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northeast carwasher

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Winter 2026

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northeastcarwasher.com

If you've read many of my editorials over the last 30 years it should be no surprise that I have a huge place in my heart for the little guy. And by "the little guy" I mean the single to four or five location operator who still makes up the majority of our washes despite private equity's insurgence in many markets. I have a deep respect for these hard-working entrepreneurs who have to compete with PE sites, and larger chains, who typically have more resources. But what these smaller location operators do really well is cement themselves into their markets and create a foothold that is hard to break.

One such operator is Sam Cosmano. He is a second generation operator, like many of you, and a shining example of what makes this industry exceptional. Sam has devoted his career to carrying on his father's legacy, and improving upon it, while striving every single day to put out the best product he can for his customers all while being a respected and engaged part of his community.

You can read about Sam and Sammy's Car Wash & Dog Wash Emporium, and its recent equipment upgrades, on page 22. His single site multi-profit center tunnel is in East Aurora, NY, southeast of Buffalo. And even though PE washes are knocking at his back door, and operating a small business in New York State is nothing short of exhausting given the array of ill-advised legislation that can come out of Albany, my money is on Sammy's to continue to be a viable and significant contributor to the community, and the industry, into the next generation of Cosmano's washing cars.

Tell Us About Your Wash

We want to hear about more locations like Sam's, as well as other larger operations making a difference in their communities. Tell us what you are proud of and what you feel sets you apart from the competition. Tell us what obstacles you've overcome and how you've done that. Share your valuable knowledge and experience in the industry with our readers and we'll feature you in a future issue of the magazine. It's thanks to a vast array of colorful, candid and sometimes "quirky" operators and suppliers sharing their journeys that make this magazine truly unique. And, it's our true honor and privilege to pass those stories along to our readers.



Suzanne L. Stansbury, Editor/Publisher

Some other highlights in this issue:

- ✓ Page 26: 35th NRCC recap "Best Education EVER!!!"
- ✓ Page 42: The Marketing Maven's take on AI at the wash
- ✓ Page 93: NYSCWA pending legislation on temperature regulations and a no liability bill!!!

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It's an Honor

On Veterans Day 2025 nearly 5,000 locations from across the US and four countries came out to honor our Veterans and active service members. In total 407,210 free washes were provided totaling 4.6 million washes since the event's inception in 2004. Each year we share photos of the event and thank those operators who participated. If you have a great photo you want to share with us, please email it to info@northeastcarwasher.com and make sure to tell us how the event went and what it means to you!

At the recent Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC), Grace for Vets Founder, Mike Mountz, was honored for his work on the program and his industry innovation.

Grace for Vets is currently shepherded by Mark Curtis and the team at Splash Car Wash.

To participate in GFV 2026 visit graceforvets.com or go to page 63 and scan the QR code and start planning your event today! **NC**



Hoffman Car Wash employees proudly raise the American Flag on Veterans Day.



Karma is Kind

In our travels through the Northeast we stopped at a Go Carwash location on River Road in Marcy, NY, and spied this colorful and kind sign. And, we kind of LOVE it. **NC**

quirky

kwer-ke
adjective

having many quirks: unusual in especially an interesting or appealing way. something or someone that is peculiar, unconventional or eccentric in an unusual and often charming way.

**In tribute to the passing of Diane Keaton who was often referred to as being "quirky."*

WASH VOLUME INDEX

It's a bit of a mixed bag for our comparison from July-September of 2024 to 2025. In fact, our Mid-Atlantic participant called it a "strange quarter" with his August being up by 40 percent, but July and September being about the same. Our New Jersey contributor attributed his downturn to weather and the economy with September being especially poor. Let's hope for a precipitation-filled start to the winter with generous salting :)

Here are the numbers!

Mid-Atlantic +14%

New Jersey -15%

New York +13.2%

NC

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Suzanne,

Wow, 30 years and the clear voice of the Northeast carwash industry!!! The years sure went fast. I've been retired that long from the industry and still enjoy reading your magazine. The fall cover story on issues facing carwashing by industry leaders was most enlightening. I'm not wishing you another 30 years of editing and publishing, but 20 would be good. We are the lucky ones to have your talent and knowledge shared with us.

- Cookie Anthony, former Connecticut operator who now resides in Massachusetts



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MCWW's 2025 Open House/Auction Raises More Than \$200,000 for St. Jude



Motor City Wash Works (MCWW), Detroit, MI, recently held its 2025 Open House and Charity Auction and raised \$203,087 for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, according to a

company press release. To date, since partnering with the life-saving hospital, MCWW has raised more than \$2.1 million.

The 2025 Charity Auction was held at the Saint John's Resort in Plymouth. The event auctions off vacation packages, St. Jude patient handmade artwork and Give-to-Live segments. The purpose of the event is to raise awareness of St. Jude's life-saving mission and to financially contribute to that effort. According to the press release, the success of the Open House and Charity Auction reflects the generosity and unity of the carwash community and MCWW is proud to stand alongside its customers, partners and friends in supporting the lifesaving work of the hospital, said the release.

About St. Jude



St. Jude Children's Research Hospital is a pediatric treatment and research facility in Memphis, TN, focused on treating and curing catastrophic diseases like cancer in children. It was founded in 1962 by entertainer Danny Thomas, and provides treatment at no cost to families, covering all medical care, travel, housing and food. It is the only NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center solely for children and is dedicated to advancing cures and finding new treatments.

To learn more about the mission of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital visit stjude.org and motorcitywashworks.com

Click-to-Cancel Rule Blocked in Court

A U.S. appeals court blocked a rule that would have required businesses to make it as easy to cancel subscriptions and memberships as it is to sign up, stating the agency that created it did not follow protocol, according to a release by Reuters. The Click-to-Cancel rule (also called the FTC's Negative

Option Rule) was shot down on July 8, 2025, just days before it was slated to take effect on July 14.

The U.S. Federal Trade Commission, which passed the rule under former Democratic Chair Lina Khan, failed to conduct a preliminary analysis of the costs and benefits of the rule, according to the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Louis.

It should be noted that Connecticut, Maryland, New York and Virginia, in addition to California, Colorado, Illinois and North Dakota have their own automatic renewal laws on the books that operators need to follow.

For more information visit ftc.gov

J.E. Adams Buys Proto-Vest



J.E. Adams Industries, Ltd., Cedar Rapids, IA, an employee-owned company has acquired Proto-Vest carwash dryer systems, according to a company press release. The acquisition expands the company's portfolio by adding this dryer system to its existing vacuum systems.

Proto-Vest was founded in 1969 by the McElroy family. In 2022 it was acquired by Jeff Reichard and renamed Proto-Vest Dryers, LLC. Proto-Vest built a reputation for innovation and customer satisfaction over its rich history, said the release. Its systems are said to deliver superior vehicle drying, reduced energy consumption and lower noise levels.

The acquisition enables J.E. Adams to re-engineer product lines for enhanced drying efficiency and build quality while incorporating its own best practices associated with all J.E. Adams products.

For more information visit jeadams.com

OhmCo a WI Business Plan Contest Finalist



OhmCo, Neenah, WI, was named a top 25 finalist in the 2025 Wisconsin Governor's Business Plan Contest, hosted by the

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Newsworthy ... *continued*

Wisconsin Technology Council, according to a company press release. The release added that the recognition affirms OhmCo's carwash business plan innovation and unique focus on elevating niche industries through design and strategy.

After submitting a short abstract before advancing through multiple rounds, the company secured one of the 25 business plan spots statewide. And as part of finalist recognition, OhmCo received one year of office space at Ward4, a coworking community in Milwaukee. "It's stunning," said Mel Ohlinger, president & CEO and co-founder with her husband and co-founder Mike. "You walk in, and you're instantly captivated by all the historic elements and industrial architecture. There's a ton of energy, and it's going to be a fun space to meet clients. We only wish it was closer to Neenah."

