

northeast carwasher

A Northeast Market Snapshot



**Industry Innovators:
Funny How Those
Quarters Add Up**

**Digital Advertising:
A Primer**

**Venus & Mars Talk
Goals in '24**

**Are You Nurturing
Your Business' Soul?**

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Winter 2024

Vol. 29 No. 1

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In our cover story this issue we take a look into what's happening in the Capital District of New York, the greater Albany-Schenectady-Troy market. We didn't speak to each operator there, but I think we got a good sense of what is happening around the Northeast based on this market. As a result of private equity money and heightened consumer demands for faster, better service operators are stepping up their games and fortifying their footprints. As the saying goes, 'A rising tide lifts all boats.' And, at the end of the day that can be a good thing. The end result could be a happier customer, more customers and an elevated industry reputation. See if you think your market is reflected in what our participants shared.

Industry Innovators

We started a new column in our fall issue called Industry Innovators. In that column we will feature exceptional contributors to our industry. Our first such "innovator" was Fred Grauer. Fred has been a carwasher, in various segments, for 65 years, but like a fine wine he has aged to perfection. Recently having "retired," or so he says, at 80, he offered to do some writing for us and what better column than this one. Fred focuses on Dick and Carleen Baright and their family in our second Industry Innovators column. The family, their sons and now its third generation, is another example of the tireless hard work and innovation that make up a great carwash entity. We hope you enjoy learning about them through Fred's eyes. And if you think we should feature someone, or a family, in a future column, please let us know!

NRCC 2023

You know I have to mention the 2023 Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC) in this column. And if you were there you know exactly why. What a show! There was record-breaking attendance (1,921 attendees and exhibitors) breaking our previous record set in 2019 and there were 386 booths on a jam-packed show floor. There was a fabulous "Celebration" hosted by Simoniz USA on Monday night at the Hard Rock after the Virtual Tour, top-notch education, a world-class Keynote Speaker in Mark Denton thanks to the sponsorship of Micrologic and InnovateIT, and ICS' Welcome Reception that included huge giveaways and lots of cheer and opportunities to relax and mix and mingle before gearing up for the last day of the show. You can read all about the specifics on page 22, but needless to say, it was an event for the record books. Congrats to the board and to the host association and its Chairman Bob Rossini of the Connecticut Carwash Association. Those who took advantage of this annual event know its value and were able to walk away with insight and knowledge that will no doubt help them be better operators. To learn about the 2024 NRCC visit nrccshow.com in the coming months and make a plan to attend.



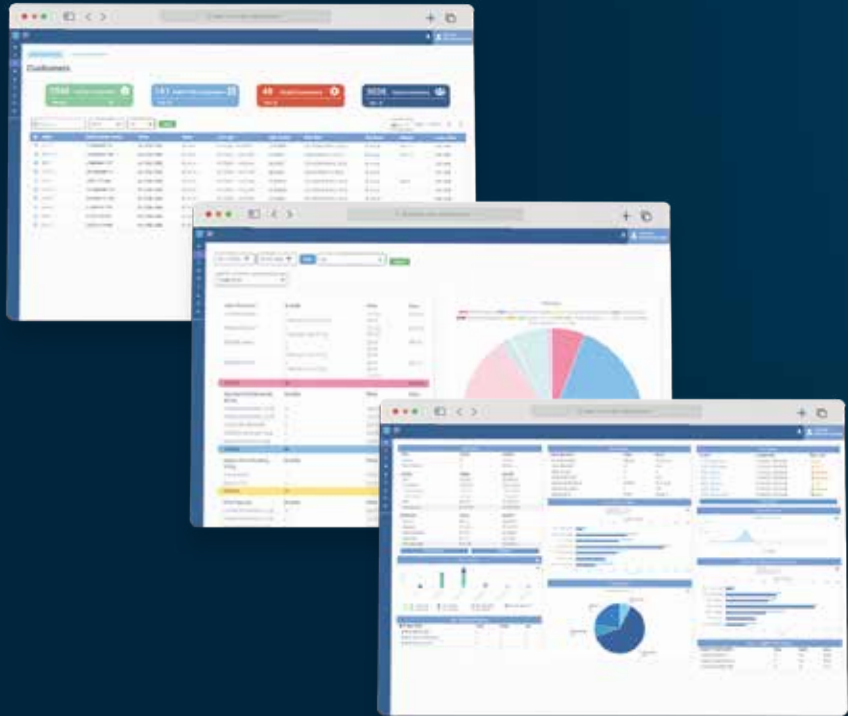
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Go TEAM!!!



Team Car Wash owner, Tom Fuller, is a fan of brand building and his local sports teams. “We support Rutgers and the Somerset Patriots (Yankee AA affiliate),” he said. “Rutgers has 500,000 alumni in our service area and is a Big 10 football/basketball school. People love their sports team,” he added.

Fuller signed a multi-year sponsorship

with them as the official carwash of RU Athletics and he also does an in-game promotion, on-air commercial and has the right to use their trademark in all Team Car Wash advertising. “The relationship is really about brand building,” said Fuller. “It’s impossible to track back how many customers it brings in.”

With his Somerset Patriot relationship Team has a huge billboard on the homer wall, and they do an in-game “Dirtiest Car in the Parking Lot” promo and sponsor a game where the team has Team towels and free washes. He said approximately 300,000+ are in annual attendance at those games from his target market.

NC



*Look for a recap of the 2023
Grace for Vets event in our spring issue!*



Hoffman Car Wash, one of the first supporters of Grace for Vets, washed approximately 5,500 Veterans' vehicles over its two-day event.

Apricity (n.)
The warmth of the sun in winter
Origin - Latin

WASH VOLUME INDEX

We’re shaking things up a bit and providing you numbers from a three-month comparison to last year at the same time. Our participants will not be identified; just the region/state they represent. Our goal is to give you a snapshot of what volumes look like across the Northeast.

Comparing July-September 2022 to 2023 this is what we found:

New England -9.2%
Mid-Atlantic +3%
New Jersey -14.5%
New York +1%

NC

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L to R: George Ribeiro, Tim Perry, Greg Heyer, ribbon cutter and GM Northeast & Mid Atlantic Regions for NCS Jim Arvin, Eddie Whitley, Rich Cridelle, Jim Caswell and Dominick Candelore.

Darby King with KNC Holdings, Mike Alonzo with Weyer Petroleum and Christian King with KNC Holdings catch up at the event.



NCS Opens New Capital District Facility

National Carwash Solutions (NCS), Grimes, IA, opened a new 53,000-square foot Regional Distribution Facility in Green Island, NY, with a huge Grand Opening on October 25 to mark the event attended by some 125. Jim Arvin, GM Northeast & Mid Atlantic Regions for NCS, said, "This facility houses NCS parts

across all of our brands, as well as over 45,000 square feet of NCS branded chemistry. We were delighted to welcome so many to our facility for lunch, facility tours and our ribbon cutting ceremony." He added, "This new facility allows NCS to bring our growing product lines closer to our customers for years to come."



Stefan Budricks

Industry Loses a True Friend, Journalist

On July 16, the carwashing industry lost Stefan Budricks, the long-time Editor of *Auto Laundry News (ALN)*. Budricks, 73, passed away peacefully with his partner Joe Mining by his side after battling liver cancer.

Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, Budricks was a South African army Veteran with a law degree but a love of journalism led him away from the law to his true calling. He

worked on a number of newspapers, magazines and trade publications in South Africa and the US before taking the chief editor post at *ALN* in 1996, where he worked until his passing.

His obituary credits Budricks with helping to turn around the then struggling publication, the industry's oldest. According to Publisher Andrew Williams, "In my 43 years with the company, he was the most professional, loyal and dedicated editor I have worked with. He will be deeply missed both professionally and personally."

Editor's Note: Stefan understood the industry and reported on it with color, insight and grace. He was a true professional and an extremely kind individual. He will be missed.

Continued...

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Autobell® Awards 2023 Scholarships

Autobell® Car Wash, Charlotte, NC, awarded 96 of its team members in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and Maryland with scholarships toward the college or university of their choice, said a company press release. The scholarships totaled \$150,000.

The program was established to recognize the outstanding achievements of team members while empowering pursuit of their academic dreams, said the release. To date, the program has awarded nearly 2,000 applicants more than \$2.1 million since its inception in 2000. "The Autobell® Scholarship Program is an excellent opportunity for our team members. It shows we care about their future and recognizes the hard work they put in," said Katie Sent, Autobell Director of Human Resources. "We know by building teamwork and customer service skills at work they have a great starting point for a successful future wherever they go, and this scholarship will help them achieve their dreams," she added.

For more information visit autobell.com

Express Wash Concepts Secures Greenfield Expansion Funding



Express Wash Concepts (EWC), Columbus, OH, has secured a \$150 million incremental credit facility led by MidCap Financial to further propel its core market greenfield development, said a company press release. The new facility empowers EWC to maintain its responsible, multi-brand expansion strategy, currently encompassing 91 operational sites, 10 sites under construction and an additional 35 in various stages of development. "Our 15-year journey has been marked by a strategic focus on operational excellence and greenfield development," said John Roush, EWC CEO. "Securing an upsized credit facility under these terms and scale in the current credit environment underscore the strength of our business." He added, "Our growth hinges on two core competencies: operational excellence and Greenfield development."

For more information visit expresswashconcepts.com

ICS Makes Staffing Additions



Innovative Control Systems (ICS), Bethlehem, PA, has welcomed Larry Cavalier back to the company as its Midwest U.S. Territory representative, said a company press release. "Cavalier previously worked with ICS as its Western Territory Representative.

The company also added Mike Enriquez as its new sales rep for the Western U.S. and Western Canada. He brings more than 15 years of carwashing experience to the team, said the release.

James LaBar has also joined ICS as its Northeast U.S. and Eastern Canada representative. LaBar previously worked in ICS's support department (since 2016) and possesses a deep understanding of the company's products and the industry, added the release.

Spark Supports Breast Cancer Awareness



Spark Car Wash, Summit, NJ, proudly supports the Connie Dwyer Breast Cancer Foundation (CDBCF), which provides access to critical breast health services for uninsured and underinsured women in New Jersey, according to a company press release. This initiative, during Breast Cancer Awareness month in October, is part of Spark Neighborhood, Spark Car Wash's ongoing commitment to making a positive impact in the communities it serves, said a company press release.

Customers had two opportunities to support this local organization at all Spark sites. They could purchase limited edition pink microfiber towels for \$5, with all proceeds going to CDBCF. Spark then donated 20 percent of total sales on October 28th across all locations to the foundation. Additionally, proceeds from the original purchase of the towels from manufacturer Quick Dry supported breastcancer.org and Hospice of the Piedmont, said the release. "We are proud to support the Connie Dwyer Breast Cancer Foundation, an impressive organization doing incredible work right here in New Jersey to ensure the most vulnerable women in our region have access to the care they deserve," said Kacy Erdelyi, VP, Marketing. "We know that many of our customers have been touched by breast cancer, and we're grateful to have a chance to show our support this month."

According to Erdelyi Spark will be making a \$3965 donation to CDBCF.

For more information visit sparkcarwash.com and cdbcf.org

Autobell® Supports Breast Cancer Awareness

Autobell®, Charlotte, NC, partnered with National Breast Cancer Foundation Inc.® during October to support its mission to inspire hope and provide help for those affected by breast

Continued ...



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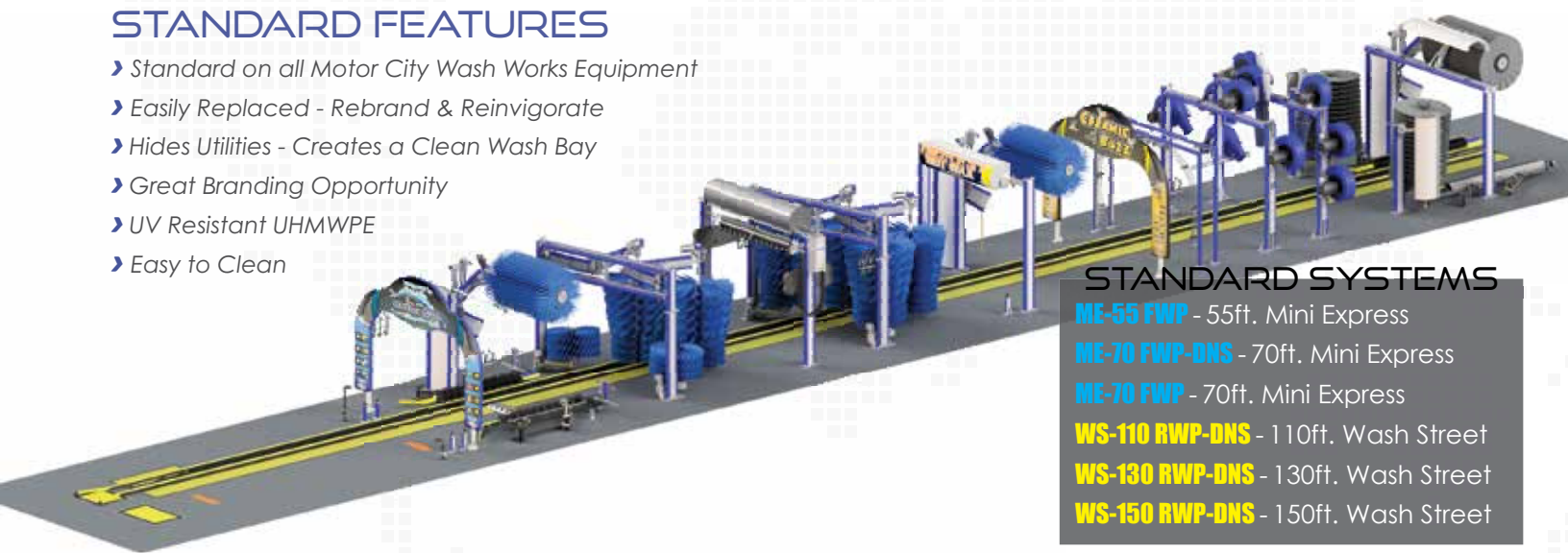
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cancer, including early detection, education and support services, said a company press release.

The company offered first-time Unlimited customers their first month for just \$5, with Autobell donating a portion of proceeds from new plan sales to NBCF. As a bonus during this promotion new Unlimited customers also received a free pink microfiber towel emblazoned with the familiar pink ribbon that symbolizes breast cancer awareness and serves as a reminder encouraging people to get involved, get screened and donate.

For more information visit autobell.com and nationalbreastcancer.org

Splash Car Wash Opens in Oswego; Growing the Chain to 59



Splash Car Wash, Milford, CT, has opened its 59th location in Oswego, NY. The new express wash, equipped with a 150-foot conveyor and 17 free self-service vacuum stations, is Splash's 40th in New York, according to a company press release.

The Oswego wash construction was completed under the direction of Dave Clements and Jeff Arnold, Splash's upstate New York development partners and the former owners of Classy Chassy, a multi-site wash operator that Splash acquired in 2021. Clements and Arnold are also managing the development of a new wash in Leray, NY.

Construction continues in Randolph, MA, and Derby, CT, with anticipated openings in early September closely followed by two new washes under development in Shelburne and Rutland, VT. Construction at the Randolph and Derby sites is overseen by Glen Sheeley, and the Vermont sites are managed by Aaron Vincelette, one of Splash's development partners and former owner of ECO Car Wash.

Other projects underway include express washes in Henrietta, Clay, Fayetteville and Hamburg, NY, as well as the renovation of a former Buckman's Car Wash location in Greece, NY.

For more information visit splashcarwashes.com

NCS Acquires USAtowl



National Carwash Solutions (NCS), Grimes, IA, has acquired Panaram International Trading Co., operating under the popular brand name USAtowl (formerly Carwashworld), Belleville, NJ. This acquisition is a significant stride in providing enhanced

customer solutions, highlighting NCS's dedication to meeting the evolving needs of carwash owners and operators throughout North America, said a company press release.

With a rich history dating back to 1973, NCS offers end-to-end customer service and support through its extensive network. NCS is renowned for its comprehensive solutions, catering to the diverse needs of carwash owners, operators and investors, said the release. The NCS family of brands includes MacNeil, Ryko, Vacutech, PurClean, Mondo, Baywatch, TSS, Armor All Professional®, Rain-X®, Blue Coral®, and Black Magic®.

This acquisition presents NCS with several strategic advantages, including the incorporation of the acclaimed Continental E-Series ExpressWash Washer-Extractors industrial washing machines and customized towels into its bundled solutions, opportunities to provide a one stop shop for customers across North America, and the addition of Juliette Silver, a highly regarded industry figure, to the NCS sales team, said the release.

The synergy between NCS and USAtowl will result in an expanded product offering and superior services for carwash owners, operators and investors. "By integrating USAtowl's expertise, we are not just expanding our offering, we are ensuring that our customers receive the best possible solutions tailored to their needs," said Jesse Wurth, CEO of National Carwash Solutions. "This acquisition underscores our commitment to serving our customers better, (and) aligning our strategies with their success."

Juliette Silver, CEO of Panaram International Trading Co., DBA USAtowl, expressed her enthusiasm about the partnership. "Becoming a part of the NCS family is an exciting chapter for USAtowl. We are confident that this union will enhance our ability to serve our clients and expand our offerings," she said. "NCS shares our commitment to quality and customer satisfaction, making this integration a natural fit for both organizations."

For more information visit ncswash.com and usatowl.com

Washworld Expands Mfg. Facility



Washworld, Inc., DePere, WI, has expanded its manufacturing facility here. The expansion will double the production square footage to accommodate the growing demand for Washworld products and further enhance their commitment to delivering excellence to their valued customers, said a company press release. This strategic initiative represents a pivotal moment in the company's history, reflecting their dedication to meeting the evolving needs of their customers and positioning Washworld as an industry leader for years to come. "The decision to expand our facilities is a testament to the unwavering support and loyalty of our customers and the dedication of our hardworking team," said Pete Jensen, Co-Owner at Washworld.

