I was doing the choosing. My last high school year I tried out for our county championship team. I was the last guy cut due to the limited number of uniforms. I had come a long way.

My Reward

Now I suppose there is a good argument that says I could have spent all that time doing homework, or taking music lessons. Except, this is what happened in my world. It was a great deal of time, I'm guessing 4,000 to 6,000 hours, and it had a major impact on my personal confidence. I was disappointed, in some ways, while learning what serious **Practice** can do. Later in life, I read that you can be an expert in almost anything you choose if you are willing to practice 10,000 hours. But before I reached that number, I had my driver's license. That opened a new world for me with different things to **Practice**.

The Gift of Movement

As a side note, this experience also gave me something physically challenging to do. That first year, at a new school, finding a way to cope with my lack of basketball skills was not my worst event. My younger brother died after his clothes caught fire while burning trash. I was also physically and emotionally bullied being the new kid who cried on the bus because his brother was gone. Then, on top of that, we had a lightning strike house fire that destroyed our whole second floor. But that physical nature of my basketball experience had an important impact on my future life with the extra value of exercise and movement.

As years went by, I had many other opportunities to improve myself by **Practicing**.

I became aware that events, or situations, that were depressing at the time, often lead to learning something new or experiencing something that became life-changing growth.

Practice Grows Confidence

At 25 years old, another lesson showed up. I gave my first ever speech at our local Rotary. I spoke about our family carwash business and the vehicles we washed. It was terrible with stumbling and useless information. I was corrected and embarrassed. Using that as guidance about not feeling proud or happy with myself, I moved on. Gathering information, I **Practiced** inside our company at every opportunity. Learning to present with very few notes, I could talk to the audience instead of reading to them. I went on to have wonderful opportunities to present with confidence for many years. I had learned about Preparation and **Practice**.

Lesson Learned with Today's Needs

We **Practice** improving with our hobbies, sports, games, writing, cooking, painting, and others, all to get better. Remember what it was like riding your first bike and driving your first car. The more you **Practiced** the better you got. After a while it became an intuitive and simple process. **Practiced**, first to get past the initial fear, then repeating enough times to feel confident and natural.

I have had many opportunities because I didn't quit. I became comfortable talking on my feet in front of groups. As the years went by my reasons to **Practice** changed, but my early lessons stayed with me. What I learned as a shy embarrassed 12-year-old was the importance of these simple, but not always easy, three magical words, **Practice, Practice & Practice**.

Let's look at what you can do to Fly Like Superman.

Positions to Consider Practicing

1. Letting Go

- This could be of what isn't working or not healthy.
- This could be your repeating thoughts that are not safe, caring or nurturing.

- Or, this could be a relationship that does not provide great energy. Think of safe, creative, inspiring connections you can **Practice**.

2. Using your Ability to Imagine or Visualize

- Try imagining how you would like to be. Instead of thinking, or complaining about, the way in which you don't want to be.

3. Solving Problems

- **Practice** writing about new or different ideas. Sit in a quiet place, **Practice** focused breathing, then ask for help from the universe. Patiently wait for a new thought to arrive.

4. Changing or Creating Habits

- Figure which habits you have that you would like to change and **Practice** with writing and your imagination.

5. Improving or Learning New Skills

- Have you ever thought to **Practice** having a better, more helpful attitude?
- Have you ever thought of **Practicing** feeling happy and grateful?
- Train, your mind and body to relax, **Prepare and Practice** with your imagination.
- Make a list of things you can **Practice**: places you've been that felt great or times you smiled or laughed. Re-live them in your Imagination with the remembered feeling.

Creating New Habits with Practice

Practice using simple examples to get the hang of it. A perfect **Practice** start is to use your imagination in bed before sleep. It's a time when you've slowed down your thinking and is perfect for **Practice**.

Your body, your mind, your attitude, and personality work best when you are feeling the energy of appreciation. It's awareness of what makes you feel energized and totally alive.

According to neuroscientist Dr. Caroline Leaf, it takes 21 days to build a long-term memory and 63 days to build a new habit. The message is to be patient with yourself as change takes time, but as with most **Practicing**, well worth it.

See Yourself as You Would Love to be Seen

Intentional Practicing

- Inspire yourself with Curiosity, Imagination, Intention, Meditation, Repetition and **Practice**.
- See in a whole new way. Imagine a future without obstacles while feeling more connected.
- Practice meditation, calming your mind, practicing one thing at a time.
- **Rehearse and Practice** being the person you want to be.

It really works!

NC



Ray Justice

Ray Justice is an Entrepreneur, Poet & Creativity Explorer. He is a former carwash operator and past president of the NYSCWA. Visit him at ThoughtCompass.com or email him at Ray@RayJustice.com



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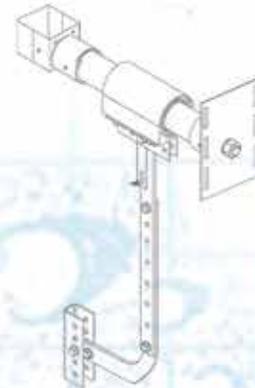
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