The competition was coordinated by Julie Johnson of the Wisconsin Technology Council. The co-founders also credited Sean Fitzgerald of the Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce for his early support and encouragement of the team.

For more information visit carwash-marketing.com

Share your company's news with us at info@northeastcarwasher.com

In Memory of James O'Leary



We learned only recently of the passing of James Anthony O'Leary, a long-time carwash consultants/broker who spear-headed Carwash Consulting International in Chatham, NY. He passed on January 15, 2025, at the age of 81. His daughter and business associate, Tracy Marsh, shared the sad news.

James was born in Bandon, County Cork, Ireland. He was a graduate of Germantown High School in Columbia County in upstate New York. He received an Associate Degree in Business from Albany Business College and won many awards and

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accolades during his career at W.T. Grant, Dale Carnegie, *The Poughkeepsie Journal* and for his creative and diligent work as an entrepreneur and Business Broker in the quick lube and carwash industries.

According to his obituary, James was a devout man who put family first and was always willing to lend a helping hand to those in need. He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Lynn (Martin), his children Tracy (Robert) March, Trisha (Brian) First, and Timothy; granddaughters Sage and Samatha, sister Mary Kilmer and many nieces, nephews and extended family members and friends. He is preceded by his parents Edna and Timothy O'Leary and brothers Timothy, Richard, Joseph and Edmund.

Our deepest condolences to his family.

OhmCo Wins Pitch Competition



Mel and Mike Ohlinger, Co-Founders of OhmCo and their daughter Iona.

OhmCo, Neenah, WI, a Wisconsin-based carwash marketing and technology solutions company has been awarded the Grand Prize at the BEAR '25 Pitch Competition, hosted by the Chippewa Economic Development Corporation (CEDC), according to a company press release. The event, often described as a "Shark Tank" for growth-stage businesses, drew together investors, mentors and entrepreneurs from across the state.

The Grand Prize secures OhmCo guaranteed pitch opportunities with major investor groups, reflecting significant interest in the company's growth trajectory. With more than seven years in business and a track record of successful involvement in the carwash industry, OhmCo's leadership team sees this recognition as a launchpad toward expanding its services and staff. "We're a Wisconsin-based business, but the vast majority of our clientele is spread throughout the U.S. and the world," said Mel Ohlinger, founder and CEO of OhmCo. "Getting to participate in events like this, connecting with other small business owners around the US, and building a business with strong investor interest out of Neenah, WI, is extremely exciting and validating. Wisconsin has a rich history in the carwashing world, and we're happy to contribute to it!"

[For more information visit ohmco.co](http://ohmco.co)

Autobell® Awards 2025-26 Scholarships



Autobell®, Charlotte, NC, has awarded educational scholarships to 158 team members across North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Maryland and Delaware for the 2025-26 academic year totaling \$150,000, said a company press release.

Created to recognize the notable achievements of team members while encouraging continued education, the Autobell Car Wash Scholarship Program has provided more than \$2.4 million in funds to more than 2,200 recipients since its inception in 2000. "We're continually inspired by the drive, dedication and community spirit of our young team members. Supporting their academic goals is a privilege, and we're committed to providing a culture that values learning and personal development," said Katie Sens, Autobell Director of Human Resources. "Our flexible scheduling makes Autobell a top choice for high school and college students, enabling them to focus on their education and extracurricular pursuits," she said.

Selection Process

The scholarship selection process reviews students' academic diligence, extracurricular activity, civic engagement, and leadership potential, said the release. In addition to gathering letters of recommendation from teachers, coaches and community leaders, applicants also submit an essay exploring an educational or creative aspect of their Autobell employment experience.

[For more information visit autobell.com](http://autobell.com)

Continued ...

wanna hear a poem?

Roses are red,
Violets are blue,
*You're still using Graphene
in your carwash?*

(It's a work in progress)

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EverWash Appoints New CFO, CCO



EverWash, Philadelphia, PA, a carwash membership platform, has appointed Jim Lutz its Chief Financial Officer. He started advising EverWash part-time in late 2024 and is now doing so in a full-time capacity. He brings extensive financial leadership experience to the team, according to a company press release. He was previously with GeoBlue, Qlik and IBM.

Chris Vilella has been promoted to Chief Commercial Officer (CCO). He was formerly the company's vice president of business development. He joined the company in 2022. He was previously with CEI Group.

Max Pulcini has also been promoted to vice president of marketing. The long-time employee was formerly the company's senior director of marketing and communications. He has been with EverWash since 2017.

"These leadership updates reflect our commitment to building a world-class team to support EverWash's continued momentum," said Scott Caplan, founder and CEO. "Jim, Chris and

Max have each played critical roles in our success, and I'm confident they'll help us drive even greater value for our partners, members and employees moving forward."

For more information visit everwash.com

OPW Names David Malinas New President



OPW, a Dover Company, Hamilton, OH, has named David Malinas as the company's new president, according to a company press release. Malinas brings more than 20 years of operational leadership experience to his new role and most recently served as Chief Operating Officer of Duravant, a global automation equipment company based in Chicago. Prior to that he served as President of the Industrial Process segment at ITT, and held senior

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executive roles at Thermo Fisher Scientific and Danaher Corporation.

No stranger to Dover, Malinas first joined the company in 2019 as Senior Vice President of Operations. During his earlier tenure at Dover he led the development and execution of its manufacturing strategy, with a strong focus on footprint optimization, continuous improvement, supply chain efficiency and quality enhancement. "OPW has always represented innovation, quality and a commitment to operational excellence," said Malinas. "I'm thrilled to rejoin the Dover organization and work alongside our talented OPW team, building on this strong foundation to accelerate growth, drive performance and deliver long-term value for our customers."

Malinas succeeds Kevin Long, who spent 11 years with Dover including serving as President of OPW since 2017.

For more information visit opwglobal.com

Express Wash Concepts Donates \$28,450 During CLE Inspires Week



Express Wash Concepts (EWC), Columbus, OH, has donated \$28,450 to Cleveland Guardians Charities as part

of its 4th Annual CLE Inspires Week. The donation was raised in late August when Clean Express offered a special

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Mexican Patent 3448648

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“Guardians Shine + Ceramic” wash for \$15. For every wash purchased, \$10 was donated to Cleveland Gardens Charities and customers were entered to win exclusive prizes from both Clean Express and the Cleveland Guardians. “From the beginning, we’ve believed our responsibility goes far beyond clean cars,” said John Roush, Founder and CEO of Express Wash Concepts. “Through our EWC Cares program, we’re committed to strengthening the communities where we live and work. Partnering with organizations like Cleveland Guardians Charities allows us to give back in meaningful ways — whether that’s supporting programs for underserved youth, strengthening families, or enhancing local neighborhoods. We’re proud to invest in the people and causes that make our communities stronger.”

Through the EWC Cares program, EWC donates hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to local nonprofits and community initiatives across the regions it serves. From seasonal fundraising efforts and towel exchange programs to grand opening donation drives, EWC empowers employees and customers to make a meaningful impact.

For more information visit expresswashconcepts.com and mob.com/guardians/community/charities

Sonny's Acquires WashMetrix



Sonny's Enterprises, Tamarac, FL, has acquired WashMetrix, a business insight and performance management platform, according to a company press release. The acquisition accelerates the growth of Sonny's Quivio ecosystem and strengthens its complete business management position in the industry.

The platform provides a true P & L view, benchmarks key KPIs by location and integrates POS, HRIS and accounting to go beyond standard reporting — transforming data into actionable business intelligence, said the release.

“This acquisition is an accelerant to our strategy,” said Curt Hutchins, CEO of Sonny's. “WashMetrix enhances Quivio with advanced business intelligence and operational analytics, giving our customer the most complete and accurate view of their performance,” he said.