For more information visit washworldinc.com



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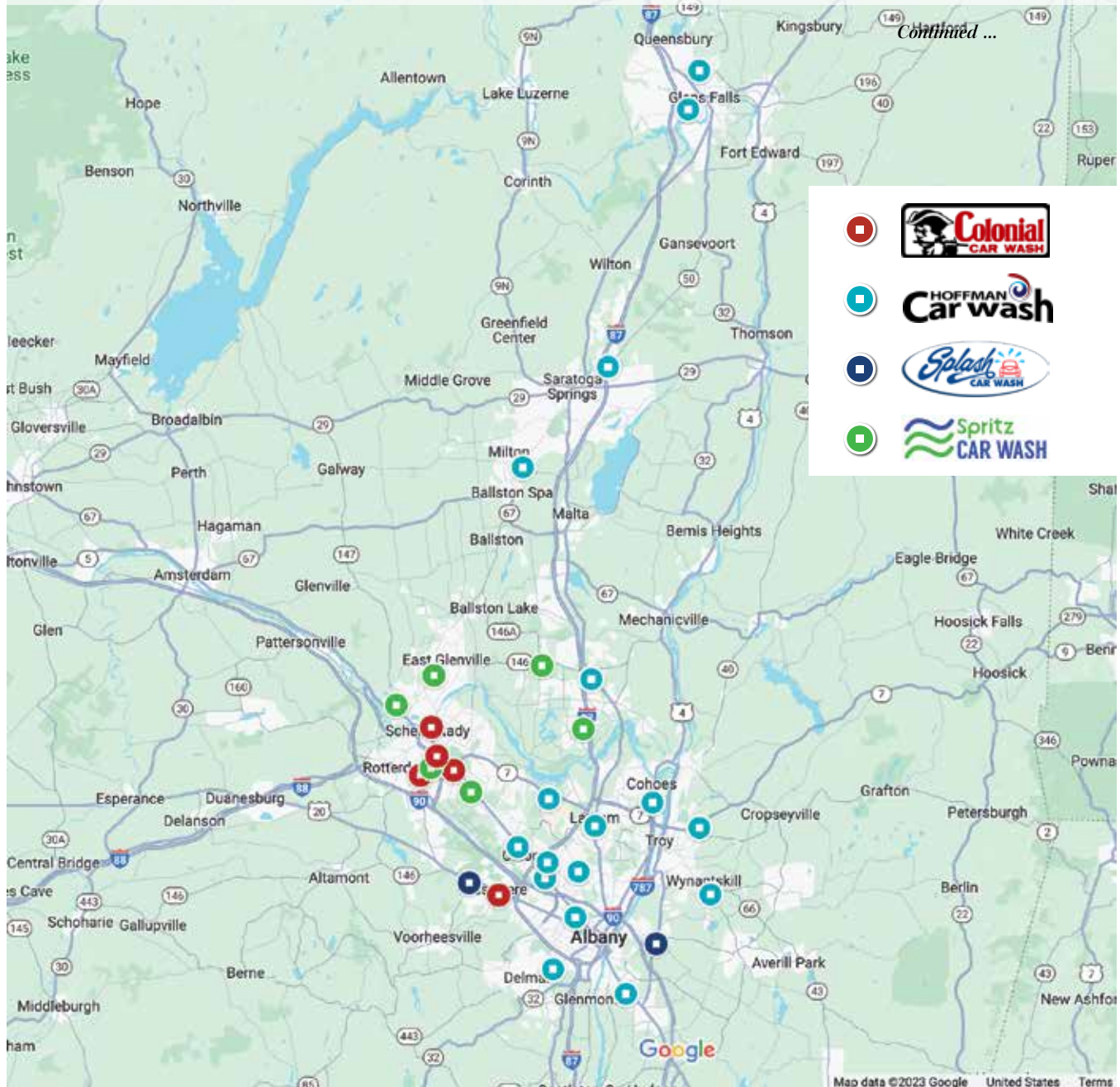
We take a look at the Capital District of New York state

A Northeast Market Snapshot

By Suzanne L. Stansbury

With private equity money still pushing into the Northeast, albeit at a much slower pace now, established operators continue to expand their footprints while shoring up their market presence. We're using the Capital District of New York State to illustrate this point. Our cover story asks some key operators in that market for their take on growth, competition and the future of carwashing as a snapshot of what's happening in the Northeast as Private Equity(PE)-backed chains like Tidal Wave, MOD Wash, Splash, Go and Valet Auto Wash, for example, move into the state and market.

Continued ...





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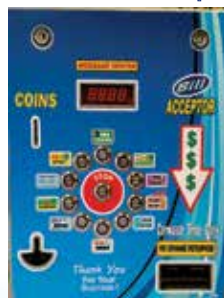
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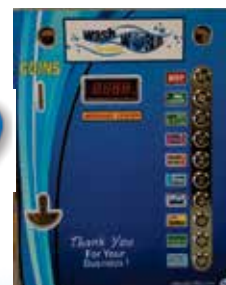
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Colonial Car Wash

For Colonial Car Wash owner, Dave Fusco, who has been in the industry for 47 years, doing business in the community in which he grew up has proven beneficial, and helped him stave off outside-of-market operators and PE. Because of his local ties and relationships, he heard about a prime location coming available before any group outside his market did, and he acted on that knowledge.

Fusco was able to purchase a lot just 1.5 miles from his flex-serve tunnel with detailing in Schenectady in 2022. Although that newest site, a 135-foot express with 21 vacs, has not yet opened due to supply chain issues and labor, as well as other projects on his drawing board, Fusco is glad he made the purchase.

He currently operates five sites: three tunnels and a self-serve he just rehabbed. One of the tunnels also includes self-service



The new express exterior is slated to open in March.

and inbay automatic options. His fourth tunnel, noted above, is now slated to open in March. "My growth is being driven by keeping competition out of the market I'm in," he said. "This last site, though, is the last one I'm planning on building."

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Hoffman Car Wash's Tom Hoffman, Jr. and Ron Slone.



This new express site in Clifton Park is less than a mile from a flex location and directly across the street from a self-serve site owned by Spritz Car Wash.



This express in Cohoes opened in 2023 and is one of eight locations the company has opened in the last five years.

Hoffman Car Wash

When you are the largest player in a market, however, you may have more sites and a bigger presence, but you also have a larger market share to protect. Hoffman Car Wash's CEO Tom Hoffman Jr. and President Ron Slone are all too aware of what's at stake. The company operates 26 tunnels and four stand-alone self service/inbay locations, said Slone. They have also added eight locations in the last five years inside the Capital District and beyond with three tunnel locations currently under construction to open in 2024 and two sites permitted and waiting for construction to begin, according to Slone. "We are also actively looking for additional sites," he said.

There are several reasons for the company's growth. "The primary reason is providing opportunity for our people," said Slone. "Growing our outlet count allows us to create new opportunities for our staff and ensure we continue to hire and retain the best people. "Growth also allows us to protect our existing markets by ensuring that we have locations that are convenient for our customers."

The company also expanded its corporate offices in 2021 spending nearly \$4.8 million on a new, state-of-the-art facility. "The transition to a more spacious office and the cultivation of an exceptional team has proven invigorating," said Tom Hoffman, Jr. "We are now poised to use our increased staff capacity to facilitate sustained growth, simultaneously presenting our team members with abundant opportunities for personal and professional development." He added, "Carwash

operators who were looking to exit over the last few years had a golden opportunity to achieve the highest price for their business. Some have said you should either get out or grow. We chose to grow."

Slone sees PE's impact on the industry as a double-edged sword. "Like most operators, we see both positive and negative impacts associated with private equity entering the carwash space," he said. "Possibly the largest positive impact is that operators who have spent decades building their business are now able to sell their business for more than they would have realized pre-private equity."

Adds Slone, "The main negative is capital from private equity has fueled an expansion of carwashes in some markets that may not be sustainable in the long term. As this point, we cannot put the genie back in the bottle, so we are focused on running our business as best we can."

Hoffman noted that the company is preparing to break ground at its first out-of-state location in Bennington, VT, about an hour from the company's headquarters in Albany. "We are pursuing more growth outside of our 'home' location," he said. "But the Northeast is a region, I think, that has been known to be difficult in which to find property because of the cost and challenge in securing approvals." Hoffman added, "I think that growth in the Northeast will be just a little slower than in other parts of the country."

Continued ...



Splash Car Wash

For Splash Car Wash's CEO Mark Curtis, expansion into other states and markets is full steam ahead. The company just opened its 59th and 60th locations in Oswego and Leray, NY. "We've added close to 40 stores over the last five years," said Curtis. "We have six under construction with five more sites about to begin construction."

Although Splash is based in Connecticut, it also has sites in New York, Vermont and Massachusetts. Many of the recent sites Curtis has acquired/built, however, have been in western New York and two existing sites were purchased in the Capital District. "This was somewhat opportunistic as two great sites — Wash Boss (East Greenbush) and Knock-out (Guilderland) — became available. It also allowed us to connect the wash locations we



This Splash express in Guilderland was purchased in 2023. It was formerly Knock Out Car Wash.

	
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have in the southern part of New York with our sites in Western and Northern New York."

Curtis said he selects his markets with two objectives in mind. "Our primary focus has been on contiguous markets in which we can either acquire an existing operation or develop a new site," he said. "Our primary objective is to enter markets that are underserved or where we can acquire an existing wash and bring it under the "Splash" brand. He noted that ultimately, every site will be either "Splash" or have "Splash Car Wash" as a subtitle — i.e. "powered by Splash."

Palladin Consumer Retail Partners, a private equity firm, partnered with Splash in 2018. The partnership has enabled Splash to grow exponentially. "I think private equity has generally had a positive impact on our industry by infusing substantial capital into our businesses," said Curtis. "It's allowed some operators to exit successfully, while it's enabled others, Splash included, to expand through acquisition and new site development."

Curtis also feels that PE's impact on the industry has impacted consumer behavior. "I believe that it (PE) has brought a level of professionalism to the carwash business and in part has played a role in substantially increasing the demand for our services," said Curtis. "By increasing the quality and efficiency of carwash sites, and coupled with the expansion of the subscription model, we have dramatically changed consumer behavior for the better."



Spritz Car Wash

For Steve Weekes and his team at Spritz Car Wash, which includes his daughter Mackenzie, son Sebastien and partner Peter Rosenfeld, growth is top of mind. “We have eight locations — tunnel, inbay and self serves — and we purchased one site in the last five years,” said Weekes. “We are going to continue to grow and have several properties we are working on now. My kids, the second generation, are driving our growth.”

Keeping the focus on producing a clean, dry and shiny car, at a fair price, is paramount for Weekes. “You can’t stop PE,” he said. “We just need to run our business well.”

Weekes, like the rest of the operators in this article, continue to be bullish on carwashing. “I think as a whole, customers will wash more if a good quality offering is available. Now, if we could just get Mother Nature to help out and New York State to lay off on any negative legislation that would impact our industry, that would be great.”

For Curtis, and as noted by Slone earlier, market saturation is a real concern. “I believe there will be continued expansion by consolidators and regional brands alike, either through acquisition or by new wash development,” said Curtis. “My hope here is that the newcomers to the market (and the industry) avoid the ‘over building’ we’ve seen in other markets around the country.”

According to Curtis, a rising tide lifts all boats. “I believe that the quality of carwash offerings in the region will continue to improve as existing operators move to renovate and/or re-equip their sites in the face of growing competition.

“I also believe that the overall improvement of the washes in the (market) and region will continue to ‘bend the demand curve,’ as my friend Gary Dennis (former International Carwash Association President and Co-Founder of Mammoth Holdings, an express carwash platform with 100 locations made up of 20+ brands funded by Red Dog Equity LLC) says, and reward those carwashes that have kept their sites looking and operating at a peak level.” **NC**

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



Sebastien and Steve Weekes, Peter Rosenfeld and Mackenzie (Weekes) Wilock at their site on Route 9 in Clifton Park.



Spritz acquired Squirt Car Wash on Chrysler Avenue in Schenectady in 2023.

33rd NRCC Breaks Records!

A view of the Atlantic City ferris wheel.

The 33rd Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC), October 2-4, at the Atlantic City Convention Center surpassed its 2022 booth count with 386 exhibits and beat its highest attendee number set in 2019 with 1921 combined attendees and exhibitors, according to Heather Courtney, NRCC Show Coordinator. "To say I'm thrilled would be an understatement," said Courtney, who is in her seventh year managing the event. "We spent more money promoting the show and have elevated our educational track significantly over the last several years."



2023 NRCC Keynote Speaker Mark Denton.

The NRCC had outstanding education, a huge show floor and is cost-effective for operators as well as vendors and all of that combined is a great value to all."

And according to Bob Rossini, Show Chairman representing the Connecticut Carwash Association (CCA), the event's host, "This show had extremely high energy," he said. "Attendees have seen the changes we've made to the show and it's paying off. Everyone I spoke with was impressed and energized to learn and bring fresh, new ideas back to their washes."

Show Highlights

A wide range of educational options elevated the 33rd NRCC, with something for everyone, according to Education



Breakout speaker Arthur Greeno of Chick-fil-A.



Keynote Speaker Mark Denton, (right), speaks with Purple Elephant's Anthony Setaro, Al Scozzari and Vinny Setaro.

Keynote Speaker Mark Denton captivated a crowd of more than 300 attendees.



The annual Virtual Tour of carwashes is one of the best attended seminars, moderated by Tom Hoffman Jr., and is held on the first day of the event.

Chair Suzanne Stansbury. "It's always a challenge to select a topic that will appeal to all types of operators with varying backgrounds, but I think we were able to find presenters with lots of charisma and diversity who were also relatable. I was really happy with our educational offerings."

The lineup included the annual "Virtual Carwash Tour" facilitated by Tom Hoffman, Jr. of Hoffman Car Washes and InnovateIT. The sites shown virtually included RoJo Car Wash in Norwood and Walpole, MA, operated by John Shalbey, Jr., Gleam and Gleam 2 Car Washes out of Denver, CO, operated by Emilie Baratta, Chesapeake Car Wash in Chesapeake, MD, operated by Tom Morris and Quick Clean Car Wash out of Lee's Summit, MO, operated by Bob Brown. "I try to compile a diverse grouping of washes and this year I think I was able to hit all wash models, including sites with detailing," said Stansbury. "I have also added in some out-of-market sites to give attendees a more broad look at what operators in different parts of the country are doing." This event was sponsored by Sergeant Sudz.

Simoniz Celebration Expansion

After the Virtual Tour concluded Simoniz USA, a long-time supporter of the NRCC, held its annual event, the Simoniz Celebration, at the Hard Rock's Hollywood Ballroom. This gathering helps get everyone fired up for the show's first day of exhibits and additional education. This year, the company opened the evening event up to every single attendee, no matter their level of registration. "Simoniz calls the Northeast our back yard with

Continued ...



The annual Welcome Reception, sponsored by ICS, is a show highlight on Tuesday after the close of the show floor.



Show Chairman Bob Rossini ran the annual Award's Program.

33rd NRCC Breaks Records! ... continued

our headquarters located in Bolton, CT,” said Joey Plude, Marketing Manager. “Therefore, a partnership and association with the NRCC and the Northeast community as a whole is very important to us.”

The annual event drew a massive crowd, according to Plude. “We are so proud to have strengthened this relationship with the NRCC and the Northeast carwash family by opening up our Simoniz Celebration to the entire show,” he said. “We feel it was a massive success having almost 535 attendees and we are committed to making it even bigger next year!”

Chairman Rossini couldn’t agree more. “Our thanks go out to the entire Simoniz team, and Joey, for coordinating this incredible offering,” said Rossini. “Next year’s event on Monday, October 7th, should be amazing!”

Tuesday’s Events

On day two of the show attendees were able to partake of an extensive buffet breakfast before soaking up content from the popular Early Bird panel discussion. This panel is meant to be unscripted and cover topics relating to all carwash models. Panelists included Amanda Kubarek of K & S Car Wash, Auburn, NY; Steve Sause of Cloud 10, Darien, CT; Mike Ashley of Virginia Car Wash Industries, Inc., Toms Brook, VA; and Dan Saidel of Premier Car Wash, Metuchen, NJ. The panel was moderated by the New England Carwash Association’s John Shalbey, Jr., with RoJo Car Washes in Norwood and Walpole, MA.

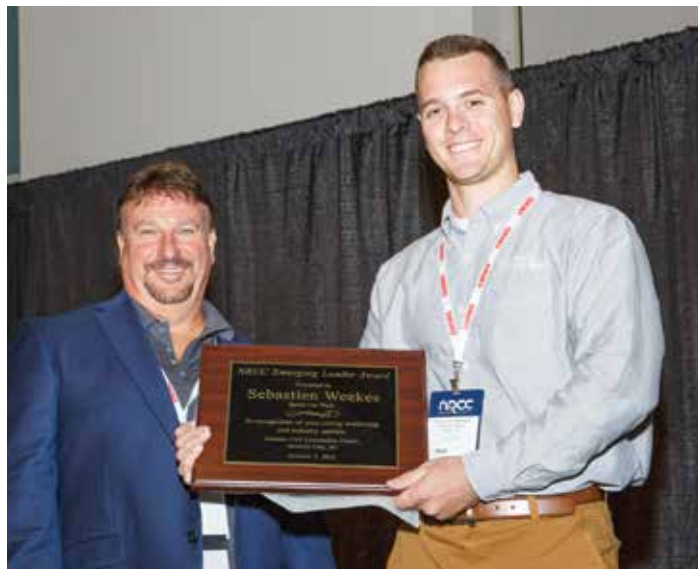
Next up was an insightful program titled, “Your Unlimited Program — Is it Return or Rechurn?” facilitated by Myrrh Consulting’s Chris Brown. Brown provided tips on how to master the unlimited sales process while minimizing financial fallout. He was able to demonstrate how to drive your unlimited capture rate, keep churn in check and ensure that your customers are happy customers for life.

“Ask The Marketing Experts,” facilitated by Nick Lopez of Bubble Bath Car Wash, was the next spirited seminar on tap. Lopez’ panelists included Wade Keith of Breeze Thru Car Washes in Wyoming and Colorado, Kacy Erdelyi of Spark Car Wash with three sites in New Jersey (more on the drawing board) and additional washes to come in Pennsylvania and New York, and Victoria Perez of Bubble Bath Car Wash in San Antonio, TX. The group took questions from the audience and shared their expertise on all aspects of carwash marketing. The feedback to this seminar was extremely positive and left attendees wanting more.

Exceptional Keynote Experience

International award-winning leadership expert and celebrated speaker, Mark Denton, shared his expertise on navigating turbulent waters in life and business with more than 300 in attendance. Denton has competed in countless races and sailed more than 80,000 miles across the world’s most hostile oceans. In doing so, he has learned a bit about motivating his team and being able to adjust his leadership skills to meet all challenges; skills that can be taken back to your wash when motivating your staff

Continued ...



NRCC Chairman Bob Rossini and Emerging Leader recipient Sebastian Weekes of Spritz Car Wash.



NRCC Chairman Bob Rossini presented Will Gorra with his father's Hall of Fame Award in his absence.



Teammates and friends Will Gorra and Hall of Fame recipient Al West.



Emerging Leader recipient Dave Jones of Splash Car Wash and NRCC Chairman Bob Rossini.



NRCC Chairman Bob Rossini and Hall of Fame recipient Al West with Simoniz USA.



Emerging Leader Recipient Max Pulcini of EverWash.



NRCC Chairman Bob Rossini and Emerging Leader recipient Francesca Roman of Hoffman Car Wash.



Team Simoniz USA was out in force at the NRCC's Annual Awards Luncheon where Al West and Bill Gorra were honored with the Hall of Fame Award for their outstanding support and service to the NRCC.

33rd NRCC Breaks Records! ... continued

to work smarter and better as a team. “His sheer courage and will to overcome incredible odds, while working in a team environment, is nothing short of inspiring,” said Chairman Rossini.

The Keynote was sponsored by Micrologic Associates and InnovateIT.

Awards Luncheon

This year’s Awards Luncheon was led by Chairman Bob Rossini. Recipients included four Emerging Leaders: Sebastien Weekes of Spritz Car Wash in Clifton Park, NY, Dave Jones of

Splash Car Wash, Milford, CT, Francesca Roman of Hoffman Car Wash, Albany, NY, and Max Pulcini, Director of Communications with EverWash, Philadelphia, PA.

The Emerging Leader Award celebrates and encourages early-career managers who have demonstrated strong leadership and industry service.

Continued ...

NRCC Board Member Walt Hartl (right) walks the show floor with an extremely interested Keynote Speaker Mark Denton. Denton at one point contemplated getting into the industry.



Nearly 300 attended the Annual Award's Luncheon.



Some 1145 attendees, excluding vendors, walked the two-day show floor.



RR Lalená's Rami Lalena and Kleen-Rite's John Tobias take a moment to catch up and pose for a photo.

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33rd NRCC Breaks Records! ... continued

The Most Distinguished Person Award honoree was Larry Fiano of Fiano's E-Z Coin-Op Carwash in Bolton, CT. Fiano, 98, is a long-time CCA member. He has been washing cars since 1967 when he built a carwash into a parcel of land he had acquired the previous year. His wash is still in operation and the

parcel of land now also includes a miniature golf and driving range called Mar-Lea Golf named after his oldest son Mark and youngest daughter Leah.

Continued ...

The Team from DRB, the Wednesday seminar sponsor.



Dr. Joe Gartland with Kleen-Rite speaks with show floor attendees.



The team from Micrologic, one of the Keynote Speaker sponsors.



The team from Ardex strikes a pose.



The team from Sonny's The CarWash Factory.



ICS' Brian Bath and Kevin Ahnert.



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33rd NRCC Breaks Records! ... continued

Larry would like to acknowledge the help he has received from Jeff and Allison Shackett of Car Wash Systems, as well as the Gorra family of Simoniz USA who have supplied the wash for the last 50+ years. Larry was not able to attend the show so Chairman Rossini accepted the award on his behalf.

The NRCC's highest honor, its Hall of Fame Award, was bestowed upon two individuals this year who have supported the NRCC and its mission and helped it grow year over year, tirelessly. The recipients are selected by past honorees.



Virtual Tour participants John Shalbey Jr. of Rojo Car Wash, Emilie Baratta and Elijah Williams from Gleam Car Wash, Tom Hoffman Jr. of Hoffman Car Wash, moderator, Thomas Morris of Chesapeake Car Wash and Bob Brown of Quick Clean Car Wash.



G & G Industrial Lighting's team from Clifton Park, NY.



Northeast Carwasher columnist Gary Sokoloski of Gary's Tech Tips and Washworld.



And the winners of the Welcome Reception raffle were Mike Goupil of Maintenance Tech. and Larry Lawrence of Roll-N-Vac by Trubite, Inc.



Throughout the three-day event you can see signage promoting the NRCC displayed on the board walk and throughout the city.



NRCC Board Members Mike Ashley and Chris Kubarek.

Bill Gorra and Al West of Simoniz USA were honored with the 2023 Hall of Fame Award. Bill's journey began in 1980 working in sales at Syndet Products where his hands-on approach helped him gain industry knowledge. Using this experience, just three years later, he oversaw and managed five Gentle Touch Car Washes in Hartford, CT.

Bill then negotiated a licensing agreement with First Brands to use the Simoniz name in conjunction with professional carwash products. In 1988, he purchased controlling interests of Syndet from his father and expanded operations. And in 1997, Syndet purchased the 100-year-old Simoniz brand and renamed it Simoniz USA. The company now employs 350 and owns more than 100 brands and has been exhibiting at the NRCC for 33 years.

Al West began with the company 27 years ago after breaking into the industry as a manager with Boston-based ScrubaDub. He was then recruited by Simoniz when they were looking for a Team Member. He quickly rose up through the ranks to his current position as Northeast Carwash Sales Manager. And, according to his boss, Bill Gorra, "Al is selfless, passionate, dedicated and one of the most loyal people you can find, and the company would not be the same without him."

Both Gorra and West have supported



Product Development Manager Gavin Klami with InnovateIT speaks with show attendees.

the NRCC as valued exhibitors, sponsors and sounding boards over the last 33 years. They never hesitate to help the show grow and prosper while providing East Coast operators with a first-rate event. Gorra was not available to accept the award due to the recent passing of his wife Christine. His son, Will, accepted the honor on his behalf. West, who did not know he was receiving the award, accepted it with surprise.

The Award's Luncheon was sponsored by Carwash Superstore.

Annual Welcome Reception Grows

Another highlight of the show is the annual Welcome Reception sponsored by long-time sponsor and show supporter ICS. This casual meet and greet includes complimentary beverages and light New Jersey fare before everyone sets out for dinner with friends and vendors. "The last three years we have held the event at the ACCC just at the close of the show on Tuesday," recounts Courtney. "It's a great opportunity to take a break after walking the floor and catch up with friends old and new."

Continued...

Mark and Steve McMillen and Colonial Carwash owner Dave Fusco.





Chemquest reps take a break for a photo.

It's been a highlight of our show for years and we couldn't do it without the generosity of ICS."

This year's Welcome Reception also included a \$500 cash giveaway and a Yeti cooler giveaway. The cash winner was Larry Lawrence of Roll-N-Vac by TRUEBITE, INC, out of Binghamton, NY, and the Yeti cooler went to Mike Goupil of Maintenance Tech out of Portland, ME.



Final Seminar

The show's final seminar and breakfast featured Chick-fil-A's Arthur Greeno whose Keynote "Remarkable Customer Service" resonated and entertained the audience. Greeno, who is also the bestselling author of "Breaking Conformity," is a current multi-store owner/operator. He shared some of the company's "secret sauce" on its consistent quality and remarkable customer service. It was obvious that he goes above and beyond with his employees. Visit nrccshow.com for a barcode to link to "50 Great Stories Meant to Inspire Greatness In Your Company."

"I thought Arthur and our entire educational lineup provided some exceptional content and examples of how to improve communication, better lead and better market wash operations," said Stansbury. "We have a limited number of educational slots to fill each show, which makes the selection process challenging, but we do encourage attendees to share their thoughts and ideas with us," she said. "Please email them to info@nrccshow.com or give us a call at 800.868.8590.

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Chris Kubarek and Christine DeSocio and Amanda Kubarek of K & S Car Wash in Auburn, NY.



The team from SplashSource helped increase the show's social media presence and added a lot of spark to the event. Pictured, Tatum O'Donnell, Sophia Evans and Sylvie Layer.

The 34th NRCC is slated for October 7-9 at the Atlantic City Convention Center.

The Hard Rock Hotel & Casino is the host hotel.

Visit nrcshow.com in the coming months for registration and seminar information.

The Car Wash Operators of New Jersey (CWONJ) is the host association with CWONJ Past President Doug Rieck serving as Chairman.



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Marketing Director Uses Her Creative Talents To Produce a Carwash Coloring Book

By Tiffany Kjos

Carwashes and crayons might not seem like a natural fit, but a coloring book has proven to be a powerful marketing tool for AVW Equipment Company.

Danka Dubak, AVW's Marketing Director, spends a lot of time staffing trade show booths where giveaways are plentiful. Noticing more and more children attending industry events, she envisioned handing out something other than a stuffed animal or electronic gadget, and also providing a cool gift for parents to take home to kids who couldn't go to a trade show. "We wanted to make trade shows more fun for kids," shared Dubak, granddaughter of the founder of the 50-year-old company. "We wanted to come up with something that was engineered for kids."

Innovation is ingrained in AVW. Its founder designed and in 1998 launched the belt conveyor system and has engineered many other carwashing innovations. The coloring book depicts a car journeying through a tunnel with a belt conveyor and

another going through a tunnel with a chain conveyor. The first vehicle is happy, but the second is, well, not so much. "It's a playful kind of way to learn this car is happy and he's getting cleaned and he's really relieved. When he's on a chain-and-roller conveyor he's stressed out," Dubak explained. "The tunnel with the chain conveyor is dark and dungeony and scary. Another feature of the belt conveyor is it can handle big trucks. The 'sad' truck is too big to enter the tunnel."

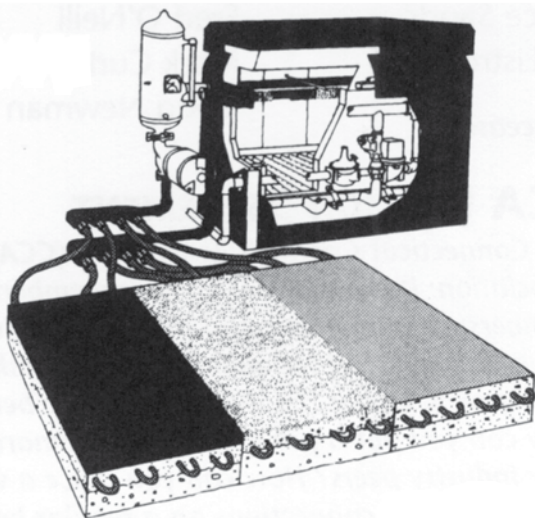
Dubak, with a degree from Indiana University, did her homework before producing the coloring book. "Statistically, you're far more likely to remember things from an image than just reading. But that's even more so by an illustration than a photograph. With that in mind we wanted to make a cartoon illustration with carwash concepts."

Five Decades of Carwashing

AVW's plant, in Maywood, IL, is undergoing a transformation that will double it from 35,000 square feet to 60,000 square feet. Company founder and patriarch Milovan "Mike"



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AVW Equipment's Marketing Director, Danka Dubak, is also a coloring book author who helps spread awareness of the industry to future drivers.



Vidakovich, who turned 89 in December, still stops by to check on the operation, which employs approximately 90. The Serbian emigre and his wife Dusanka started in the carwash business in the 1970s, eventually founding their own company.

AVW's products include equipment that Vidakovich developed, such as the circular motion mitt, the modernized flex wrap and the wheel blaster. AVW has installed 800 belt conveyor systems worldwide, each able to wash 3,255 cars a day.

AVW does business in 24 countries, 20 percent more than when Dubak came aboard in 2016. And the coloring book has helped in ways Dubak couldn't have imagined. When wildfires devastated Australia in 2019, AVW took action. "We have a strong customer base in Melbourne, so we made an Australian-edition cartoon coloring book, with kangaroos and the Australian flag, and we shipped them to our customers," she shared.

The coloring books were sold from more than 24 locations, with proceeds going to firefighters and others affected by the wildfires, perfect for the family- and community-oriented company.

"The family was pushing for this the minute we had this idea," Dubak said of the coloring book. "They back this 100 percent. Our family just loves kids. So they love this idea."

Dubak enlisted a Serbian artist to draw the coloring book. That proved to be the endeavor's most expensive element. Printing was relatively inexpensive since AVW uses a longtime local printer and can have them print the books on demand for about \$4 per copy. "The cartoonist wasn't cheap because that's a special skill," Dubak shared.

The first printing, in 2019, was 1,000 copies. The coloring books are so popular that carwashers request stacks of them to place in their lobbies, and AVW provides them to customers for free. Customers also email photos of children using the coloring books to Dubak and post photos of them online. "It's really fun

because people will be like, 'Oh, can I get some of those for my kids?' and they'll tag us on photos on Instagram of their kids coloring," Dubak relayed.

Vidakovich is obviously pretty persuasive, having convinced Dubak to join the family company. Dubak wanted to go to Hollywood to work in television production, she said. After two internships there, her grandfather lured her home. Vidakovich said to her, "Why would you want to do something for someone else when you can do something for your own family?" He said give it a shot, you can find a way, you don't have to be an engineer. You can use your creative skills to help the business as well ... find something you like doing. So I did, and I am really happy I stayed with the family," Dubak said.

Moving forward

Another fun publication focusing on the equipment AVW produces is already in the works.

"I love kids, and a goal of mine is to make a children's book, so I guess this is kind of up my creative alley," Dubak mentioned. "My goal for 2024 is 'AVW Friends,' which is going to be a character book so we feature our products, with our different machines like 'Tina the Tire Shine,' 'Top Brush Tim,' and 'Archie the Arch.'"

The 12-page coloring book does more than draw attention to AVW. Dubak says it aims to make the business of carwashing, and its many aspects, appealing to the next generation. "I grew up in the carwash industry, and it's a really fun industry. I just want other kids to learn about it from an early age and get more kids into this field."

NC



Tiffany Kjos is a freelance writer and editor based in Tucson, AZ.

Tiffany Kjos

Baright family built empire one site at a time

Funny How Those Quarters Added Up!

By Fred Grauer

Innovator/Innovation: To introduce something new, make changes. The act of introducing new things or methods.

Imagine for a moment that you are planning a trip to New York City and in addition to the normal Big Apple things you do you decide to take a ride north along Rt. 9 and explore the beautiful Hudson Valley? Well, if you are a carwasher, you must check out the washes along your travels because all carwash operators love to do that, it's part of your DNA. And lucky for you, Google comes up with multiple Foam & Wash Car Wash locations from Red Hook to Vails Gate.

You are intrigued so you dig a little deeper and find this statement on their website, "Foam & Wash is a local family business, born in the 1960's with the first carwash in New Windsor. We specialize in fast and convenient services in first-class facilities with a friendly and courteous staff."

Wow, you are hooked. What could be better than a trip to the historic, charming villages of the Hudson Valley with the pot of gold bonus getting to visit 13 Foam & Wash sites in Dutchess and Orange Counties along your journey!

So, now that you know where you are going, who is Foam & Wash and what is the

story behind the multi-location wash's success? We were lucky enough to interview the founders and learn how the company came into existence.

As a preamble to comments from Dick and Carleen Baright, founders of Foam & Wash, note that Dick was working at IBM in 1966 where he and several others started a Credit Union prior to dipping his toe into carwashing. Dick and his cohorts would set up card tables in the cafeteria at IBM and solicit membership for \$1 a week. So, even in his early 20's entrepreneurial longings were pulling at Dick to do his own thing. You might add that the experience of asking co-workers for \$1 a week to start a credit union may have been the forerunner of today's Unlimited wash program. That credit union account is now called The Hudson Valley Credit Union.

And so it began. "Not being satisfied to spend the rest of my life at IBM and desiring to be my own boss, with my own

Continued ...



Dick Baright, second from left, with his three sons, Todd, Gary and Scott.



Three generations of Barights and spouses with Dick and Carleen Baright front and center.



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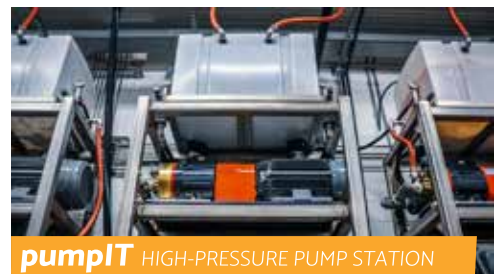
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Foam & Wash ... *continued*

goals, achievements and successes, I began searching for a new career and discovered a little booklet, 'Franchise Opportunities.' I didn't want a franchise, I wanted innovative business ideas!" recalls Baright.

His desire for innovation was manifesting itself as he drove to and from work. "The innovation of a totally new concept in carwashing, a coin-op self-service carwash, was intriguing," he said. "As luck would have it, each day on my way to work I drove past a three-bay self-service carwash being built in Hyde Park."

Baright stopped in one day to check out the wash and discovered that the owner thought he was too old for the new venture, lived too far away and wanted to sell it uncompleted. "In 1966, self-service carwashes were a new concept in the Hudson Valley, at 6 minutes for a quarter and vacuums 5 minutes for a dime, it seemed crazy! But we took a chance and it proved successful, we were on our way!"

Soon after, Baright learned about a five-bay being built in Vails Gate. Upon investigation, that owner was underfinanced, the bank was chasing him and he had to sell. Yet another perfect opportunity! Baright bought the wash with the help of a small loan from his parents. Financial help from the understanding landlord, and months of hard work assisted by a friend who had just built a self-serve in Poughkeepsie, and he had two sites under his belt. "We added an inbay automatic and Texaco gas station and we were once more happily successful and able to purchase the property too!"

Next, a small two-bay self-service became available in the family's hometown of Red Hook. After that purchase a third bay (car and truck) was added to the site. "Funny how those quarters added up," noted Baright. "For the next 20 years we were busy investing, buying, building and improving our properties including those in the center of our village of Red Hook. We have no regrets as we started small when it was more affordable, and grew from there."

It's Time for the Second Generation

"As our three sons, Todd, Gary and Scott graduated from college their interest in the carwash business blossomed (and) they joined us as we all focused on the business of carwashing and exceptional customer service with their great youthful dreams and innovative technology, planning and growth expansion," noted Baright.

As the boys began families of their own they were joined by their wives in the continued support and growth of Foam & Wash. As time progressed, each of the boys specialized in

different areas of the business. Todd, the eldest, in financial and general management, Gary in new product development and marketing, and Scott tackled the mechanical and electrical aspects of the business. As a team all were involved in site selection, design and construction.