For more information visit sonnysdirect.com and washmetrix.com

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Express Wash Concepts Expands in Columbus, Detroit

Express Wash Concepts (EWC), Columbus, OH, has added to its ever-growing wash lineup with its 38th Central Ohio Moo Moo Express at 664 East Fifth Avenue here. The new site adds to the company's now 124 express carwashes throughout Detroit, Toledo, Cleveland, Dayton, Cincinnati, Columbus, Hampton Roads and Pittsburgh, according to a company press release.

Looking ahead, EWC plans to open more than 20 additional locations by early 2026. "Our growth has always been purposeful and community driven," said John Roush, Founder and CEO of Express Wash Concepts (EWC) and Moo Moo Express Car Wash. "We remain committed to providing fast, high-quality, environmentally friendly washes in convenient locations throughout Central Ohio, and we're excited to bring our award-winning Moo Moo experience to the East Fifth Avenue neighborhood."

To celebrate the grand opening, Moo Moo Express offered free "Ceramic 4 Ultra" signature washes (\$22 value) for a week. There were also grand opening Wash Smart Unlimited Club offers available and for every club membership purchased during that period, Moo Moo donated \$10 to Student Success Stores, which provide Columbus students in grades 6-12 with free access to essential items helping them start each school day healthy, confident and ready to learn.

New Detroit Site Opens

EWC also added its 10th Detroit metro Clean Express Auto Wash at 25100 Harper Ave. in St. Clair Shores to its lineup. It now operates 142 express wash locations across Detroit, Pittsburgh, Toledo, Cleveland, Dayton, Columbus and Hampton Roads. "With the opening of our 10th Clean Express location, we remain committed to providing fast, high-quality and environmentally friendly washes — conveniently located throughout metro Detroit. We're equally proud to invest in communities like St. Clair Shores through creating local jobs and meaningful nonprofit support via our EWC Cares initiatives."

This site's grand opening also featured a "Ceramic 4 Ultra" promotion and for every new membership purchased during the event, Clean Express donated \$10 to Susie Q's Kids Inc., a local organization which partners with area nonprofits to provide comfort bags to children in need through hospitals, shelters, foster care and grief support agencies.

For more information visit expresswashconcepts.com, studentsuccessstores.com and susieqskids.org



Ribbon cutting at the 38th Central Ohio Moo Moo Express Grand Opening in Columbus.

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- 💧 Touch Free Tunnel ⬆️ 8' Clearance
- 🚗 200+ Cars Per Hour Line Speed

Continued...

Whitney Wilson Joins Qual Chem



Whitney Wilson has joined Qual Chem, Akron, OH, as an Account Coordinator on the company's Operations Team, said a company press release. Wilson brings a wealth of experience in customer service, organization and leadership to the team, in addition to hands-on expertise in the carwash industry, added the release. She is also passionate about building strong relationships and ensuring a smooth, positive experience for both customers and teammates.

According to Sharon Taylor, Director of Operations, "Whitney's willingness to help wherever she is needed and (her) caring nature are both great additions to our team! We are excited to have her on the Qual Chem Team!"

For more information visit qualchem.com

Kleen-Rite to Distribute OPW, Belanger, MCWW OEM Parts



Kleen-Rite Corporation, Columbia, PA, is in partnership with OPW to distribute OEM replacement parts for PDQ and Belanger. It is also now distributing parts for Motor City Wash Works (MCWW), said a company press release.

Kleen-Rite now stocks the most important parts for these systems, allowing customers to take advantage of stress-free buying and quick shipping, said the release. Kleen-Rite will spread inventory to its various distribution centers around the

country to facilitate easy ordering. Gery Frey, Kleen-Rite National Sales Manager, said, "Between Belanger and PDQ, it's a great opportunity for us to grow in the express and inbay markets. It's also an opportunity for customers to be better served because we're going to stock the products and have them readily available," he added.

These partnerships are a win-win for customers as well. "By partnering with them (MCWW), we create the ideal situation for customers," added Keith Lutz, Kleen-Rite Vice President. He added, "We feel it enables OEM brands like Motor City to do what they do best: make quality equipment." And, as Lutz describes it, "Quality products with quality distribution creates an ideal situation for customers."

For more information visit kleen-ritecorp.com, opwglobal.com and motorcitywashworks.com

Nathan Bertsch Joins Hoffman innovateIT



Hoffman innovateIT, Albany, NY, has appointed Nathan Bertsch as its Chief Revenue Officer, according to a company press release. Bertsch brings more than 25 years of hands-on

and executive leadership experience in the carwash industry to the role. Over the course of his career, which began at 15, he has contributed to the growth and success of Mike's Carwash and Tommy Car Wash Systems, where he worked across operations, construction, procurement, sales and consulting. Since 2018 he has served as Partner and Chief Innovation Officer at Express Carwash Equipment, where he helped build their wash portfolio and deliver innovative, customer equipment solutions for operators across the country. "Nathan has built a reputation as one of the industry's most forward-thinking leaders," said Tom Hoffman, Jr., CEO and owner at Hoffman Development and Hoffman innovateIT Car Wash Equipment. "His deep operational knowledge, combined with his ability to develop scalable equipment solutions, makes him the ideal leader to drive growth at Hoffman innovateIT. We're thrilled to welcome him to our team."

In his new role Bertsch will focus on expanding the company's market presence, strengthening distributor partnerships and advancing the company's mission of providing reliable, simple and scalable solutions to carwash operators nationwide. "I've spent my entire career working to help operators run stronger, smarter and more profitable carwashes," said Bertsch. "Hoffman innovateIT shares that vision and I'm excited to join a team that is committed to building equipment solutions by operators for operators. Together, we'll continue raising the bar for what's possible in this industry."

[For more information visit innovateitcarwash.com](http://innovateitcarwash.com)

Amplify Facilitates Sale, Spotless Brands Acquires Philly-Based Pete's Express



Amplify Capital Group, Philadelphia, PA, served as the exclusive financial advisor to Pete's Express Wash, a leading carwash platform in the Philadelphia market, in its sale to Spotless Brands, according to a company press release. Founded more than 40 years ago by Pete Altringer, Pete's sons Drew and Jeff joined the business and over the last two decades have helped lead the company's significant expansion across greater Philadelphia.

After receiving multiple offers from interested buyers, the Altringer's opted to work with Amplify. "Pete, Drew and Jeff built something truly special," said Jeff Pavone, Founding Partner. "Their commitment to quality, community and customer experience resonated strongly with buyers and was a major driver of the outstanding result we achieved."

The family selected the buyer who best aligned with their

values and long-term vision for the brand, according to the release. "We couldn't be more pleased with Amplify's guidance," said Pete Altringer. "They understood our goals from day one, managed a highly competitive process and delivered an exceptional outcome for our family and our employees."

Giving Back

As part of Amplify's commitment to giving back, the company will make a significant donation to St. Jude and Human Trafficking Institute in recognition of this recent closing.

[For more information visit amplifycapgroup.com,](http://amplifycapgroup.com)
stjude.org and traffickinginstitute.org

Washworld Adds a Distributor



Washworld, DePere, WI, has added Washers Solutions LLC, Norton Shores, MI, to its distribution network, according to a company press release. They are teaming up with SPA Equipment to fully represent the state of Michigan.

[For more information visit washworldinc.com](http://washworldinc.com)

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Hard work, dedication and community involvement pay off for WNY wash

David and Goliath Wash Thrives

By Frederick Jerant

Everyone likes to hear David-and-Goliath stories. You know — the kind where one little guy overcomes what seems to be a gigantic obstacle.

That's the story we can tell of Sammy's Car Wash & Dog Wash Emporium, a single-location facility located in East Aurora, New York.

In an industry where multiple locations and deep-pocketed investors are becoming the norm, owner Sam Cosmano hasn't just stayed in business — he's thriving.