As time moved on, the Baright family added new services to their inbay and self-serve wash locations that complemented their sites. Gasoline, Laundromats, dog washes, vacuums, automated tellers and in keeping with industry trends they offered Unlimited wash programs and express conveyORIZED tunnel carwashes.

Today there are 13 Foam & Wash locations in the greater Hudson Valley, all with an employee team that cherishes the family culture and focuses on the customer experience.

So, as Dick Baright began his quest nearly 60 years ago with innovation and passion, that same spirit continues to drive the Baright family. In addition to Dick and Carleen's boys,

their grandchildren are also now involved in bringing innovative leadership to the business!

One such innovation came from Gary Baright's realization that waterproof lighting was lacking in the industry. G & G LED, founded by Gary Baright and Gary Sloan, now G & G Industrial Lighting, came about after Gary Baright learned of the efficiency of LED Lighting and felt that technology would be perfect for the carwash industry. (Gary Sloan is no longer a partner). After doing huge amounts of research he discovered that no supplier could provide a waterproof light that would survive the harsh conditions of a carwash, so with the help of his partner and nephew, Jason Baright, an electrical engineer, they researched and built an LED light fixture that could survive harsh conditions. From those humble beginnings word spread and they created the company that manufactures its units in Clifton Park, NY, with almost 100 percent of its components being made and assembled in the USA. In addition to their carwash application, G&G lighting is now being installed in other industries that demand low operating, high-efficiency LED.

What lies ahead for Foam & Wash is no doubt continued success, growth and innovation. But it's clear that teamwork, forged by Dick and Carleen, has been the cornerstone of the company's legacy.

NC

Fred Grauer is a 65-year industry veteran. He recently "retired" from a position with Vacutech, but is consulting and writing this column for the Northeast Carwasher. You can reach Fred at fredgrauer@comcast.net



Fred Grauer



Dick Baright, second from left, with his grandkids taken a few years ago.

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SBA Stops Collecting on Some Past Due PPP and EIDL Loans

By Michael Ford

Earlier this year, the Small Business Administration (SBA) announced it would no longer pursue collecting PPP and EIDL Loans under \$100,000. While the SBA is fine with walking away from the responsibility of collecting these loans, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) and the House Small Business Committee want the SBA to continue full collection efforts.

House Small Business Committee Chair Roger Williams said, “The agency failed to detect upwards of \$200 billion in potential fraud in their lending programs and now has decided to end active collections on loans of \$100,000 or less. The SBA should be treating these taxpayer-funded loans the same way as any business owner would who is owed a large debt.”

Added Williams, “The SBA should continue pursuing loans of all sizes rather than taking the path of least resistance. This Committee will continue its investigation into this concerning decision and will work to hold the SBA accountable.”

The Committee’s investigation began after the SBA’s Office of Inspector General published a report noting the SBA’s decision not to pursue PPP loans \$100,000 or less was not justified. During the hearing with the SBA Inspector General, the IG reiterated that he did not agree with this decision and the SBA had not provided a suitable justification for ceasing collection on these loans. The OIG’s most recent report, released on September 29, 2023, examined the SBA’s decision to end active collection on COVID EIDLs \$100,000 or less.

The OIG Report

The September 29 report from the SBA OIG produced five recommendations:

Have the Office of Capital Access evaluate whether collection costs will exceed recovery amounts.

RESPONSE: The SBA partially agreed by saying they were assessing the cost-benefit analysis.

COMMENT: The SBA is looking at it internally, but appears to have already made the decision by not following the recommendation to have the Office of Capital Access be involved.

Have the Office of Capital Access reevaluate and amend the decision to end active collections.

RESPONSE: The SBA agreed to internally reevaluate and amend as appropriate.

COMMENT: The SBA response gives the impression they have already decided internally as to what is and what is not appropriate. Again, they will not bring in the Office of Capital Access for review of the decision.

Continue collections of loans if the combined loans received is more than \$100,000.

RESPONSE: The SBA agreed to the extent that it is technologically feasible. They are working on implementing a system to flag multiple loans.

COMMENT: This may well mean the SBA intends to carry out full collection efforts for borrowers with multiple smaller loans that combine to more than \$100K.

Continue to collect all loans that appear to be fraudulent, false or misrepresented.

RESPONSE: The SBA partially agreed to the extent that they can get the information. However, the SBA stated the OIG and federal oversight entities are refusing to share the information.

COMMENT: Since government agencies are not sharing information with each other, the SBA may be limited in what they can do to follow the recommendation.

To maximize the return to taxpayers, have the Office of Capital Access evaluate if selling the portfolio, including delinquent loans is in the best interest to the government.

RESPONSE: The SBA disagreed with both the OIG and a report from a third party contractor that this would be in the best interest of the government.

COMMENT: It appears the SBA does not think it is in the best interest of the taxpayers to sell and collect the loans even if they do not plan on internally collecting them.

Is the SBA Required by Law to Collect?

According to Representative Williams, “Federal Claims Collection Standards require agencies to pursue all appropriate means of collection and determine based on these efforts that the debt is uncollectable before terminating collection of a claim.”

Could the Loans Be Sold to Debt Collection Agencies?

Chair Williams said, “Further, the SBA retained an outside consultant in May 2021 to determine whether pursuing a partial sale of delinquent COVID EIDLs would be in the best interest of the taxpayer. The consultant recommended the SBA sell part of the debt to ensure an exit strategy that would maximize the value of the portfolio. However, the SBA decided not to follow the consultant’s advice and did not provide the OIG with a reasonable explanation for that decision when asked.” Added Williams, “The Debt Collection Improvement Act specifies that an agency shall sell nontax delinquent debt after terminating collection actions if the Secretary of Treasury determines sale of debt is in the best interest of the United States. It is unclear if the SBA has consulted the Department of Treasury on their decision not to sell the portfolio.”

Implications for Future SBA Borrowers

While the SBA wants to close the door on collecting these loans, they may be required by law to change direction. Whether it is through the possible sale of the delinquent portfolio to collection agencies or internal collection efforts, there is still pressure to continue.

The SBA has stated they will report delinquent accounts to credit bureaus. In addition, they will be sending collection letters and flagging non-compliant borrowers in their system.

There are reports that the SBA EIDL Department has flagged almost 500,000 loans as possibly questionable. If your loan was flagged and the SBA is contacting you, it may be prudent to respond. Borrowers who do not respond could be subject to additional scrutiny and in some cases possible prosecution. In addition, flagged borrowers may not be eligible for future government-backed financing.

We recently had a client who was flagged by the SBA's EIDL department. Because the client did not respond to the SBA's request for information, the SBA withheld issuing their authorization number until the matter was cleared. This caused a significant delay in the funding of the clients' new carwash construction loan.

It is important to know that if your loan is flagged by the

SBA for being non-compliant, you will need to address the issue before you are eligible to borrow more funds under federal government programs.

The debate on whether the SBA can just walk away from collecting PPP/EIDL loans under \$100,000 is still very active. Some members of Congress and the OIG are firm in the belief that the SBA owes it to the citizens to collect all loans. The SBA's opinion appears to be different.

The option of not paying your loan or not taking steps to get the appropriate forgiveness may seem like a course of action for some, but is not the recommended path. Non-payment could lead to being ruled ineligible for future government lending programs, being turned over to collections, having your credit negatively impacted or even worse, prosecution. **NC**

For more information or questions about your loan, go to SBA.gov or Lending.SBA.gov

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



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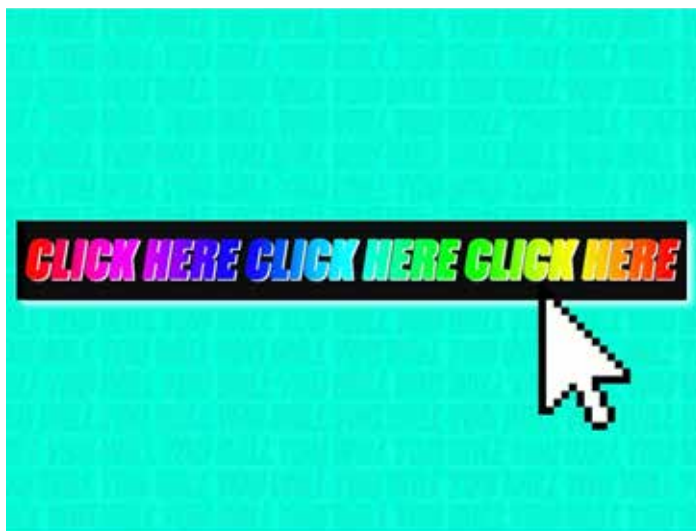


Digital Advertising: a Primer

By Kacy Erdelyi

When AT&T ran the first digital advertisement in 1994, 44 percent of viewers clicked on it — a remarkable result. Its success “set off a chain reaction that altered the course of the advertising industry — and any other industry that overlapped with it.” (Source: www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2017/04/the-first-ever-banner-ad-on-the-web/523728/).

But by 1996, people were already calling display ads “boring and ineffective.” Fun fact: the man who designed the original AT&T ad, Joe McCambley, claims his children tell him he did the equivalent of inventing smallpox.



The first ever banner ad, from AT&T.

But being boring never slowed the digital advertising train. It worked for AT&T (which clocks in at revenues of \$120.7 billion today) and it continues to grow. In 2022, total digital ad expenditure was \$221 billion in the United States, and \$616 billion worldwide — which is 67 percent of the total advertising spend across all media.

We can't ignore it, so our challenge as marketers is simple: how to use digital advertising to grow our business, without giving people smallpox.

What?

There are many different places and types of creative that you can use in digital advertising, but for the purposes of this discussion, let's just focus in on the most straightforward approach. This article assumes we are:

- Buying advertising from the two largest providers: Meta (Facebook/Instagram) and Google.
- Using static images for ads, not videos.
- Not buying broader banner ads across multiple sites.

Those parameters make digital advertising accessible for both

single-unit and multi-unit operators, without requiring a huge investment in creative or media planning and buying support.

One additional note: SEO, a very important part of any retail business' digital strategy, is also outside the scope of this article.

Why?

We can think of digital advertising as one in a series of options that all have the same purpose — to let people know that your carwash exists, and to get them to come buy something. Other media that fall in this category include: postcards, billboards, TV ads, radio ads and more niche options like receipt or diner menu advertising. Why does 67 percent of spend go to digital when so many other options exist? Digital has a few advantages over some of these other options, outlined below.

“Sampling”

My favorite advantage of digital advertising for carwashes is its ability to act as a sampling vehicle for new users to the category. In the Northeast, many customers have never experienced a carwash like Spark, and a small digital ad may not be enough to convince them that we're different. So instead of trying to tell, we show. We use digital media to distribute free carwashes and give customers a chance to try us out. We see this as the same technique Starbucks uses when a barista stands outside with samples of Frappuccino — a tried and true marketing technique reinvented through digital media.



Spark “sampling” digital ad.

Customer Data Collection

When customers opt in to free washes, we collect their phone numbers and email addresses. Digital media makes this totally seamless. A customer clicks through, enters their email and phone number, and gets texted a free wash, just like that. By collecting data every time we sample a free wash, we build a huge database of customers that we can communicate with via email and text message after their initial wash (a much cheaper way to keep people engaged than running advertising to existing customers!).

Tight Geographic Concentration

Digital advertising allows you to spend money on only the tight 3-, 5-, or 7-mile radius you want to speak to about your wash. That prevents you from covering a wider area (like radio might) and spending money on people who are too far away to become regular customers.

Measurement and Testing

Digital advertising's most undeniable advantage is its ability to track data, and then use that data to make constant adjustments to optimize your spend. You can see on a day-to-day basis how your ads are performing, and which are performing best. That means you can slowly, over time, use digital advertising to improve your creative and your targeting to get the best results.

If you have the functionality to sell washes and memberships online, it's also possible to track the exact ROI (return on investment) of your advertising. If you spend \$1000 on ads, and you can see that 200 people purchased \$20 washes from that advertising spend, then your ROI would be 300 percent. Because digital is so trackable and flexible, you can continue increasing your budget as long as your ROI is high. Once it begins to flatten out, you can hold your spend at that level.

When?

All of that immediate measuring and testing feedback gives you an incredible amount of control over when you advertise. Unlike a real-life billboard that costs money to take up and down and often involves multi-week contracts, digital advertising can be responsive to what's happening in the world and at your site.

At Spark, we noticed that converting people from digital ads was much more expensive on rainy days, since customers were less likely to click on an ad for a free carwash if they didn't think they would use it immediately. We built an algorithm that shuts down our ads if there is a lot of rain, which significantly brought down our average costs to convert over time.

Your digital advertising can also be designed to be responsive to other timing considerations, like days of the week or seasonality — increasing budgets when costs are low and customers are responsive, and decreasing them when it's harder to get attention.

By looking at your results weekly, and understanding how they might be impacted by outside factors, you can design a digital media budget that optimizes your effectiveness and keeps the cost of acquiring a new customer as low as possible.

How?

Both Meta and Google have relatively accessible online portals that make it possible for anyone to run a digital media campaign. That said, they require a bit of time and attention and are not incredibly user-friendly.

If you are spending at least \$5K per month in total (even across multiple sites), it starts to make sense to find a small digital agency or digital media freelancer to help optimize your spend. To find out if this makes sense for you, you could include the freelancer's cost into your ROI calculation. Revisiting the example above, if you paid a freelancer \$500 to help you with your \$1000 digital media spend that yielded \$4000 in sales, your ROI would still be 250 percent — and now you've made money without requiring too much of your own time investment.

Websites like [fiverr.com](https://www.fiverr.com) and [upwork.com](https://www.upwork.com) can be good places to find freelance talent, although a personal recommendation from another small business is probably the most reliable source.

Start Small

Digital advertising is not an all-or-nothing proposition. You can start small with a tiny testing budget on Meta and a quick ad you design on [canva.com](https://www.canva.com) that clicks through to your website. Run that for a month and see what happens! You'll be able to track how many people clicked through on that ad to your website, and then you can decide the value of those clicks and whether you want to invest more.

Good luck experimenting with digital media. May we all end up like AT&T!

NC



Kacy Erdelyi

Kacy Erdelyi is VP, Marketing for Spark Car Wash, a fast-growing Northeast chain based in New Jersey. Curious about anything marketing? Let us know at northeastcarwasher@gmail.com and we'll build our next article around your questions.

Dear Venus and Mars,

What is your biggest goal in 2024 and how will you accomplish it?



Heather Ashley

Venus Says

Increase revenue.

We have chosen to remodel one of our washes and update equipment to make more revenue. Also, we plan a name change. In addition, we are looking at our loan structure and finding ways to optimize our loan. We will look into comparing utility costs and insurance rates, as well.

All of our self-serve bays are getting an overhaul in equipment, including pay systems and physical appeal. There will be new paint, decals and better lighting everywhere. We are also going to add some additional services to our bays.

We have chosen a new automatic wash unit that we feel will save money and speed up wash times so we can have a higher car count. While we have chosen to remain truly self-serve, we picked a really good unit that has a high level of satisfaction. The fact that it will save on water consumption and is deemed more "energy efficient" is a bonus.

I have heard that adding LED lighting provides curb appeal and can draw in more customers. We are looking into an APP-controlled system so we can change the light colors as we wish. For winter, we might do blue and white but for Valentine's Day we will do reds, pinks and white. It is something we can have fun with and draw attention to ourselves even with school colors on game nights.

Aligning ourselves with specific causes is also going to be a big focus. These efforts will include well known causes like Shriners Hospitals for Children to local rescue squads and fire departments. Sometimes you have to donate in order to tap into a new customer base, but once you get them, they will see the value of your product and return.

Time for a New Name

There are studies that have shown a name change every so many years is a good thing. From bringing new awareness to your

Continued on page 46 ...

Mars Says

Our biggest goal in the new year is to improve our overall reputation and set us apart from increased competition. To achieve this goal we have outlined specific objectives that focus on key areas of improvement to enhance our overall business performance.



Paul Vallario

Objective 1: Boosting Monthly Membership Program

One of our primary aims for 2024 is to significantly increase enrollment in our monthly membership program. We believe this not only boosts customer loyalty but also ensures a steady and predictable revenue stream. To achieve this, we'll introduce attractive incentives and benefits for our members, making it an even more appealing option for our customers.

Objective 2: Elevating Car Wash Quality

Quality is one of the most important things in a service business, and we are committed to raising the bar. By investing in state-of-the-art equipment, fine tuning our techniques, and using top-tier cleaning products we aim to provide an unparalleled carwash experience for our customers. Our focus on quality aligns with our mission to be the go-to carwash for those seeking exceptional service.

Objective 3: Introducing Rewards Programs for Loyal Customers

Recognizing and rewarding our loyal customers is a priority for 2024. We plan to expand our rewards programs to offer more incentives for frequent visitors. This may include discounts, special promotions or exclusive perks for those who consistently choose our carwash. Creating a sense of appreciation for our customers' loyalty is key to maintaining long-lasting relationships.

Continued on page 49 ...

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.

**If you have a question for Venus & Mars please send it to: Media Solutions,
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What's in Your 2024 Towel Tool Box?

By Valerie Sweeney

Winter is here! Now is a good time to check that towel “tool box” of yours and make sure you have the essentials you need to get you through the winter season. What’s in a towel “tool box?” It could be a combination of various towels, or the same type of towel in different sizes, styles or colors for various tasks. Consider having the following towels as part of your towel toolbox.

Terry Towels

Terry towels still remain the number one seller of all carwash towels. While some washes will use a larger towel, most carwashes use one that is approximately a hand towel size, 16" x 27". These towels are normally classified by their weight per dozen. Lighter weight styles are usually 2.5-3 pounds per dozen. Heavier weight towels are usually 3.5-4.5 pounds per dozen.

There are benefits to having towels of different thickness at the wash. Thinner towels are good if you are using them in tight spots, like on a window or interiors. Thicker towels are better when you are drying the body since they can absorb more water. If you use a thinner towel for one application, and a thicker towel for another, consider color-coding so your employees know which one to use.

Microfiber

Microfiber is by far the most versatile of all carwash towels. Various sizes of Microfiber towels are available, so using the right size for your application is important. Consider having a smaller 14" x 14" or 16" x 16" Microfiber on hand for windows and interiors. Larger hand towel size Microfiber, like 16" x 24" or 16" x 27", is better for drying the body of the car and is excellent for wax removal. While terry style Microfiber is the most popular, some washes like to use a waffle weave style.

Hucks

Huck/surgical towels still play an important role in the carwash industry. Many people still use them on windows. Why would you still want to keep huck towels around when most operators use microfiber on the windows? If you live in a colder climate, Microfiber might give you some trouble on the coldest, iciest days. They work really well, but sometimes the moisture will freeze in the fibers of the towel if it is extremely cold. Cotton towels do not seem to become affected to the same degree.

Rags

Whether you recycle your old body towels into cut-up rags, or if you purchase them, having a box of rags around will help prevent having any good towels ruined. Rags can be used on the dirtiest parts of the vehicle, including cleaning wheel wells and doorjambs. Rags also come in handy for any maintenance

issues that may arise, or even for cleaning your common areas and break room.

Many carwashes already have a good towel system in place. You should always use whatever towels work best for your wash. If you run into certain situations where your regular towels don't exactly fit the job, consider keeping some back-up towels in that “tool box” of yours.



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

Valerie Sweeney

Have a towel question for Val,
email her at erc@ercwipe.com

Venus ... continued from page 44

business to revitalizing your online reviews, it seems worth a try. We are going to take it from Ashley's Car Wash (which seems a little too personal having our actual name attached to something) to a name that is easily transferable should we decide to sell one day. The new name is near and dear to our local community and rich in Civil War history.

Financing Research

We have thought outside the box when it comes to our financing. We have been comparing what some folks were offering at the 2023 NRCC and looking at other local banks; it does pay to shop around. We are looking at the interest rate hikes and the renewal times (the balloon); a big increase could be around the corner. It is good to be proactive.

We have also taken a look at our utility costs and really feel that the new equipment with the better “energy efficiency” is going to make a great difference for us. We have typically shopped every two years or so for insurance, and we plan to do so again this year.

There are things we have surely missed, but I bet many of you have tips for making more revenue in 2024. I would love to hear them.

NC

IT'S NOT WHAT WE SAY

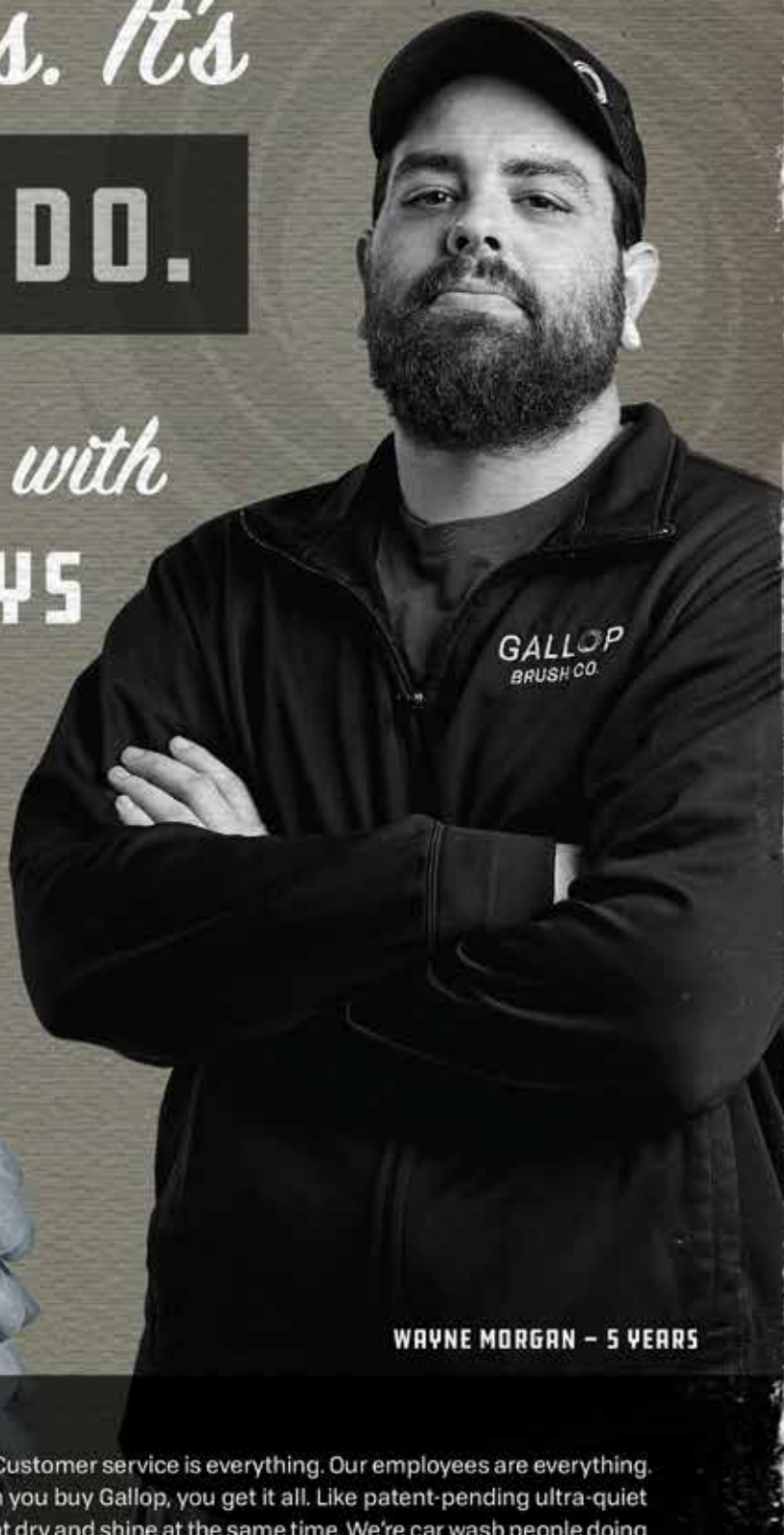
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Are you Nurturing the Soul of Your Business?

By JoAnna Brandi

Every business has a soul. Every business has a spirit. You can feel it. You can see it.

And in some cases, you can smell it.

I was visiting a potential joint venture partner at their executive office before getting a tour of customer service and all other departments. We had a pretty good meeting. I was feeling upbeat about the possibilities. The opportunity would have afforded me the ability to create a product line and a distribution channel for clever and useful renditions of my work in customer and employee happiness.

Then we took the walk. Outside of the executive offices was a long, smelly and dirty corridor. It seems there was poorly vented printing presses on the premises which were producing soot and an awful smell. It was hard to get it out of my nostrils.

I met and interviewed the people in the customer service department (which had a serious clutter problem) before moving on to the fulfillment department.

I'll spare you the details.

I left feeling like this company had a dark soul. I didn't want to work with them — despite what seemed to be great opportunities. It was such a contrast from almost all the companies who allow me "inside." What my clients have in common is a desire to excel and a desire to see their people — employees and customers — excel and thrive as well.

Culture is the Soul of your business. It stems from the values you hold sacred and live out in your everyday behaviors and environment.

The condition of your culture is evident everywhere — in your employees' individual and collective attitudes about where they work and what they do, and in the relationships they have with each other and with customers. It's evident in the ways you recognize and reward your team.

It's also evident in the physical environment. What does your waiting area look like and smell like? Is there comfortable

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Objective 4: Strengthening Digital Presence In An Increasingly Digital World

We understand the importance of a strong online presence. Our goal is to improve our digital footprint by implementing a robust online marketing strategy. This includes regular updates on social media platforms, engaging content, and potentially exploring online booking systems to streamline our express detail services and attract a broader audience.

As we navigate through 2024, we are dedicated to these strategic initiatives. By boosting our monthly membership program, elevating the quality of our carwash services, introducing rewards programs for loyal customers, and strengthening our digital presence, we're confident in our ability to deliver exceptional value to our customers and increase the success of our business.

NC

seating and perhaps some magazines to look at while waiting? Are there refreshments, for purchase or — even better — complimentary? Are there shaded areas outside to wait in the warmer climes or times while your car is getting detailed?

If your place is gorgeous, but the people are not trained and appreciated, you lose. If the people are trained and managed in a positive way but the facilities can use an upgrade — you are still losing. You need both — the physical and the emotional surroundings that let your customers know they are in good hands with YOU.

You can see it in how you run your staff meetings, how empowered your staff feels, what kind of language you use, who takes a risk, how you celebrate success, the cartoons that get pasted on the walls or circulated in your networks and in hundreds of other little ways that your culture expresses itself.

It's Evident in Your Bottom Line

According to Gallup, when you create a strong, positive culture you can enjoy an 85 percent increase in net profit in five years. That smells pretty good to me.

And not only that, there is a "Spillover Effect" from every culture. Positive Cultures spill over goodness — appreciation, gratitude, acknowledgment, caring, accomplishment, pride — two to three degrees out from their core — and sometimes farther than that. It's your way of making the world a more positive place.

Ask yourself: What am I doing as a leader to nourish the **Soul** I want to see expressed in my business?

As a leader you are more powerful than you think. Your people are watching you.

Be well, stay powerful.

NC

PS: Need some coaching on how to get there? Want to know more about how Values drive the soul of your business? Give me a shout — I'm here for you!

JoAnna Brandi is a certified Chief Happiness Officer working 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 "54 Ways to Stay Happy in a Changing, Challenging and Sometimes Negative World." You can find her at ReturnOnHappiness.com.

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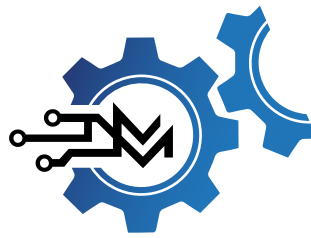
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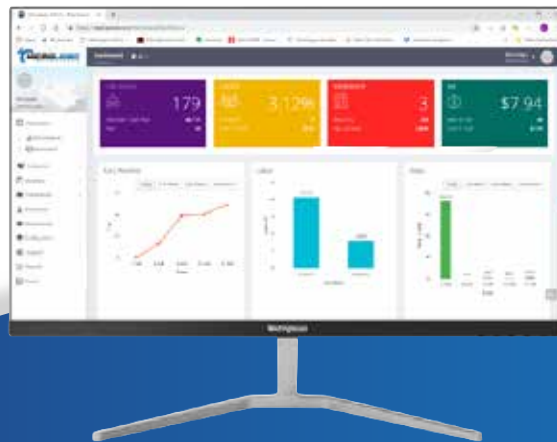
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Ready or Not, Winter's Here!

By Doug Rieck

As we move into the winter washing season there is much hype, hope and anxiety associated with it. The reason is obvious to fellow carwashers, and less so to most others. We are in a seasonal business and winter storms can bring in a lot of dirty cars. I explained this to a new employee by

telling him that the conveyor can wash either seven cars an hour or 70. He is sharp and caught on quickly. He has only been with me since September and has seen the depths of the slow season and had no idea that we could wash more cars in an hour.

I know several snow plow operators

and all have been in the same boat as carwashes. The advent of private equity and increased competition has further exacerbated the need and desire for salty roads at our washes. The past three years have seen an extended La Niña weather pattern which left the Northeast, and especially South Jersey, in a funk with no snow and little cold. In addition, we have had a lot of rain and clouds. Where I am on the 'Jersey Shore this fall we had eight weekends, in a row, of rain outs. Like most of us, I have been looking at winter forecasts since July. I subscribe to Weatherbell which has Joe Bastardi as its head meteorologist and he has been increasingly positive about snow and cold for us this winter. Now, a snowy and colder winter seems to be unanimous among all weather prophets, but there has been a divergence of opinion at times. I am sure we all remember the phrase from the Pandemic "follow the science." Well, weather forecasts are opinions based on forecasters' interpretations of science. My wife tracks several forecasters on Facebook who have all settled down in favor of a real winter in 2024. Today, I was reading that this week in Anchorage they recorded more than nine inches of snow within 24 hours leading to 26 inches of snow within four days. This is 17.5 inches over the previous November record set in 1956. Anchorage, AK, is in a much different climate zone than New Jersey, but the fact that they set the first early snow record in 67 years might indicate something (I hope). I am also hoping that by the time you read this column we all will have had our first snow, and maybe several. Last year Philadelphia had no snow. The slogan of the Phillies is, "Ya gotta believe."

One of the problems associated with carwashing is that consumers develop mindsets. They don't take the

Continued ...



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Doug's Perspective ... continued

family car out on a weekend to get it washed after a week of rain, let alone a month or two of rain every other day.

Our current weaker retail economy does not help our cause either. Customers have gotten out of the habit of washing or fail to see a need for it. They change their purchasing patterns and re-prioritize where they spend their money. Right now the priority of a clean car is pretty low. That is why a snowy, icy, cold winter which will pose a need for carwashing will help reset the consumer's clean car need equation. Every geographic segment of carwashing has their area of primary business drivers; ours is a traditional Northeastern winter. Don't get me wrong, I do also love pollen!

What we do need to do is prepare, plan and position for the winter weather. Most of us have forgotten a few things about cold weather washing during the past few non-snow years. At my washes, I have not used my plow in three years. I still have a half skid of salt/ice melt from four years ago. The last two years we have not used either of our two snow blowers. My crew has forgotten about snow shoveling and salt logs.

About 15 years ago, I messed up prior to a minor snow which turned out to be a big one. All of the snow shovels and snow blowers were in the detail shop behind the carwash. We only had steel shovels to clear the path to get to the snow equipment. A little bit of planning saves a lot of angst. If you

operate self serves and inbays you end up with a lot more to worry about — weep, floor heat, bay heat, automatic doors, etc. All of this stuff seems simple to carwash operators from the cold parts of the Northeast, but it gets lost down here in South Jersey. I bet we do know how to vacuum beach sand from cars better though.

But regardless of what part of the Northeast in which you wash cars, winter planning is essential. Equipment breakdowns and supply shortages can put a damper on winter washing. Those 10 to 15 golden high-volume days do not give us a redo. Be prepared and take advantage of what we all hope is a real winter!

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 dougriec@gmail.com



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Same Thing, Only Different

By Gary Sokoloski

As time goes by so much of what we do seems to be the same thing only in a different place. Or, more often these days it is the same thing in the same place. It has always been in the back of our thoughts that by the time we finish with one building/installation cycle we are back replacing all the things we just spent a decade or so building/installing. As my fourth decade in this business nears, these cycles, and evolution is more and more prevalent.

The most obvious and impactful for us is the initial equipment purchase and installation for a customer. It is the beginning of a long-term business and in most cases a personal relationship with a customer who will likely become a friend. While nothing is the same as it was in the early '80s, that is not necessarily a bad thing. One would think that doing the same thing over and over would become boring or tiresome. For some, I am sure this is the case, and they show their disdain for the job and move on their way in short order. While those of us who are not smart enough to know anything different, we just keep asking for more. There is something about having a plan or vision and being able to complete it in a specific timeframe and budget that meets or is above expectations that drives those who follow the same career path their entire professional lives.

A Hose is not a Hose

There is a reason for what we do and why some things are designed the way they are. On some recent yearly inspections of past installations we have done it seems like many people had their own idea of how things should be maintained or replaced. It was like some operators went out of their way to replace any part that broke with something different.

At one location a hose with swivel ends and a protective spiral wrap was replaced with a hose that had fixed ends and no protective wrap. Some might think, a hose is a hose. While that might be in some cases, in this application the hose needed to "roll" in the energy chain in which it was installed. This caused the energy chain to break, which then broke some lights and just made a mess inside the machine.

At another location, the same incorrect hose was installed, and it twisted the energy chain so much that it would almost fall out of the trough it rides in. The worst part in both these instances was the last thing we looked at — the hose. We spent more time trying to figure out why this is happening and how to fix it, but not realizing that the hose had been replaced with something not intended for that application. It is one thing to do what you must do to keep a machine running; it is another to not consider the consequences of those repairs.

At another location, we went to fix what we thought

would be a typical motor and gearbox replacement. Once on site it was evident that the motor and gearbox did need replacing, but it was not until after the new parts were installed that we realized that the building settling was causing the issues. This equipment is wall mounted and the construction used to change this self-serve bay into an automatic was not in full compliance with typical building norms. After 10 years in service the building decided it needed a rest and started leaning inward. We were able to space out the part of the rail system that was leaning and recommended the operator fix the wall. Days went by with no issues and then we received a call that the machine was stalling in a different part of the bay. When asking if the wall was fixed all the operator could think was that it must be a faulty motor or gearbox because they were getting the same fault. After days and days of going back and forth on whether it was the building or the equipment the operator finally decided to measure the rails and found that another part of the wall was moving now that the first part was fixed. This went on for a month until the wall was fixed. This is one of those buildings that is on its fourth set of equipment and the operator cannot imagine any problem being something besides an equipment issue. They just kept on insisting it was the "same fault" only in a different position in the bay, so it had to be an equipment issue.

What we do as carwash installers/technicians is nothing noble or life changing for society but, as with most trades, it is for the most part an honest living. As with the equipment we install and then replace, the same can be said for some of the manufacturers, owners, operators, technicians, or site attendants that we have worked with over the years. Some are still in the same position doing the same job while others have climbed that mountain and are at the top of the hill in our industry. What we do is so basic. Wash a vehicle. What could be so hard about that?

I would like to thank all of those who I have had the pleasure to work with over the years and wish all of you continued success in this little industry that has been our calling. **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 gary@centerlinecarwash.com



Gary Sokoloski



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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Greetings carwashers in the Commonwealth and beyond. Truly, we are all in awe-some times to be in the carwash business, especially here in Pennsylvania. Many of the "big brands" have found Pennsylvania to be "ripe for the picking" for developing new locations, as each expands their retail footprint. Not to overshadow the "tried and true" Pennsylvania IBA/SS and Full-Service/Express operators who have been here for years, and each preparing for a successful winter season of carwashing.

The Carwash Association of Pennsylvania (CAP) is strong! As witnessed through the attendance and engagement at our recent events:

- CAP Baseball Outing, August 2023. A nice evening game, taking in a home game of the Harrisburg Senators.
- CAP Annual Dinner, September 2023. Recognizing "Salute to Service" and bringing a focus on military and Veterans in the workplace. That event featured Guest Speaker, Ret. Col. Mark Ferrero and Keynote speaker, Mark Curtis, Splash Car Wash/Grace for Vets. Also at that meeting we presented the PA Carwasher of the Year Award 2023 to Scott Soisson of Sheetz, Inc. for his personal and professional dedication to Veterans, as well as his involvement with Grace for Vets.