"My dad started working part-time at a local wash in the 1950s," Cosmano recalls. "He stuck with the business as it grew, and eventually became a partner, managing eight washes and actually acquiring an ownership stake in two or three of them." But an urge to be independent took over, and "Big Sam" Cosmano persuaded the other partners to sell the East Aurora location to him outright in 1974.

The independent wash, known then as the Aurora Car Wash, became dad's pride and joy. "He really made it his baby," Sam recalls. "At the time, he lived in Amherst — a 21-mile drive away — and ran the operation with only the help of his nephew, Mike Mctigue." Big Sam's motto was a simple one: "Hard work and customer satisfaction."



Sam Cosmano

Just eight years old at the time, Sam frequently hung out at the Aurora Wash, absorbing Dad's techniques and procedures.

Many years later, Sam joined the operation as a part-time employee while in college. After graduating in 1987, he assumed full-time duties.

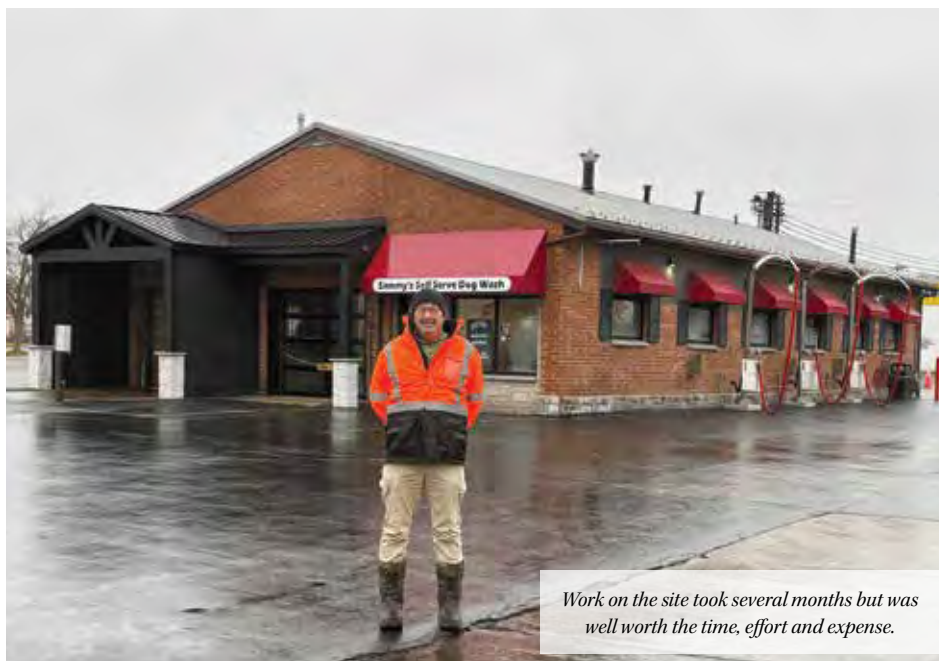
"Part of my on-the-job training was going out with a carwash-building company. During that time, I helped build three facilities in New York state and learned everything about the ways carwashes are designed and operated."

By the mid-'90s, Sam was the manager; he took over the business entirely in 2012 and re-named the operation.

A Two-Pronged Approach

Sammy's offers two ways to get a clean, sparkling car or truck. The tunnel operation uses an all-cloth cleaning system with denim foam side brushes and Armor-All Professional products. These include pH-neutral soaps, conditioners and rinses. Sammy's also combines 90 hp of forced-air blowers (up from 70 hp) with the only Dry N' Shine drying unit in western New York.

For drivers who prefer a more hands-on approach to carwashing, Sammy offers a DIY bay at the north side of the property. Hog's-hair bristled brushes and high-pressure wands (using fresh water only throughout the process) clean



Work on the site took several months but was well worth the time, effort and expense.



each car gently. Customers can also opt for Armor-All Clear Coat Protectant.

“We also offer a ‘detail buffet,’” Sam says, “where every customer can get towels, window cleaner, all-purpose cleaner and trim shine for the final touches.”

In addition to the “buffet,” Sammy’s also offers full detailing services. “Every car gets the time and attention it needs,” he says. “We work on one car at a time, and never rush them through, assembly-line style.”

The exterior/interior service uses high-quality cleaners and waxes to restore the shine, with a top coat of hand-applied wax to maintain the finish. Car interiors are treated with a carpet extractor and various cleaning tools and products to provide a fresh-from-the-dealer appearance.

A Different Dog Wash

And while Sammy’s primarily caters to four-wheeled visitors, the four-legged type hasn’t been overlooked. It’s been nearly a quarter-century since Sam first proposed adding a carwash service — something that Big Sam frowned upon. But Sam prevailed, and the operation is still going strong.

“I wanted something a bit different from the other dog-washing facilities I’d seen,” Sam says. The self-serve operation uses only warm water, along with hypoallergenic products including shampoo, cream rinse, a “de-skunker,” oatmeal, flea-and-tick treatments, a plain water rinse and a blow dryer.

“It’s a one-room facility,” Sam adds, “just a basin, tub and hoses. But we monitor the room regularly, so customers can be sure it’s clean, with no ‘wet dog’ smell.”

Major Equipment Overhaul

Recently, Sammy’s underwent some major revisions on the carwash side. A key aspect was the removal of a 25-year-old conveyor and pouring a new 48-inch-wide concrete pad — twice as wide as its predecessor. The tunnel features a new conveyor from Motor City Wash Works, as well as new “spaghetti foam” cloth brushes and wallboard. The renovations included adding a Laguna® rTC™ tunnel controller, a Washify POS system and some new MacNeil Wash Systems equipment. “We also installed more blowers, with a total power of 90 hp,” Sam says. “That’s enough capacity to serve as a fallback if our Dry N’ Shine equipment goes down.”

Professional contractors for the renovations included Nick and Joe Muscarella of WNY Car Wash Systems in Corfu, NY, and Engasser Construction of East Aurora. They were assisted by a contingent of carwash “elves,” made up of cousin Mike Mctigue, many friends and family members — including Sam himself!

The total investment for the project was around \$40,000.

Direct Mail Hit the Mark

While chain carwashes often have sizable marketing budgets, smaller ones do not — so Sam has tried a number of approaches to getting the word out.

“I tried handing out air fresheners that had a QR code on the back,” he said. “I must have handed out 1,000 of them in a single

Continued ...



*This is exactly how Sam spends his days and weeks
– knee deep in every aspect of the wash’s operation.*

Cosmano Honored for his Philanthropy

Sammy’s Car Wash & Dog Wash Emporium has been an active supporter of the East Aurora, NY, community for years, sponsoring various music shows and contributing to the local music hall of fame. Sam himself has coached youth sports for many years, and is a member of the Aurora Conservatives Committee.

And then the surprise came...

“I was invited to be a guest at the East Aurora Kiwanis Club awards dinner. But I had no idea that I was going to receive the Kiwanis ‘Business of the Year’ award. One minute, I’m sitting at my table; the next, I’m at the podium receiving the award. It was really flattering to be recognized in this prestigious way.”



NC

David and Goliath Wash Thrives ... continued

week, but I didn't see much of a sales uptick. Next, I began advertising in our local newspaper but, again, I didn't see much of a return on that investment.

"I hit pay dirt when I decided to imitate the bigger washes and used a direct-mail service. The flyers were larger than a greeting card, and printed on a postcard-style paper stock. They featured the story of our wash on one side, and numerous discount coupons on the other side. It was the biggest hit I ever saw!"

Although he concedes to bumping up his individual-wash prices a few times, "I haven't raised my club prices since 2015, when I started the club," he boasts.

"I noticed something interesting right after the club started," Sam says. "Customers were coming in to get their cars washed — whether a wash was needed or not. Some even came in while it was raining!"