This event also included Proclamations issued from Governor Josh Shapiro to Mark Curtis and Scott Soisson for continued carwash industry professionalism and dedication to Veteran Services.

- CAP Golf Outing, September 2023. On the heels of our dinner we enjoyed a full day of many teams with great weather enjoying swinging the sticks together.

CAP continues to be supportive to its members and all PA operators. We look forward to a great 2024 and the opportunities to bring fresh benefits to all.



Dave Edwards, CAP President



The Carwash Association of Pennsylvania (CAP) held its annual Picnic & Golf Outing at the Cumberland Golf Club in Carlisle, PA, on September 14. Pictured is the winning team of Mike Burke III, Tom Burke, Keith Lutz, Mike Burke II and Rick Bentley.



CAP President Dave Edwards and 2023 PA Carwasher of the Year recipient Scott Soisson of Sheetz, Inc.

CAP Dinner Honors Veterans and Their Supporters

The Car Wash Association of Pennsylvania (CAP) met on September 13 at the AACA Museum in Hershey, PA, for an event featuring retired Col. Mark Ferraro and Mark Curtis of Splash Car Wash. Each provided the opportunities and benefits of looking to and hiring Veterans. More than 50 attended the event.

Curtis received a Proclamation from the PA Governor's Office and PA Governor Josh Shapiro, for the awareness Grace for Vets provides to recognize Veteran's on Veterans Day with a free wash. Grace for Vets was founded by former Pennsylvania operator Mike Mountz of Cloister Car Wash.

Scott Soisson, the 2023 PA Car Washer of the Year recipient, also received a Proclamation from the Governor's office as well, for his military service and then in his civilian career as category manager, car wash sites, for Sheetz. The company provides



Pictured are CAP President Dave Edwards, Splash's Mark Curtis, Retired Col. Mark Ferraro and Sheetz's Scott Soisson, CAP Car Washer of the Year recipient.

employment opportunities to Veterans as well as more than 20,000 free washes on Veterans Day throughout its nearly 200 wash sites.

It should also be noted that Sheetz provides more than 30,000 meals to Veterans on Veterans Day throughout the nearly 200 Sheetz locations annually. According to CAP President Dave Edwards, Soisson is extremely deserving of the Car Washer of the Year honor. "Scott was instrumental in encouraging management at Sheetz to support Grace for Vets," he said. "For this effort Scott is a worthy recipient of the award, recognizing his courage

to think out of the box, efforts and ingenuity to grow ideas and events beyond the carwash bay." **NC**

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Mark Curtis	*Deceased

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

On behalf of the entire Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC) board, I'd like to thank everyone involved in making the 2023 NRCC an outstanding — and record breaking — event. We had our highest operator attendance at 1145 and coupled with 776 vendor bodies we topped out at 1921 — an all-time record.

And our show floor didn't disappoint either. We had our greatest number of booths with 386. As a result, we have contracted to expand our footprint in 2024 and at the close of the show this year we had sold nearly three-quarters of the space already! If you're a vendor contemplating exhibiting, secure your space today!

But it wasn't just the board and vendors who made the show a huge success, it was the participation from our operators and their staff. In addition to record attendance, there was record enthusiasm and record fun at the 2023 NRCC. From the expanded Simoniz Celebration at the Hard Rock, Monday night with 535 attendees, to our Welcome Reception after the first day of the show sponsored by ICS that included two major raffles, fun and the opportunity to mix, mingle and make new friends the opportunities to grow were endless.

And what about our education and Keynote Speaker Mark Denton, the sailor with the drive and determination to sail around the world and motivate his team to tackle some of the most challenging waters and situations out there? He was a true inspiration and his message can easily be integrated into your daily wash operations — work hard, be flexible and willing to make changes and treat your employees/team like family.

The awards program this year was also elevated. In addition to presenting several Emerging Leader awards to a strong pool of recipients, we were able to honor long-time operator Larry Fiano from Connecticut and present not one but two Hall of Fame Awards. Bill Gorra and Al West from Simoniz were those recipients and just so deserving for their dedication to the industry and the NRCC. They are both always there for us and we are so appreciative. And although Bill was not able to attend due the very recent passing of his wife, Christine, he was there in spirit and we thank him and the entire team at Simoniz.

I also want to acknowledge the wash owners who brought their entire teams, or at least as many as they could, to the show. That demonstrates to the board that we are doing a good job, but we will always strive to improve upon each show to give attendees the most bang for their buck and to excite them to attend year after year. We will continue to raise the bar!

This year's takeaways were huge. Please mark your calendar for the 2024 NRCC, October 7-9, again at the Atlantic City Convention Center. And if you are not involved in your state or regional association, today is a great day to start. You won't regret it and you will grow from your participation in it!



Bob J. Rossini

Bob Rossini, CCA President

The CCA,
as the 2023
host association,
would like to thank
Bill Gorra, Al West and
the entire Simoniz Team
for putting on
an outstanding
“Celebration” on the
first night of the NRCC!



C.A.R. Products’ Bob Goldenberg Passes

Robert “Bob” Goldenberg, 65, passed away on July 27 after a brave battle with pancreatic cancer. Bob was born on May 20, 1958, to Ruth (Josephs) and Harry Goldenberg in Holyoke, MA. He graduated from Holyoke High in 1976 and went on to work for his father’s distribution business, C.A.R. Products. After his father’s retirement, Bob built the company into a local and international business where he spent his career until he sold the business in 2015 to Blendco Systems, a part of DuBois Chemicals’ Transportation Division.

In 2000, Bob married Peach (Lewis) and had one daughter Carly Goldenberg, who is a freshman at the University of Arizona. He was a loving and devoted father, husband and employer. He enjoyed riding in his ’67 GTO, boating and playing with his dogs, Marco &



Bob Goldenberg

Polo, as well as taking beach vacations with his family.

In addition to being survived by his wife and daughter, he leaves behind a brother, Steve, nephew Will Goldenberg and his family, cousins Elaine Barr and Ann Krone, and many friends and colleagues.

Bob was a long-time supporter of the CCA and its mission. **NC**

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the Wounded Warrior Project, woundedwarriorproject.org

“Bob was the guy you wanted to have a beer with, or sell you chemicals for your car-wash. There was no difference. He was a genuine person all around. I worked for him on and off since 1992 and I never met a competitor who had a bad word to say about him. We lost a great one.”

- John Millerick, DuBois Chemicals

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Rossini Accepts Most Distinguished Person Award On Behalf of Larry Fiano

Connecticut Carwash Association (CCA) President and 2023 Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC) Chairman Bob Rossini accepted the 2023 Most Distinguished Person Award on long-time Connecticut operator Larry Fiano's behalf. Fiano, who has been an

ardent supporter of the CCA and operator of Fiano's E-Z Coin-Op Carwash in Bolton, CT, was unable to attend the event on October 3 at the Atlantic City Convention Center.

Fiano did send a heartfelt letter to the CCA board in thanks for the honor.

To the CCA Board,

I, Lawrence (Larry) F. Fiano, am the originator and present owner of Fiano's E-Z Coin-Op Carwash at 266 Boston Turnpike in Bolton, CT. I am the second of seven sons of Antonio and Elizabeth Fiano who immigrated from Italy to the US shortly after the end of World War I.

I was born October 7, 1925, on a 126-acre farm located on Birch Mountain Road in Bolton. The farm was located on a dirt road, with no electricity and a half mile from a one-room schoolhouse.

I graduated from Manchester High School in 1943.

Vegetable farming for a profit was getting very difficult. In 1953, we quit farming and purchased a large restaurant across the street from the present carwash site and it became Fiano's Restaurant. Bartending kept me busy from 6pm to 1am. In 1954, I became a realtor. In 1960, I purchased 240 Boston Turnpike, which gave me a presence on a highway and the ability to place a 4' x 8' sales office sign on the property. I expanded into the creation of subdivisions and building of custom homes and multi-family dwellings. In 1965, I purchased the adjacent 10-acre property and moved my office into the home located next to the street.

In 1966, I sold the office site to Sun Oil Company, and moved the office to the rear of the present carwash location. In 1967, with the necessary approvals I built the self-serve carwash into the right-hand corner of my newly acquired parcel. The remainder of the parcel today, Mar-Lea Golf, is a very attractive miniature golf and driving range named after my youngest son Mark and my youngest daughter Leah.

Initially, the carwash utility room housed the simplest of equipment and we charged a quarter for five minutes of carwashing time. I am not mechanically inclined, but with the help of others and more recently Jeff and Allison Shackett of Car Wash Systems, LLC, I was able to update and maintain the ever-changing equipment as it came on the market. Simoniz (originally Syndet), operated by the George and Jenny Gorra family, and located diagonally across the street from us, has been our supplier of carwash products for 50-plus years.

Over the last 56 years, we've developed and maintained many customers and friendships. Despite my interest in my other properties, I still have a soft spot for my carwash.

I feel very humbled and thankful for the recognition by the Connecticut Carwash Association. It's been a family effort, which has a value to me. I'm very thankful for the assistance of my family over the years helping to maintain the carwash.

Again, many thanks to the CCA for this recognition.

Larry Fiano



Bob Rossini

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*deceased

CWONJ.COM

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

This past October the Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC) hosted its 33rd convention at the Atlantic City Convention Center. This was the largest show to date with 386 vendors and more than 1900 people on the show floor. There was a variety of educational seminars, a virtual carwash tour with five carwashes from Massachusetts, Colorado, Maryland and Missouri featured, in addition to lots of new vendors and innovations.

There were also several after-show parties, open to everyone who attended. Simoniz hosted their annual "Simoniz Celebration" which never disappoints on Monday night at the Hard Rock. The NRCC hosted its annual Welcome Reception sponsored by ICS at the convention center immediately after the show on Tuesday that included some significant raffle prizes.

With more than 80 percent of the booths already sold for the 2024 event, it looks like we're in for another record-breaking show. The 34th NRCC is slated for October 7-9 at the Atlantic City Convention Center. The Hard Rock Hotel & Casino is the host hotel. Make sure to visit nrccshow.com in the coming months for registration and seminar information. The Car Wash Operators of New Jersey (CWONJ) is the host association for the 2024 show so make sure you register and attend the event in support of your association.



Dino Nicoletta, CWONJ President

Look for information on the CWONJ Children's Miracle Network 2nd Annual Carwash Weekend Fundraiser Spring 2024

**The 2023 event raised nearly \$13,000 for the
Children's Miracle Network Hospitals!**

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Visit cwonj.com for updates and to sign up soon!

CWONJ Raises Nearly \$13,000 for Children's Miracle Network

The Car Wash Operators of New Jersey (CWONJ) teamed up with the Children's Miracle Network (CMN) Hospitals, September 1-4, to raise money and spread awareness. "This is the first year we have worked with CMN, but our relationship with The Children's Specialized Hospital goes back many years," said Doug Karvelas, Event Chairman. "I think this is a great fit and we were able to raise \$12,766 for CMN."



In fact, the relationship began 18 years ago and to date the CWONJ has raised more than \$100,000 for the hospital (not including the weekend event), which is part of CMN. "We are so grateful and excited about working with the association and putting together a weekend-long event," said Jill Butterfield, Program Officer for CMN Hospitals. "It is our hope that the event grows year over year."

The association will be moving ahead with plans to do a second fundraiser for CMN later this winter. Check cwonj.com for updates.

NC

To learn more about Children's Specialized Hospital and Children's Miracle Network visit childrens-specialized.org and childrensmiraclenetworkhospitals.org



Broad Street Car Wash in Hamilton was a participant in the first weekend carwash fundraiser to benefit the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals over the Labor Day Weekend. Owner Doug Karvelas was the event chairman.

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Post Election, “Essential” Legislation Update

By Sam Weinstein

Following the November General Election, the New Jersey Legislature is entering its Lame Duck Session, which is the time just before the end of the legislative session. The session will end on January 8, 2024, and committees returned to Trenton for regular business beginning on November 20.

The Car Wash Operators of New Jersey’s (CWONJ) legislation, A3703 (Dunn/Eulner), which permits carwash businesses to operate during state of emergency or public health emergencies, has been referred to the Assembly Commerce and Economic Development Committee and is awaiting to be scheduled for consideration. Princeton Public Affairs Group (PPAG), along with association leadership, is working to secure the measure’s passage prior to the end of the legislative session.

Election Updates

The composition in the New Jersey Senate remains 25-15 with Democrats and Republicans both flipping one seat; Democrats gained five seats in the Assembly giving them a 51-29 advantage over their Republican counterparts.

This year’s top-of-the-ticket featured New Jersey’s 40 State Senate and Assembly races. As of this writing, the Democrats have successfully retained control of the New Jersey Senate. Both Democrats and Republicans managed to flip one seat each in the Senate, resulting in the Democrats maintaining their majority with a 25-15 hold over the Senate. In the New Jersey Assembly, it appears that Democrats were able to pick up 5 seats and will continue to control the Assembly by a margin of 51-29.

Legislative District 3

Former Assemblyman John Burzichelli achieved a victory by unseating the incumbent Republican Senator Ed Durr in a contest for the State Senate seat. This winning momentum extended to Democratic Assembly candidates, as Heather Simmons and Dave Bailey secured wins against Republican incumbent Assemblywoman Bethanne McCarthy Patrick and Republican Assembly candidate Thomas Tedesco Jr.

In 2021, following the surprise defeat of Senate President Steven Sweeney (D-3), Assemblyman John Burzichelli (D-3), and Assemblyman Adam Taliaferro (D-3), the 3rd legislative district became a battleground for both parties. The district saw a total of more than \$2 million in combined campaign spending, with Democratic candidates outspending their Republican counterparts by approximately \$1 million. Major issues leading up to the election included energy policy and parental rights. In the 3rd district, 36 percent of registered voters were unaffiliated, 35 percent were Democrats, and 29 percent were Republicans. In this year’s election, Democrats made a significant comeback in the 3rd district, successfully reclaiming the seats they had lost in the 2021 election.

Legislative District 4

Assemblyman Paul Moriarty defeated Republican candidate Christopher Del Borrello for the State Senate seat. Along with

Assemblyman Paul Moriarty, his slate of Dan Hutchison, and Cody Miller were also victorious against Republican Assembly candidates Amanda Esposito and Matthew Walker.

In March 2023, Democratic Senator Fred Madden announced his retirement after serving for 22 years, leaving an open Senate seat. This year’s election marked the first legislative election under the new redistricting map approved in 2022. The additions to the 4th legislative district included Atlantic County towns such as Buena, Buena Vista, and Franklin Township, which historically favored Republican candidates. Despite the inclusion of Republican-leaning towns, the 4th district still leans Democratic, with Democrats comprising 40 percent of registered voters and holding a partisan advantage of nearly 27,000. Despite the redistricting, Democrats successfully retained the legislative seats in the 4th district.

Legislative District 8

Republican Senate candidate Latham Tiver secured a win surpassing his Democratic rival, Gaye Burton, in a contested Senate race. This momentum extended to the Republican Assembly slate, with incumbent Assemblymen Michael Torriasi and Brandon Umba clinching victories over the Democratic Assembly candidates Andrea Katz and Anthony Angelozzi.

In January 2023, Republican Senator Jean Stanfield announced she would not seek re-election. In 2021, Senator Jean Stanfield defeated Democratic Senator Dawn Addiego by only 2 percent. The 8th district leans Republican, and the impact of the 2022 redistricting process further solidified this tendency by incorporating the Republican-leaning towns of Mullica, Washington and Bass River. Republicans also received a boost from redistricting due to the removal of Democratic-leaning parts of Camden County. As the Democratic election campaign progressed, in August 2023, the Democratic Party encountered an unexpected twist with Democratic Senate candidate, Heather Cooper, withdrawing from the race. In response, the county committee members deliberated and selected former Pemberton Councilwoman Gaye Burton as the new Democratic Senate candidate. Although the 8th legislative district leans Republican, unaffiliated voters account for approximately 36 percent of registered voters, making them the largest portion of the district’s voters.

Legislative District 11

Incumbent Senator Vin Gopal emerged victorious against Republican candidate Stephen Dnistrian in a battle for the State Senate seat. Senator Gopal’s winning streak extended to his slate, where Margie Donlon and Luanne Peterpaul also beat incumbent Assemblywomen Marilyn Piperno and Kim Eulner.

The 11th legislative district was the most competitive and expensive race in the state. It was the only split district, with a Democrat in the Senate and Republicans in the Assembly. In 2021, Assemblywoman Kim Eulner and Assemblywoman Marilyn Piperno unseated the two incumbent Democratic



candidates. In 2021, Senator Vin Gopal defeated his Republican challenger by 4 percent. The closely contested 2021 elections fueled anticipation surrounding this year's election. The Democratic candidates outspent the Republican candidates by a factor of six to one. Voter registration favored Democrats, with 34 percent compared to 26 percent. Despite the Democrats' financial advantage, Republicans targeted the Democratic candidates on school funding, property taxes, parental rights, whale deaths, and offshore wind. Despite Senator Vin Gopal voting against a bill providing tax incentives to Orsted's offshore wind project, the news of Orsted ceasing operations in New Jersey provided Republicans with optimism heading into election day. However, this Republican momentum failed to materialize in the election results, with Senator Gopal easily winning re-election.

Legislative District 12

Republican Senate candidate Owen Henry emerged victorious in a contest against his Democratic counterpart, Brandon Rose. The incumbent Assemblymen, Robert Clifton and Alexander Sauickie, secured victories over the Democratic Assembly candidates, Paul Sarti and Raya Arbiol.

The 12th legislative district has predominantly been a Republican stronghold since the 1980s, with Republicans making up 32 percent of registered voters compared to 27 percent registered Democrats. Senator Sam Thompson announced his retirement after switching to the Democratic Party earlier in the year, a move prompted by the Republican Party's decision not to renominate him for re-election. In this year's election, the Republicans successfully reclaimed the 12th legislative Senate seat with relative ease.

Legislative District 16

Incumbent Democratic Senator Andrew Zwicker defeated former Republican Congressman Michael Pappas for the State Senate seat. The slate of incumbent Assemblyman Roy Freiman and Democratic Assembly candidate Michelle Drulis prevailed against Republican candidates Ross Traphagen and Grace Zhang.

The 16th legislative district has been represented by three Democrats since 2021, after Senator Kip Bateman (R-16) retired and Senator Andrew Zwicker (D-16) filled the Senate seat. Senator Andrew Zwicker was challenged by former U.S. Representative Michael Pappas. In 2021, Senator Zwicker defeated former U.S. Representative Michael Pappas by 6 percent. In January 2023, Assemblywoman Sadaf Jaffer announced she would not run for re-election after just one term in the Assembly. Assembly Democratic candidate Michelle Drulis aimed to hold the Assembly seat for the Democrats. Key issues in the 16th legislative district included parental rights, school funding, and property taxes. As in other races in the state, the Democratic candidates had the fundraising advantage, outspending Republicans

by about 75 percent. Registered Democrats also outnumbered registered Republicans, 36 percent to 26 percent. In this year's election, Democrats capitalized on their fundraising advantage, successfully retaining control of all seats in the 16th district.

Legislative District 30

Incumbent Republican Senator Robert Singer emerged victorious against the Democratic Senate candidate Stephen Dobbins. Republican incumbent Assemblyman Sean Kean secured a win against the Democratic Assembly candidate Salvatore Frascino. However, in a major upset, Democratic Assembly candidate Avi Schnall defeated incumbent Assemblyman Ned Thomson.

The 30th legislative district has been a Republican stronghold since the early 1990s. The district heavily leans Republican, with Republicans accounting for 39 percent of registered voters, while Democrats constitute just 19 percent. Republican incumbent Senator Robert Singer has held his seat for 30 years. Heading into the election, Republicans controlled all legislative seats in the 30th district. In this year's election, even in the face of the district's long-standing Republican dominance, Democratic Assembly candidate Avi Schnall achieved an impressive feat by securing the Assembly seat. Schnall's victory carries immense significance, especially for Lakewood's Orthodox Jewish community, who played a pivotal role in his election.

Legislative District 38

Democratic Senator Joseph Lagana secured a win over Republican Senate candidate Micheline Attieh. Lagana, joined by Assemblywoman Lisa Swain and Assemblyman Chris Tully, both incumbents, continued the Democratic success as they prevailed over Republican Assembly candidates Gail Horton and Barry Wilkes.

The 38th legislative district leans Democratic, with Democrats comprising 38 percent of registered voters compared to 22 percent for Republicans, giving Democrats a nearly 24,000 partisan advantage. Democrats have held all seats in the district since 2004. Despite the Democratic advantage, Republicans campaigned strongly to flip the district and raised more money than a typical GOP candidate. Although Democrats have maintained the 38th district since 2004, in 2021, Assemblyman Chris Tully won by only 2.93 percent. Key issues in this race included property taxes, reproductive rights, clean energy, and parental rights. Despite the rigorous campaign efforts by the Republicans in this year's election, Democrats managed to maintain control of both the Senate and Assembly seats in the 38th district.

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



Sam Weinstein

ICA President Justin Alford Speaks at CWONJ Fall Meeting

The Car Wash Operators of New Jersey's (CWONJ) Fall Membership Meeting, November 8, at Suburban Golf Club here featured International Carwash Association (ICA) President and Benny's Car Wash co-owner Justin Alford. Alford, a third generation carwasher who hails from Baton Rouge, LA, made the trip with his wife Juliet and daughter Helen, a fourth generation carwasher, to speak at the annual meeting attended

by 60. "It was an honor to have Justin come to New Jersey and share his family's incredible and successful carwashing story," said CWONJ President Dino Nicoletta.

Prior to the annual membership meeting Alford got the opportunity to visit some washes in the state. "What a great day," said Alford. "We were able to visit so many really interesting washes and spend time with some of my carwash friends



Benny's Justin Alford shared the history of his family's washes and educated attendees on Baton Rouge.



Benny's Justin Alford shared his company's work with Grace for Vets in an informative slide show.



PPAG Lobbyist Sam Weinstein updated attendees on the legislative efforts being taken to deem carwashes "essential" businesses in New Jersey.



Dubois Chemicals' Eric Wachtel, NCS' George Ribeiro and Shammy Shine's Tom Halford.



Foam & Wash's Gary Baright, TEAM Car Wash's James Burkhardt and Hoffman Car Wash's Tom Hoffman, Jr. partake in a succulent buffet after hors d'oeuvres sponsored by ICS. Baright and Hoffman are wearing mardi gras beads provided by guest speaker Justin Alford displaying his wash's mascot.



old and new,” he said. “What a great group of operators.”

Alford, whose grandfather started in the industry in 1951, owns nine Benny’s car washes in the Baton Rouge, LA, market with his father Ben and brother Jason. They run successful conveyor locations with full service, express, oil changes, gas, detail and c-stores. In fact, Benny’s and Innovative Control Systems (ICS), Bethlehem, PA, the event’s hors d’oeuvre sponsor, were instrumental in launching the first express carwash in the US in 2001.

Alford shared his company’s growth and evolution and educated the group on all things Baton Rouge complete with Mardi Gras beads that featured the wash’s mascot. “What a great meeting,” added Nicoletta. “Justin is a true professional and a really outstanding guy.”

Also during the meeting Princeton Public Affairs Group (PPAG) lobbyist Sam Weinstein updated attendees on the two-year effort to push legislation through the state that would deem carwashes “essential” if COVID or another similar epidemic shuts down businesses. “Sam and the team at PPAG are pushing hard on our behalf and with a little more effort we hope to get to the finish line,” said Nicoletta.

NC

To learn more about the CWONJ visit cwonj.com

Continue for more photos ...



Prior to the annual membership meeting, guest speaker Justin Alford was able to tour some area washes including several TEAM sites as well as Valet Auto Wash in Piscataway. (L to R: Dino Nicoletta, Jim Burkhardt, Tom Fuller, Justin Alford, Doug Kleeschulte, Doug Karvelas, Gary Baright and Tom Hoffman, Jr.)



A packed mixer before dinner was sponsored by ICS.



Approximately 60 attended the November Membership Meeting at Suburban Golf Club in Union.

CWONJ Fall Meeting ... continued



These TEAM Car Wash employees strike a happy pose prior to the dinner.



Sparkle Car Wash's Kevin Detrick and ICS' Scott Friedman, James LaBar and Brian Bath.



PPAG Lobbyist Sam Weinstein, Premier's Dan Saidel, Asbury Circle's Dino Nicoletta and Broad Street's Doug Karvelas.



Panarami's Leo Teixeira, Spark's Kyle VanDecker, ScrubaDub Express' Doug Kleeschulte and The Leanclean, LLC's Dennis Carter.



Broad Street's Doug Karvelas, Helen, Justin and Juliet Alford and CWONJ President Dino Nicoletta.



Tom Fuller, left, and his "team" from TEAM Car Wash.

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Suburban Golf Club in Union was established in 1896 and was designed by famed architect A.W. Tinninghast. It's present 18 hole course layout was designed in 1922 and is a private course.



CWONJ's Donates More Than \$100,000 in 18-Year Effort for Children's Specialized Hospital

The Car Wash Operators of New Jersey (CWONJ) were able to get in nine holes before Mother Nature had other plans, but more importantly the association was able to surpass \$100,000 in donations over the last 18 years to The Children's Specialized Hospital at its 21st Annual Golf Outing at Suburban Golf Club in Union. The event has been raising money for the hospital, the country's largest pediatric rehabilitation facility, for nearly two decades. And in doing so has raised \$97,000 after this event, and an additional \$12,766 at its recent Carwash Weekend, held over the Labor Day holiday.

"It's amazing what the hospital does for children across the country and it's also amazing how supportive and generous our vendor and operator members have been the last 21 years," said Dino Nicoletta, CWONJ President. "We all look forward to getting together and giving back to this amazing hospital. This year's event was exceptional despite the rain, thunder and yes, lightening! Everyone seemed to have a great time and were happy to support the hospital and its mission."



New Format a Hit

The event, which took a break in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19 concerns, attracted nearly 70 golfers. The new timeframe, introduced last year, follows an earlier start time and more relaxed format. "We decided to begin a little earlier and end a little earlier with a

CWONJ Past President Doug Rieck helped out at the Beat the Pro hole.

more relaxed format last year and everyone really seemed to like it," said Nicoletta. "Having a late lunch barbecue, around 2:30, our traditional raffle and prizes and then our brief updates really seems to work out well for everyone."

Children's President Memoli

Nicoletta then introduced Children's Specialized Hospital President Alissa Memoli who updated the group on the great work of the hospital and thanked the association for its unyielding support and introduction of the first Carwash Weekend, which raised an additional \$12,000 for hospitals in the Children's Miracle Network. Nicoletta presented her with a check for \$7,000 from the outing.

President Nicoletta then thanked and acknowledged the hard work and dedication of the club's Pro, Mark McCormick, and his wife Linda Ann, for their tireless work on the outing. Pro McCormick plays a Beat the Pro hole annually to help raise money for the hospital. He and his wife received a gift certificate as a small "thank you" on behalf of the board and association.

He then ran a brief business meeting, presented the winning foursome from Team Broad Street Car Wash led by CWONJ Past President Doug Karvelas with their pro shop gift certificates, pulled the winning 50:50 raffle ticket, won by Jerry Herrington of Swell Wash, and handed the microphone off to Mike Prudente, CWONJ Past President and Treasurer, who got a bid of \$500 for a foursome at the course from Team Proland Management's Ray Kenwell. Second



Children's Specialized Hospital President, Alissa Memoli, updates attendees on the great and important work of the hospital.



Danielle Becker of TEAM Car Wash won a \$60 gift card to the Pro Shop for hitting the Longest Drive on Hole #4.

Place went to Team Proland Management, led by board member and Golf Committee Chairman Scott Freund.

Lou Salerno with Madison Car Wash and Josh Bell with Quickie Car Wash took home Closest to the Pin honors, while Danielle Beck with Team Car Wash hit the Longest Drive.

"A special thanks to all our sponsors but especially to Golf Cart Sponsor Simoniz USA; Golf Ball Sponsor Micrologic; "To Go" Breakfast Sponsors Conte's Consulting and Broad Street Car Wash and our two Lunch Sponsors Micrologic and Team Car Wash. We can't hold this event, or give such a generous gift to the hospital, without their support."

*CWONJ President
Dino Nicoletta.*



Continued ...

Alissa Memoli, Children's Specialized Hospital President, is presented with a check for \$7,000 from the Car Wash Operators of New Jersey by President Dino Nicoletta.

A HUGE "Thank You" to our generous event sponsors!



CWONJ Fall Meeting ... continued

Other sponsors included Hole-In-One Sponsor ICS; Sponsor the Pro Sponsor Vacutech; Longest Drive Sponsors Advantage Contractors and Echelon/WashHounds; Beverage Cart Sponsors Prime Lube and DRB; Closest to the Pin Sponsors Shammy Shine Car Washes, Service Champ, Birchwood Insurance and the *Northeast Carwasher* magazine. Lunch Beverage Cart Sponsors included Service Champ, Old Granddad, King Insurance



CWONJ President Dino Nicoletta presents Broad Street Car Wash's Doug Karvelas with his team's pro shop gift certificates for winning the outing. The winning team consisted of Karvelas, Wayne Irons, Jack Kemler and Mike Giannacio.



George Ribeiro, Greg Hough, Ryan Gallagher and Jerry Herrington take a break for a photo.



Bill Meyer, CWONJ Treasurer Mike Prudente and CWONJ President Dino Nicoletta.



This team looks ready to tear up the course.

Despite the gloomy backdrop Bill, Danielle, Nick and George Becker excelled on the links.



Partners, Circle Petroleum/Reladyne and Andrew Knox & Co.

Tee/Green Sponsors included Echelon/WashHounds, Eastern Funding, Kleen-Rite Corp., Kirikian Industries Inc., Paymedia, LLC, Swiped USA, George Ribeiro/NCS, Tameric Realty and Tri State Car Wash Sales.

The Hole In One car was provided by Ray Catena Auto Group.

NC

Visit cwonj.com for more information on the association.



Service Champ's Avi Ben Hakoon and Mike Donahue.



Dan, Josh and Jeff Bell of Quickie Car Wash.



Ray Kenwell and Golf Chairman Scott Freund.

And the winners are, "Team Broad Street Car Wash!"

Team Shammy Shine strikes a pose in front of the hole they sponsored!





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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

2023 really flew by! It gives me immense pleasure to reflect on the last couple of months and share some of the achievements and experiences we've had within the Mid-Atlantic Carwash Association (MCA). It has been an exciting and productive period for us, full of camaraderie, valuable discussions and significant milestones.

On September 20, we came together as an Association and enjoyed a memorable outing at Nationals Park to watch a Washington Nationals baseball game. It was a fun experience with 30 of our members creating memories and building strong bonds. These moments of unity and shared enthusiasm are vital in our association's growth and continued success.

As we transitioned to the end of September, we gathered for a board meeting to discuss our vision for the future. During this gathering we discussed various initiatives aimed at enhancing our members' experience and expanding our influence as an Association. One of the exciting things we explored was the possibility of hosting future webinars. Topics such as proper carwash maintenance, leveraging social media for business growth, and staying updated with industry trends were discussed. These webinars will serve as invaluable resources to help our members thrive in an ever-evolving industry.

Vibrant NRCC

One of the most significant highlights from 2023 was the 33rd Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC), which took place in early October in Atlantic City. This event was an incredible success, boasting 386 exhibits and surpassing the highest attendee numbers set by the group of five associations. The NRCC welcomed a combined total of 1,921 attendees and exhibitors, a remarkable achievement that reflects the growing influence of the carwash industry in the region.

In 2024, your board aims to create an exciting calendar filled with informative seminars, engaging networking opportunities and memorable outings. The year ahead promises to be a time of growth. Your active participation, ideas, and contributions are what makes these events truly special, and we look forward to sharing them with you.

As we look forward to what the future holds, the MCA is excited to continue growing and evolving, guided by our shared passion and dedication to the carwash industry. Your active participation, ideas and contributions have been instrumental in our accomplishments, and we are grateful for your unwavering support.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any suggestions, ideas or questions. Your input is invaluable to us as we move forward in our mission to elevate the carwash industry in the Mid-Atlantic region. To learn more about MCA and become a member, please visit our website at mca.org or send me an email at execdir@mcacarwash.org.

May your carwash businesses continue to thrive, and may success find each of you.



Tom Morris, MCA President

Carsten Mejbo and Helen Dellheim of Dolly's Car Wash and Ben DuGoff of College Park Car Wash enjoy the September event.



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Greetings and Happy New Year from the New England Carwash Association (NECA). I hope you are having a great winter so far, filled with snowy skies and salty cars. For those who don't know, the winter weather can make for some of the best conditions for getting dirty cars in the Northeast. The cold temperatures and wet environment can be harsh and unforgiving, but the payoff can be equally rewarding. It takes grit, perseverance, and passion to continuously wash cars in the Northeast winter. To quote Fred Grauer from Frederick Jerant's Industry Innovators article in the last issue of Northeast Carwasher, regarding operating a carwash, "You must be passionate, otherwise, it's not going to work."

As NECA President, I am grateful for the opportunity to work with other passionate carwashers and industry suppliers. I would like to thank our outgoing NECA Board Members for their efforts, contributions, and passion to the NECA over the past few years.

First is Derek Mourad of Neponset Circle Car Wash, whose unrelenting support and willingness to help with any task were evident throughout his tenure. Derek was especially helpful with our digital marketing campaign, designed to boost the public perception of the professional car washing industry. The campaign consisted of professionally produced social media advertisements promoting the whole industry, along with available content for our members to market their own businesses.

Second is Mike Snow of Maintenance Tech, who did an incredible job of being active and present at board meetings and events. Mike always had the longest commute, driving from Maine to Massachusetts, where we held most of our meetings. His commitment was unwavering, and his efforts with the 2022 On-the-Road Meeting at Sea Dog Brewing Co. in Portland, ME, were essential to its success. In October, we held our 2023 On-the-Road Meeting at Harpoon Brewery in Windsor, VT. These meetings are simply Networking Events with complimentary food and beverages welcome to anyone in the carwash industry willing to make the drive.

Third is Felix Taranto of Triton Car Care Center, whose talents shined with his help in planning the NECA Charity Golf Outing, especially fundraising for Angel Flight NE, the partnered organization for the event. Angel Flight NE provides free air transportation to life-saving medical care for patients of all ages. Felix's enthusiasm for raising money for this organization was unmatched.

I would like to welcome our incoming NECA Board Members Robert Bibbo of North Andover Car Wash, Joe Campagna of Autowash Maintenance Corp., and Anthony Ciampi of Minit Car Wash. I am looking forward to working with them in accomplishing NECA's mission of promoting the professional carwash industry in New England while providing benefits to help members optimize their businesses.

Our first event of the year is the NECA Winter Meeting: Employee Appreciation Event in January. Back by popular demand, it will be held at Supercharged Entertainment, where guests can race high powered go-karts against other carwashers. You don't want to miss this outstanding event!

I encourage everyone to get involved with their local organization and be an

active participant in their professional community. Please consider joining the NECA if you are not already a member. If you didn't go to the Northeast Regional Carwash Convention in Atlantic City last year, you missed out on a great event; it was a sold-out show and bigger than ever before. My favorite part is always seeing and meeting other carwashers and suppliers, but several aspects from the informational sessions have already worked their way into my day to day. I expect great things from the 2024 NRCC and am already looking forward to attending. The carwash industry contains lots of passionate people and I believe this to be one of its strongest attributes. You must be passionate, otherwise, it's not going to work.



Jeffrey Katseff

Jeffrey Katseff,
NECA President

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Golf and Suds on Tap for Fall Events

The New England Carwash Association (NECA) held two great events this fall! On October 10, the NECA Board traveled to Windsor, VT, for its annual On the Road event at Harpoon

Brewery. Attendees were treated to some delicious food, as well as the brewery's fine craft beer. The event is an opportunity to reach out to members well outside the metro Boston market.

Continued ...

The Mixer was held at the popular Harpoon Brewery Taproom and Beer Garden in Windsor, VT.



NECA Treasurer John Shalbey and President Jeff Katseff mix with attendees.



Chris Vercollone (right) speaks to an attendee at the NECA Vermont Mixer in Windsor.



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Let's Play Golf!

The 20th Annual NECA Golf Outing once again teed off at the magnificent Marlboro Country Club on October 16 with 19 foursomes enjoying perfect fairways and fast greens. Throughout



First Place Winners (L to R): Paul Somero, Dawson Somero, Zackari Traffic and Lars Traffic from Arlen Company.