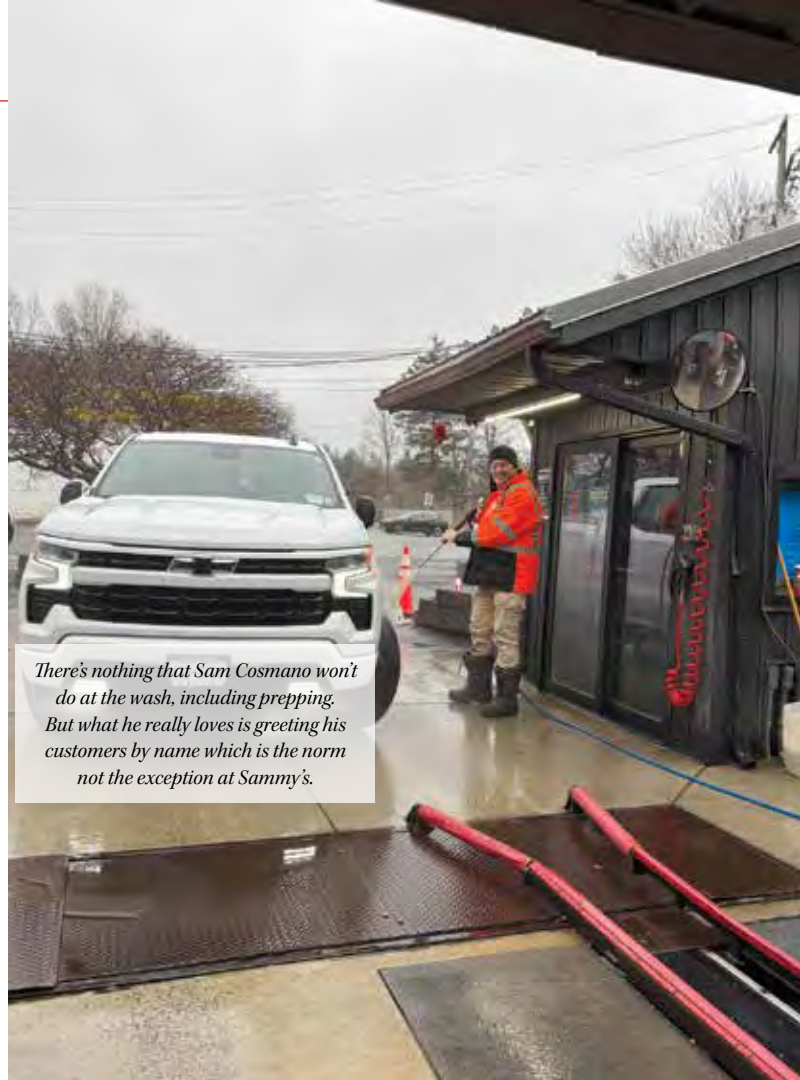
"Some of them have told me that a trip through the wash was therapeutic — almost like a spa session."

Sam is preparing for the next generation of ownership. "My daughter Ellie is studying forensic accounting at St. Bonaventure University, and my son Silverio has dreams of taking over the business some day. I might put it in trust for him."

Curiously enough, Sam says that Big Sam is still around. "I think he haunts the place. From time to time, when the wash is shut down, and all the equipment is turned off, we hear his familiar whistle."

NC

Frederick Jerant is a freelance writer based in Allentown, PA.



There's nothing that Sam Cosmano won't do at the wash, including prepping. But what he really loves is greeting his customers by name which is the norm not the exception at Sammy's.



On a picture perfect western New York day Sammy's new building signage was installed.



The detail bay got a facelift and canopy to spruce it up.



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35th NRCC Raises Educational Bar - Again!



ATLANTIC CITY, NJ — The 35th Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC), at the Atlantic City Convention Center, continued to raise its educational bar and showcase the industry's best suppliers and manufacturers, October 6-8, to a crowd of nearly 1800. "As we wrap the 35th NRCC, I want to thank and congratulate the NRCC board, suppliers, manufacturers and attendees for helping us raise the bar yet again," said Co-Chairman Walt Hartl of Hoffman Car Wash in Albany, NY, and the New York State Car Wash Association, this year's host. "This show offers outstanding networking opportunities with the Simoniz and ICS events, that were standing-room only, and open to all attendees and vendors," he said. "It also features exceptional educational tracks with topics covering website design, how to increase sales and the importance of having difficult conversations with your staff and customers, to name just a few." Added Hartl, "Top that off with an engaging and charismatic Keynote from WD-40's Garry Ridge on how his 'Any Dumbass Can Do It' approach to leading can be applied in multi, as well as a single-location washes, and you have a great formula for success."

Expanded Education

Always striving for a better and more comprehensive show drives the NRCC board to push the envelope annually, said Co-Chair Chris Kubarek of K & S Car Wash in Auburn, NY. "We strive every year to improve not only the exhibit floor, but our world-class education and this year we tried to spotlight self-service programming." In doing so, the NRCC teamed up with self-service experts Kleen-Rite Corporation to put together seminars that would appeal to that market. "We wanted to expand our footprint and make sure to provide our self-service and inbay attendees with cutting-edge education," said Education Chair Suzanne Stansbury. "The programs our partners put together were non-promotional and really addressed the current concerns facing the market, while spotlighting the innovation available to build volume and profits. The collaboration was a home run we plan to further expand upon in 2026."

At one point during the education track on Tuesday there were three concurrent seminars to again address the needs of several industry segments, as well as younger managers. "We

Kleen-Rite's Marc Tyndale, Sundance Car Wash & Laundry's Brian Hollinger, Mermaid's Cameron Alleman and Hometown Auto Spa's Jonathan Ammary spearheaded a lively and informative self-service power panel discussion.



That means...



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Kyle Doyle with Rinsed spoke on effective sales presentations and what makes up an effective team.

Mike and Mel Ohlinger with OhmCo, front and center, with a packed Virtual Tour seminar room of attendees.



Mel Ohlinger with OhmCo. spoke on what ineffective websites are costing your business.



Co-Chair Chris Kubarek introduced the Keynote Speaker Garry Ridge.



Keynote Speaker and former WD-40 CEO, Garry Ridge, proudly displays his recent book, Any Dumbass Can Do It.



Keynote Speaker Garry Ridge and Co-Chairs Chris Kubarek and Walt Hartl.

expanded our Manager's Track with a program put on by Retired Colonel Pilar McDermott of Thayer Leadership who spoke to how to have difficult conversations at the manager level," said Stansbury. "It was such a success that we plan to bring Col. McDermott back in 2026. She was impressive."

During that segment of programming Kyle Doyle with IgniteWash/Rinsed spoke on effective sales presentations and what the best run teams are doing to achieve maximum profits for our tunnel operators, and Keith Lutz with Kleen-Rite ran a self-serve program featuring what successful operators are doing to drive volume and create customer loyalty. And, of course, the popular Virtual Carwash Tour spotlighted four outstanding operations to kick off the

Continued ...



A highlight of the educational track is the annual Virtual Tour, headed up by Hoffman Carwash and Hoffman innovateIT's Tom Hoffman, Jr. Pictured are panelists Robert Greene of Carwash Express, Marc Tyndale of Fast Lane Auto Wash, Tom Hoffman, Jr., and Nathan Bertsch representing Express Carwash.

2025 Educational Lineup

Virtual Carwash Tour

Moderated by Tom Hoffman, Jr.

Featured Washes:

- Bob Autowash, Netherlands (Tom Hoffman, Jr. presented for the owner)
- Fast Lane Auto Wash, Harrisburg/Hershey, PA (Marc Tyndale)
- Car Wash Express, Savannah, GA (Robert Greene)
- Wash Boss, Evansville, IN (Nathan Bertsch)

Sponsored by AVW

Early Bird Seminar

Moderated by John Shalbey, Jr.

Panelists: Amanda Kubarek, K & S Car Wash, Auburn, NY; Joseph Noel, Autobell Car Wash, Charlotte, NC; Dino Nicoletta, Ashbury Circle Car Wash, Neptune, NJ; Rich DiPaolo, *Professional Carwashing & Detailing* magazine

Sponsored by Micrologic

Why Your Website is Costing You Customers

Speaker: Mel Ohlinger with OhmCo Carwash Marketing, Neenah, WI

What Listening to 3 Million Carwash Sales Presentations Revealed About the Best-Run Teams

Speaker: Kyle Doyle with IgniteWash/Rinsed, New York, NY

Self-Service Success Seminar

Speakers: Keith Lutz and Marc Tyndale, Kleen-Rite Corp., Columbia, PA

How to Have Difficult Conversations with Customers/Staff

Speaker: Retired Col. Pilar McDermott with Thayer Leadership, West Point, NY

Keynote Speaker Former WD-40 CEO Garry Ridge

The Power of the Learning Moment Culture and How to Achieve It

Sponsored by Hoffman innovateIT and Micrologic

Industry Leaders Talk Keys to Success Today & Beyond

Moderated by NRCC Co-Chair Chris Kubarek

Panelists: John Rousch, Express Wash Concepts, Etna, OH; Dave Ellard, 2025 International Carwash Association President; Mark Curtis, Splash Car Washes, Milford, CT; Jose Costa, Whistle Express, Charlotte, NC

Self-Serve Power Panel

Moderated by Keith Lutz, Kleen-Rite Corp.

Panelists: Cameron Alleman, Mermaid Car Wash, Mechanicsburg, PA; Jonathan Ammary, Hometown Auto Spa, Whitehall, PA; Brian Hollinger, Sundance Car Wash and Laundry, Lancaster, PA; Marc Tyndale, Fast Lane Auto Wash, Kleen-Rite Corp., Columbia, PA



NRCC ... continued

event and let's not forget about the traditional Early Bird Panel that touches on all aspects of washing on Tuesday morning.

Networking Abounds

A staple of the three-day event, as Hartl mentioned, is its networking opportunities which are open to all attendees and vendors no matter their level of registration. The first event included a "Celebration" put on by Simoniz USA on Monday evening at the Hard Rock's Hollywood Ballroom attracting more than 500 attendees. "What a great event," said Will Gorra, Simoniz USA CEO. "We look forward to it every year and couldn't do it without the NRCC. We truly value that relationship."

Continued ...



First-time attendees Denise and JD Gode (left) and Professional Carwashing & Detailing magazine's Rich DiPaolo and Sandy Murphy meet up at the annual gathering.



Martin De Los Santos with Magic Mex Installers and Alan Doyle take a moment to catch up at the Simoniz Celebration.



Myrick Morris with Stinger Chemicals and Sonny's Lanese Barnett.



OhmCo's Mel Ohlinger and College Park's Ben DuGoff seem to be enjoying themselves!



Kleen-Rite's Keith Lutz and Simoniz Celebration Host Will Gorra take a moment to pose for the camera. The event attracted more than 500 attendees.

Simoniz USA's Will Gorra took a few minutes to speak of his love of the industry while thanking attendees for their loyalty and the NRCC board for its collaboration.





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Welcome Reception

The show's Welcome Reception, sponsored by long-time exhibitor ICS, is an opportunity to unwind after show hours on Tuesday before heading out to dinner. The event includes Jersey snacks, two drinks and several raffle prizes including a \$500 cash giveaway. This year's cash winner was *Professional Carwashing & Detailing's* Rich DiPaolo.

ICS' long-term relationship with the NRCC on this event has been integral in the show's success. "ICS has sponsored the Welcome Reception for many years," said Scott Friedman, Marketing Director at OPW Vehicle Wash Solutions (ICS, PDQ, Belanger and Turtle Wax Pro). "We're exceptionally proud of our close and long relationship with the NRCC and this event enables us to show our appreciation for our industry and the people who make it special."



ICS's Kevin Ahnert and Adam Cook, NRCC Co-Chair Walt Hartl and ICS's Nick Ty-lende and Scott Friedman. ICS has been sponsoring the event since its inception!

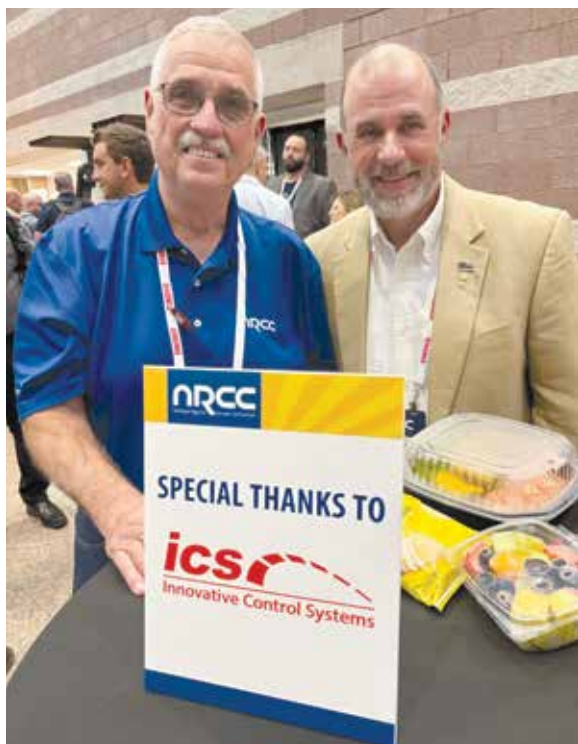
Intimate Show

But what also makes the NRCC a truly unique event is its welcoming and intimate nature, according to first-time attendees Denisa and JD Goad. "We had a great time and got to meet a lot of people who were so sharing and generous to us as we are new to the industry," said Denisa. "We really enjoyed the social aspect of the show, the food was really impressive, but what really stood out was just how welcomed we were made to feel. We have never felt so welcomed." **NC**

Continue for photos from the show floor ...



NRCC board member emeritus Ron Bousquet and NRCC Show Coordinator Heather Courtney.



Ron Bousquet and Mike Ashley take a moment to catch up and grab some food at the Welcome Reception sponsored by long-time exhibitor and sponsor ICS.



The NRCC Dream Team: Brigitte DeMarzo, Heather Courtney and Jill Terry.



And that's a wrap on the 35th NRCC Welcome Reception sponsored by ICS. Co-Chair Walt Hartl thanked our sponsor and everyone for attending.



The big winner of the night was Professional Carwashing & Detailing magazine's Rich DiPaolo who walked away with \$500!



David Valcich from American Carwash Solutions won the wireless headphones presented to him by Co-Chair Chris Kubarek.



And the winner is...

Continue for more photos from the show floor...



NRCC ... continued

SplashSource's Tatum O'Donnell (center) was gathering content on the show floor!



It was getting a little congested around the Shore Corp. booth.



There was a bit of activity around the Simoniz USA booth, sponsors of the Simoniz Celebration event on Monday night.



Save the Date

The 2026 NRCC is slated for October 5-7 at the Atlantic City Convention Center. For exhibit and attendee information visit nrccshow.com

The 2026 host is the Mid-Atlantic Carwash Association with Co-Chairs Dave DuGoff and Mike Ashley.



A special "Thank You!!!" to all the valued sponsors at the 35th NRCC!



Towel by Dr. Joe, a Kleen-Rite Company, saw a lot of activity.



Nearly 1800 attended the 2025 Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC), October 6-8, at the Atlantic City Convention Center.



Jim and Gay Gosnell with Etowah Valley have been long-time supporters of the NRCC and we thank them for that!



Amanda Kubarek, Tom Hoffman, Jr., and Mark Kubarek take a moment to catch up on the show floor.

The team from ICS.