Second Place Winners (L to R): Allston Car Wash's Mike and Matt Delaney, friend Rob Poutas and Mark Delaney.



Scholarship checks presented to (l-r) Jake Arimento and his dad Jeff Arimento, and Bob Sanft and his son Andrew Sanft. These recipients were profiled in the fall issue of Northeast Carwasher.

the day, golfers tested their skill on the putting green and shooting the golf cannon. A dozen more people joined the golfers for the post-golf reception and dinner during which the association recognized this year's scholarship winners and announced the golf prize winners. As a result of the event and its generous sponsors, a substantial donation will be made to Angel Flight NE and

Continued ...



Third Place Winners (L to R): Chris Vercollone with Brightway Car Wash, Patrick Mossesso with Auto Bright Car Care, Chris Ouimet with Fitzzy's Car and Pet Wash and Ian Walker with Brightway Car Wash.



Team Turnpike Car Wash's Greg Doucette, Bob and Jeff Katseff and Larry Saggese.



Peter Janis and Team Jamaica Plain Car Wash.



Autowash Maintenance's Joe Campagna (left) was a winner of some sports memorabilia at the raffle with NECA President Jeff Katseff.

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Golf and Suds on Tap for Fall Events ... *continued*

a contribution will also support the NECA Scholarship Program.

During the dinner program, Founder and CEO Larry Camerlin explained that Angel Flights NE coordinates more than 3000 flights per year for people who need specialized
Continued ...



Ryan Roberts, Del Hodgkins, Jake Collison and Jon Orenstein.



The smiles on these golfers' faces doesn't reflect on the gloomy sky behind them!

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Everyone needs a little practice, including the players at the NECA's annual outing!



Chris Zona with AutoWash Technologies, Mat Paisner of ScrubaDub, Matt Unger with AutoWash Technologies and Anthony Ciampi with Minit Car Wash.



Robert Benson with Haffners, Barry Smith with Simoniz, Dennis Smith, Barry's brother and Chris Bossa with Simoniz.

Golf and Suds on Tap for Fall Events ... *continued*

care in locations they cannot afford to access on their own. Roughly 50 percent of their patients are children, often suffering from severe burns, cancer or rare diseases. More than 450 volunteer pilots pay for their own fuel and other costs to make these miracles happen. It was clear to all present that the NECA donation this year is nothing short of a lifesaving contribution.

NC

For more visit angelflightne.org



John and Dianne Shalbey, Scott Goodreau and Will Gorra strike a pose.



Felix Taranto and Team Triton.



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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Let's start with a big thank you and congratulations to the Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC) on their biggest and best show to date! The 32nd NRCC had a record number of attendees, exhibitors and featured world-class educational programs. The show started off on a high note with a packed house for the Virtual Carwash Tour where attendees were treated to a "virtual" trip to carwashes from around the country. We were joined by the owners of the locations who shared the story of their washes and some of the things that make them unique.

Directly after the Virtual Tour our friends at Simoniz USA put on a terrific "Celebration" complete with loads of food, drink and music and it was open to all attendees. Thank you, Simoniz, for always supporting the NRCC and for hosting such an exceptional event!

The next day, attendees were given the opportunity to hear from industry experts in our Early Bird session and learn from energetic marketing professionals on how they hit the challenges of marketing their locations in the face of growing competition head on. We also got to learn from Myrrh Consulting's Chris Brown on the Unlimited Program. He was able to share experiences from the many washes he works with to garner better results from this program. He will be returning in 2024 to further expand on that topic.

Finally, International Yacht Captain and Keynote Speaker, Mark Denton, took the group with him around the world recounting the leadership lessons he learned and challenges he faced competing in the world's longest and one of the most dangerous yacht races with an all-amateur crew. His story was inspiring and focused on getting ordinary people to do extraordinary things, a lesson we can all learn from and take home to our washes.

During our preshow interview with Mark, I learned that he had once owned a mobile detailing business and had thoughts of becoming a professional carwasher. He ended up taking a different path that found him dodging icebergs in the Southern Indian Ocean, but that's a story for another article. He and I spent the afternoon wandering the show floor as he commented on the complexity and variety of options available to today's operator. Truth be told, I think there may still be a little soap in his veins from his days washing cars. Then, at the close of Tuesday's show floor hours ICS again sponsored our Welcome Reception. It was packed and open to all attendees and included 'Jersey snacks, drinks and two huge raffles. It was the perfect way to begin to wind down after a full day.

Our first-class educational lineup concluded on Wednesday morning with Arthur Greeno from Chic-fil-A. Greeno shared some behind-the-scenes of what makes them an iconic brand, their "secret sauce" and it has nothing to do with Chikin'. It was truly a world-class event and a special thank you to Suzanne Stansbury, Heather Courtney, the board of the NRCC and this year's host association, The Connecticut Car Wash Association and Chairman Bob Rossini, on once again raising the bar. If you missed this year's show, don't make the same mistake next year!

Legislative Update

New York State continues to impose regulations on small business and the NYSCWA along with our lobbyist Bill Crowell are continually monitoring information coming out of Albany. Recently we signed on to a letter presented to the State by the NYS Business Council

NYSCWA Holds Event At JMA Dome



SYRACUSE, NY, — The New York State Car Wash Association (NYSCWA) held an informal event at the JMA Wireless Dome (formerly The Carrier Dome) on September 23 when the Syracuse Orange took on the Army West Point Black Knights for a noon football game here. The event was sponsored by Simoniz USA and Micrologic.

A pre-game was hosted by K & S Car Wash and catered by Lasca's Restaurant, both of Auburn. "We were happy to help out and provide some great food for those in attendance," said Chris Kubarek, with K & S and an NYSCWA board member. "It was a fun day."

The Orange were victorious beating the Black Knights 29 to 16. Added NYSCWA President Walt Hartl, "Thanks to our sponsors and to those who were able to come out to the game. You've got to love college football!"

NC

Visit nyscwa.com for upcoming events.

regarding the proposed changes to ban natural gas and other fossil fuels in commercial and residential businesses. The letter was sent in response to the proposed changes to what energy sources can be used to heat and power industry and homes in NYS. The regulation is vague in who approves exemptions (along with a limited number of other industries, carwashes were granted the ability to apply for an exemption to the electrification requirement, but just because we were granted the ability to request an exemption doesn't mean all locations will be approved). The Business Council is requesting more clarity in the regulation, especially when it comes to the request and approval process for exemptions. The NYSCWA is keeping a close eye on the issue as it could eventually affect all operators in the state, regardless of whether you are building a new location, upgrading or replacing your heating systems.

Finally, we have been in contact with the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) regarding the possibility of PFOA's or "forever chemicals" in carwashing solutions. The DEC has been investigating the possibility that these chemicals could be found in a variety of industrial solutions, potentially including car-wash solutions. In an effort to work with our partners in the DEC we have offered them space in this trade magazine to inform and educate our industry on the hazards of these chemicals. I would especially like to thank Simoniz USA and NCS (National Car Wash Solutions) for their help and expert guidance and data when dealing with this request. I have long complained that government agencies have weighed our industry down with regulations and rules without consultation, this is an example of how they reached out to us and "asked the experts." I hope this will be a blueprint of how we can work with our partners in state and local governments to come to agreements on the best ways to move forward to achieve their goals and still allow business to operate.

As always, I appreciate the effort of the board and the behind the scenes work that goes into protecting and advancing the carwashing industry in the State of New York.



Walter Hartl, NYSCWA President



Meet NYSCWA Board Member, Insurance Expert Meeghan Sheckler



Meeghan Sheckler

Q: Meeghan, you grew up loving cars. Can you share your background with us?

A: My father owned and operated a mechanic shop for 42 years in Scarborough, ME. I would spend my weekends at the shop with him. This is most definitely where my love of all things car related started.

Q: How, why and when did you enter the insurance field?

A: I actually entered the insurance field "by mistake." My former husband was unexpectedly deployed to the Middle East and I was new to the New Hampshire area. I applied for a Customer Service Representative position and after interviews and testing, it was determined that a commercial lines producer was the best fit for me. My focus when I started was anything auto-garages, dealerships and of course, carwashes.

Q: You have recently started your own program and your own company, Car Wash Solutions. Can you tell us why and how being your own boss will better serve carwash owner/operators?

A: I started Car Wash Solutions to help bring a holistic approach to owner/operators. As we are all aware, we are in a hard insurance market. This means that no matter what the class code, we are seeing the carriers tighten the reigns so to speak. Add that to a semi-poor performing class code of

carwashes and we are dealing with non-renewals and carriers who are no longer entertaining carwashes.

The purpose of Car Wash Solutions, is to help owner/operators understand why they need to be proactive in this market. I enjoy working with seasoned owner/operators as well as new investors and teaching them what they can do to help minimize risk. I am still an independent insurance agent through Wieczorek Insurance which allows me to work with a variety of washes and find them a home depending on size, type of wash, loss history and experience. I think it's important to make sure that not only the owner/operators understand the risks of a carwash, but also the employees.

Q: What is an area in which most operators can improve to better protect their customers and employees from loss and harm on site?

A: Honestly, it is taking a step back from knowing everything about your site. When was the last time that you drove onto your site as if you were the customer? Look around at your property. Is there anything that could pose a liability with your driveway/ parking lot? If you have attendants, are they truly paying attention to guiding you in or are they side-tracked talking, texting, etc. How is the lighting and signage? Just because we have been doing the same thing for 10, 20 or 30 years doesn't mean that we are exempt from taking a step back and having things to work on.

Q: What is the biggest takeaway from being in this industry so far?

A: First, that it is an amazing industry. I have made friends (almost family) with so many owner/operators. The amount of passion I see from so many of you is a breath of fresh air to be honest. The long-term friendships I see when attending road shows or conferences is

amazing. A lot of the owner/operators grew up in this industry and are now second or third generation. There is so much pride! I am honored to be a part of it!

Q: You have been on the New York State Car Wash Association's board of directors for a year now. Why do you take the time out of your very busy schedule to serve as a board member?

A: No one wants to talk about insurance, and I am trying to approach it from a safety perspective. How can I help you to make your carwash safer. I have a lot of carwashes in New York, and it is great that I am able to be part of the board.

Q: What are your thoughts on the value of belonging to a state or regional carwash association?

A: I think that every carwash should be part of their local association and the regional and international associations. Yes, at the end of the day we are all competitors, whether it be at a wash level or vendor level. What I love about associations is that they bring everyone together. I love seeing someone ask for help or a part needed asap and another wash steps up. I think the associations can almost bring a peer/mentor feeling especially for those who did not grow up in the industry.

Q: What is one fun fact our readers don't know about you?

A: I was in law enforcement for 16 years in Maine.

Q: And, as a noted car enthusiast, what would be your dream car and why?

A: Oh boy, this is a hard question. I have so many cars that I like...anything fast and loud. A couple of my clients work on cars that are at Pebble Beach and I have an absolute love for vintage cars. I would have to say if money was no object that it would be a 1962 Ferrari 250 GTO.

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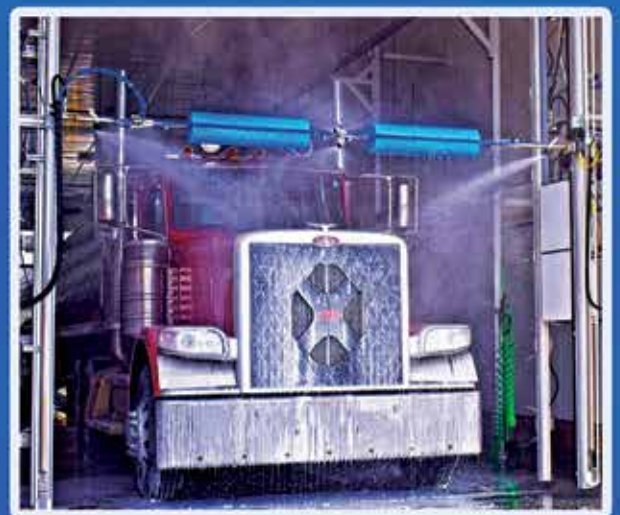
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What's Your Opinion on the Self-Serve Sales Tax Inequity?

By William Y. Crowell, III

Fifteen years ago, Governor David Patterson vetoed legislation, which was introduced at the request of the New York State Car Wash Association (NYSCWA). This legislation would have extended the sales tax exemption for coin operated carwash services to customers using credit or debit cards. Currently customers who use self-service wand or inbay automatic facilities do not pay sales tax where coins, currency or tokens are used. Where a credit or debit card is used to purchase those same carwash services sales tax is payable by the customer. The sponsors of this legislation continued to introduce identical bills for several years after the veto message. Both sponsors are retired from the state legislature and the bill was not reintroduced by another sponsor.

Numerous customers of carwash services do not appreciate the sales tax unbalance between the use of cash or credit

and debit cards for payment. The legislative proposal from the NYSCWA was intended to eliminate this distinction and equalize the cost of the carwash services for all customers. This sales tax differentiation results in taxation based on the method of payment, which is not only inequitable but not based on solid principles of taxation. It is equivalent to the sales tax distinction which used to exist where marshmallows were not taxable and mini marshmallows were taxable. Under the current sales tax law Laundromats are not subject to sales tax irrespective of whether the transaction is cash based or by credit or debit card. From a cost perspective the carwash is benefitted by cash transaction since there are no merchant fees as with credit or debit cards. This bill benefits the customer who is in many cases unknowingly paying more for carwash services based solely on method of payment.

The carwash pays sales taxes on its equipment and wash products used in cleaning and waxing the vehicles. The carwash also pays taxes on the water and other utilities used to operate the business. Charging customers an additional sales tax amounts to tax pyramiding.

Carwash services should be accorded positive treatment based on the affirmative environmental impact such services have on the use of water and its proper disposal and reuse. Tax policy should encourage carwash usage. Carwash services provide a significant environmental contribution when compared to an individual washing their own car based on the amount of water usage and the potential release of water with oil, grease and other pollutants into storm drains.

The Governor's veto in 2008 took the position that the sales tax exemption for coin operated carwash services was provided to avoid the hardship of collecting sales taxes using available coin denominations. It was noted that this would be

particularly difficult where an attendant was not present. It was pointed out that these difficulties for coins do not exist with respect to credit or debit cards. The most significant objection was the loss of revenue estimated at \$4.6 million because of the limited resources as the state was dealing with a large deficit during that time frame.

If you are opposed to including this as a part of the NYSCWA legislative agenda for the upcoming legislative session let the NYSCWA know. Perhaps you are of the opinion that there are other issues which should take precedence. The NYSCWA looks forward to your responses.

Gas Equipment/Infrastructure Ban Suit

A quick separate note that plaintiffs including the propane industry, homebuilders, contractors and unions have brought an action in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of New York for declaratory and injunctive relief arguing that the state's recent gas equipment and infrastructure ban was preempted under the Federal Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA). The EPCA contains standards for a number of appliances including water heater and furnaces. There is an express preemption provision in the EPCA. The case relies on a decision in the federal Ninth Circuit, which concluded that a prohibition by the City of Berkeley on gas piping to new building was preempted by the EPCA. The NYSCWA will keep you informed on the outcome of this lawsuit. **NC**



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William Y. Crowell, III

The Crucial Role of Incident Reporting

By Meeghan Sheckler

Carwashes are an essential part of our most consumers' lives, providing a convenient way to keep vehicles clean and shiny. While they are generally safe environments, accidents and incidents can occur. To ensure the safety of customers, employees and the smooth operation of carwash businesses, incident reporting is of paramount importance. In this article, I will delve into the significance of incident reporting at carwashes and why it should be a top priority.

Ensuring Safety

Safety should be the top priority at any carwash, and incident reporting plays a crucial role in maintaining it. Carwashes can be hazardous environments due to the use of heavy machinery, chemicals and various moving equipment parts. Accidents or malfunctions can lead to injuries or damage, making it essential to promptly report incidents for immediate resolution and prevention.

Preventing Recurrence

Incident reporting is not just about addressing the immediate issue, it is also about preventing similar incidents from happening in the future. By documenting and analyzing incidents, carwash owners and managers can identify root causes and implement necessary changes to prevent recurrence. This proactive approach helps in continuously improving safety measures.

Legal and Insurance Obligations

Carwash businesses have legal and insurance obligations to fulfill. Proper incident reporting helps in meeting these requirements. Failing to report incidents can lead to legal consequences, while accurate reporting can facilitate insurance claims, potentially reducing financial burdens for the business.

Employee Accountability

Incident reporting also holds employees accountable for their actions. When incidents occur, it is crucial to determine whether they resulted from employee negligence, equipment failure or other factors. Employees should be aware that incidents need to be reported, encouraging responsible behavior and adherence to safety protocols.

Customer Trust and Satisfaction

Customers choose carwashes that prioritize safety and professionalism. By reporting and resolving incidents promptly, carwash businesses can maintain the trust and satisfaction of their customers. Transparency in incident reporting shows a commitment to safety and customer well being, which can lead to increased loyalty and repeat business.

Regulatory Compliance

Carwashes are subject to various regulatory requirements that ensure safety standards are met. Incident reporting is often a mandatory part of compliance. Failure to adhere to these regulations can result in fines and penalties. Keeping accurate incident records helps carwashes remain in compliance with the law.

A good reputation is crucial for the success of any business. Incident reporting is closely tied to reputation management.

Promptly addressing and resolving incidents demonstrates responsibility and a commitment to safety, which can enhance the reputation of a carwash and attract more customers.

Incident reporting is an integral part of ensuring the safety and success of carwash businesses. By promptly reporting and addressing incidents, carwash owners and managers can enhance safety, prevent future problems, meet legal and insurance obligations, and maintain the trust of their customers. In a competitive market, a strong reputation built on transparency and safety can make all the difference. Carwashes should prioritize incident reporting as a cornerstone of their operations.

NC

Meeghan Sheckler runs the Car Wash Solutions program based out of Wiczorek Insurance Agency. The program focuses on commercial insurance, safety planning and training, whether you have one site or many. For more information call 207/347-1903 or email Meeghan at meeghan@wizinsurance.com



Meeghan Sheckler



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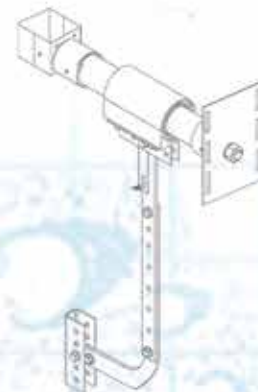
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