Keynote Co-Sponsor and long-time supporter of the NRCC – Micrologic Associates out of Parsippany, NJ.

Team Sonny's from Tamarac, FL.



Team Simoniz USA!





The team from Kleen-Rite Corp. in Columbia, PA, came out en masse to support the event.

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NRCC 2025 Awards Luncheon

The 35th Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC) Awards Luncheon highlighted two Emerging Leaders and two industry greats. The program was hosted by Co-Chairs Walt Hartl and Chris Kubarek.

Emerging Leader Recipients

The NRCC's Emerging Leader award is meant to acknowledge and push the industry's youngest and brightest to new heights while encouraging them to continue in their path as industry leaders. Melanie Agudelo of ScrubADub Auto Wash Center in Massachusetts is the assistant manager of the company's Quincy flex serve. In 2022 she was the youngest recipient of the



NRCC Co-Chair Chris Kubarek presented ScrubADub's Melanie Agudelo with a 2025 Emerging Leader Award.



Co-Chair Walt Hartl presented Emerging Leader recipient Riley Cook with Splash's honor.

Spirit of ScrubADub award, having been selected by her fellow team members and managers for caring like family for her team, community and customers. Alex Paisner, Director of People and Culture for ScrubADub said, "Melanie is an inspiring leader for her team and is deserving of any and all recognition."

Riley Cook, began as a customer service advisor at Splash Car Wash's Newark, NY, store and has worked his way up to General Manager at their Fayetteville, NY, store where he oversaw the most successful initial ramp up in Splash's history. According to Michael Grubka, Splash Area Manager, "He is a leader who has emerged and will have continued success with anything he touches in the industry."

Most Distinguished Person

The Most Distinguished Person award is bestowed on an individual who demonstrates a high level of dedication and devotion to the promotion and advancement of the professional carwashing industry. And this year's recipient did that in spades through carwash innovation and the formation of Grace for Vets, the program that honors Veterans on November 11 with a free wash to acknowledge and thank them for their service to the country. Mike Mountz, founder of Cloister Car Washes in Pennsylvania, created this program and devoted years to its mission before turning it over to Mark Curtis with Splash. The nonprofit organization is made up of thousands of participating carwashes in the US and abroad. In 2025, 407,210 free washes were given away with 4,735 participating locations in four countries. To learn more and participate visit graceforvets.com

Mike's long-time friend, Tom Hoffman, Sr. of Hoffman Car Washes in Albany, NY, presented him with the honor in an emotional tribute from one great carwasher to another. Hoffman Car Wash was the first wash, beside Cloister, to participate in the



Hoffman Car Wash's Tom Hoffman, Sr., presented his long-time friend, Mike Mountz, with the event's Most Distinguished Person award in a heartfelt presentation.



Tom Hoffman, Sr., and Carole Hoffman pose with their son, Tom Hoffman, Jr. who was inducted into the NRCC's Hall of Fame for his years of service to the event and industry.

program. In true fashion, Mike tossed out a mile's long roll of paper with all those he wanted to thank for the award, taking little credit for his huge impact on the industry.

Hall of Fame

The NRCC's highest honor, it's Hall of Fame award, was presented by NRCC board member Suzanne Stansbury to Tom Hoffman, Jr. of Hoffman Car Washes and Hoffman innovatET in Albany, NY. Hoffman, Jr., has moderated and coordinated the Virtual Car Wash



Current Grace for Vets facilitator Mark Curtis and Founder Mike Mountz.

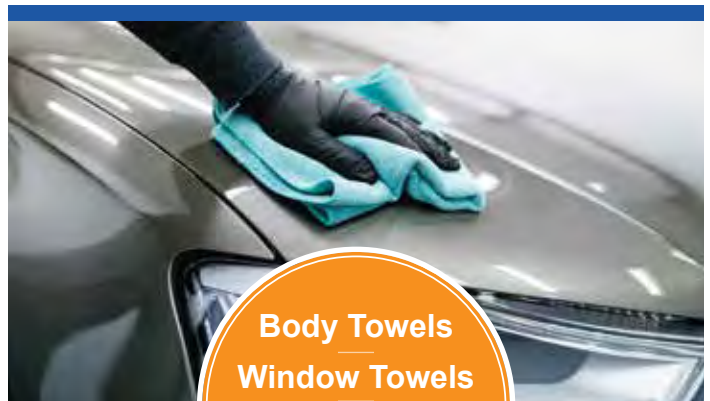
Tour educational program for the last eight years that kicks off the show on Monday and spotlights four exceptional sites "virtually."

Hoffman has served as an NRCC Chairman, on its board and on the New York State Car Wash Association (NYSCWA) and International Carwash Association (ICA) boards. Stansbury noted that his dedication to the industry and NRCC is never in question and a constant she, and the NRCC, can always count on.

The luncheon then followed and was sponsored by Welcomemat. **NC**



Mike (seated), Elton and Rhoda Mountz celebrate Mike's Most Distinguished Person award at the NRCC Awards Luncheon.



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The Thought Process Behind the Russell Speeders Rebrand

We asked Jason Baumgartner, Chief Revenue Officer with Summit Wash Holdings, to share some insight behind the rebrand of Russell Speeders to Speeders. The iconic wash started more than 60 years ago in Norwalk, CT, when Her-

man Shullman opened the first Russell Speeders location. There are currently 53 sites in the Northeast (Connecticut, New York, New Jersey) and 11 in the Midwest (Nebraska and Missouri) under the brand.



Summit Wash Holdings was initially formed through a partnership with Russell Speeder's and New Mountain Capital, a New York-based investment firm. Summit continues to grow in its core Northeast and Midwest markets, as well as its Florida market (operating under Waters Car Washes) with 26 sites.

Q: Can you share with our readers your thought process behind changing the company name from Russell Speeders (founded as you know in 1963) to Speeders?

Baumgartner: It's not a name change as much as a modernization of the brand. We shortened the name and gave the word mark and logo an update. We also updated the Russell character. Russell Speeder's has been a phenomenal brand and the Speeder's refresh is just an evolution of that legacy.

Q: I would guess that the undertaking to do that is involved and costly?

Baumgartner: Not as costly as you would expect. As we have grown in site count by 5x in the last three years, we have introduced "Speeders" locations instead of Russell Speeder's locations. By the end of this year about 70 percent of the Northeast sites will be Speeders branded, and we will strategically rebrand some of the legacy sites that fall within pockets where we have site density.

Q: How long will the changeover take?

Baumgartner: We anticipate the rebrand to be complete sometime in 2027.

Q: I assume this rebrand impacts all of your sites?

Baumgartner: We are prioritizing the rebrands of legacy sites relative to the growth of new sites and focusing on the more dense pockets in Connecticut and New Jersey.

Q: What have been the biggest challenges?

Baumgartner: No challenges, really. The brand was due for an update and this is just a part of the evolution.

Q: How have your employees embraced the change or has it impacted them at all?

Baumgartner: So far the feedback from the employees has been very favorable. They love the new look, logo, signage and perhaps most of all the uniforms and apparel. **NC**

To learn more about Speeders visit [speeders.com](https://www.speeders.com)



This street signage shows off the rebrand.



This eye-catching site in Budd Lake, NJ, shows off the brand's new logo front and center.



This Danbury, CT, Speeders will soon showcase the new logo, but the old one isn't too shabby!

Vince MacNeil Has Always Put Drive, Innovation First

By Fred Grauer

Mechanical innovation, the real building block of today's successful retail carwash, doesn't just happen. It takes exceptional innovators and visionaries to see a path forward to producing cleaner, shinier and drier cars. The industry went from a bucket and sponge rudimentary operation to a highly mechanized, money-making production facility thanks to these innovators.

In the 1940's there were fewer than 100 carwashes in the United States, and all were small family-owned businesses. Today the number of commercial washes is somewhere around 60,000.

The early days were labor intensive, time consuming, short on quality and facilities were hard to find. And, in the early days carwash businesses experienced an overwhelming surge of customers. It didn't take long before owners realized they needed better and more equipment to process the increasing customer demand. And like Henry Ford, they needed to automate, and the pressure was on for more innovation.

As the retail business grew, so did the demand for equipment.

Early innovators like Sherman Larson, Dan Hanna and Bill Thacher, to name just a few, helped lay the foundation for the modern carwash industry through their vision and technical skills.

As the years passed the innovation torch was handed off to a new generation of innovators. The story behind one is Vince MacNeil of MacNeil Car Wash Systems based in Ottawa, Canada.

When I was the owner of Sherman, I received a phone call from a Sherman carwash dealer, Jack Schmitt of Riverbay Equipment. Jack called to tell me about a new carwash conveyor manufactured by Vince and Dan MacNeil that he had seen and was going to buy. Until that day, the MacNeils were unfamiliar to me. I was further surprised by Jack's call because at the time Jack had ordered two or three Sherman conveyors that he was cancelling. As the story goes, Jack and others who bought that MacNeil conveyor were raving about

its performance, service and technology. Within days of Jack's call, I contacted Vince MacNeil to see if we could market his products through Sherman. Vince agreed and a relationship and friendship was forged.

In May of 1982 Vince and his brother Dan, a former Service Manager for Sherman Canada formed MacNeil Wash Systems. They designed and built their first conveyor known as the RG-440 in a small shop in Ottawa. Vince applied for patents and took over sales and marketing for the company. In 1985 MacNeil entered into a distribution agreement with Sherman Industries to reach the entire US as well as interna-

tional markets. Vince spearheaded the arrangement and went on to promote MacNeil products globally.

I asked Vince to share with us his motivation to enter the carwash industry.

"I never set out to be in the carwash business. My early years were fueled by speed, precision and the thrill of competition. I worked as a race technician in the world of professional motorcycle racing, traveling to iconic tracks across North America — Daytona, Laguna Seca, Indianapolis," said MacNeil. "I thrived in that high-pressure environment, where extracting every ounce of performance from a machine demanded discipline, deep technical knowledge, and relentless attention to detail."

Vince MacNeil has always had a deep admiration for engineering excellence. "I was factory-trained by both Honda and Suzuki and held a profound respect for innovators like Soichiro Honda, who built an empire from humble beginnings by turning generator engines into motorcycles. I even kept a personal file on him — his drive, innovation and commitment to quality inspired me to apply the same principles in everything I touched," added MacNeil.

But tragedy hit the MacNeil family and shifted Vince's purpose and direction. "My life changed when my youngest brother died tragically at a youthful age. At the time, he had just begun working with our older brother in the carwash industry — repairing and servicing equipment across Canada. His loss hit



Vince MacNeil isn't afraid to take risks in sport and business and it's paid off.

hard. It wasn't just the pain of losing a brother — it was the feeling of an unfinished journey, of potential left unrealized."

That moment became a turning point for Vince MacNeil and the company. "I decided to step away from racing and step into his place, not just to help my brother — but to honor the one we lost. In 1982, we reformed MacNeil Wash Systems with a renewed sense of purpose."

Redirection From Tragedy

And the legacy forged ahead with renewed commitment and energy. "My motivation wasn't just to build a business. It was to carry forward a legacy and pour everything I knew about performance, engineering and innovation into a new mission. I wanted to build carwash systems the way I once built motorcycles — smarter, faster, stronger and always with the end user in mind. Equipment that delivered reliability and value, without compromise."

What started as a tribute become a lifelong passion to engineer the best wash systems on the market, with the same dedication he once gave to the racetrack while carrying his brother with him in that mission.

In 2013 Vince and Dan sold MacNeil Wash Systems to NCS (National Carwash Solutions). In 2019, Vince formed Triumph Car Wash Parts to provide great aftermarket parts and solutions to the carwash industry. The company is headquartered in Oakville, Ontario, with a US office in Niagara Falls, NY. Vince is still highly involved in the carwash industry and is dedicated to developing new and innovative products.



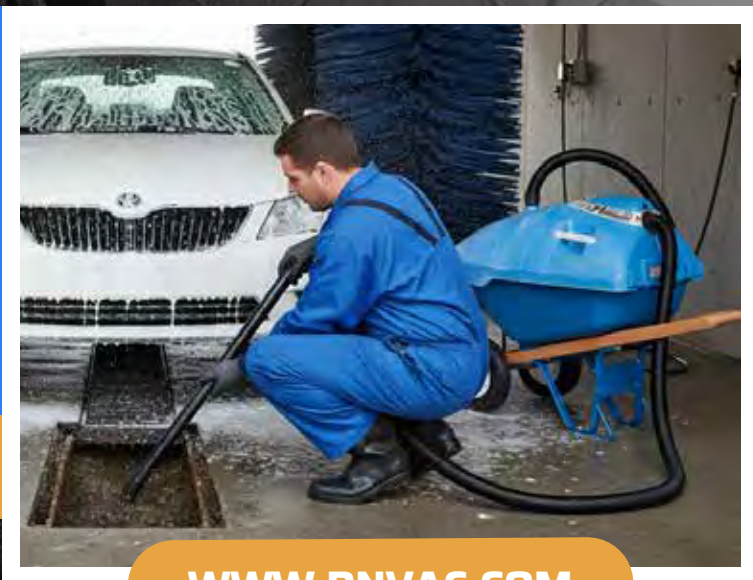
Fred Grauer is a 66-year industry veteran. He technically "retired" from a position with Vacutech, but is consulting and writing this column for the Northeast Carwasher. You can reach Fred at fredgrauer@comcast.net

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The Artificial Intelligence Advantage

How Carwash Operators Can Use AI To Drive Smarter Marketing

By Beth Martin

Artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping how nearly every industry connects with customers, and the carwash sector is no exception. For years, we've relied on technology to automate our tunnels and enhance wash quality. Now that same innovation is revolutionizing how we attract, engage and retain customers.

At Express Wash Concepts (EWC), where we operate 125+ locations across multiple states and five brands, we're dabbling in and experiencing firsthand how AI can help scale personalized marketing, strengthen community connection, and drive smarter, data-centric decisions. But we're quickly finding out that AI isn't about replacing the marketer — it's about giving marketing teams superpowers. Used well, it brings precision, speed, and insight to every customer touchpoint, from digital ads to Unlimited Wash Club renewals.

Below are some tips on how any operator — regardless of size or brand — can begin tapping into the power of AI to drive growth.

From Guesswork to Precision Targeting

The biggest marketing shift happening right now is within paid media. Tools like **Google's Performance Max** and **Meta's Advantage+** campaigns use machine learning to find the right customer, in the right place, all in real time — no manual targeting or constant tweaking required.

When we launch new locations, we feed these platforms a mix of creative assets — our best-performing headlines, high-quality tunnel visuals, and membership offers — and let their algorithms test and learn. Within days, we can see where engagement and conversions are strongest.

For example, during a recent campaign promoting discounted Unlimited Wash Club memberships, AI quickly redirected ad spend toward zip codes with the highest sign-up rates, automatically reducing wasted impressions. The result was a significantly lower cost per acquisition compared to our prior, manually optimized campaigns.

The lesson? AI doesn't replace your media strategy — it makes it smarter. Marketers still set the vision and define success. The machine just adjusts ad placements and budget distribution in real time for best performance.

Creative at the Speed of Growth

When your brand is scaling quickly, maintaining consistent creative output across dozens of markets can feel impossible. That's where generative AI becomes a lifesaver.

Platforms like **ChatGPT** and **HubSpot AI** can help marketers brainstorm and version creative faster than ever. Whether

it's drafting 10 new Google ad headlines, rewriting press release copy, or tailoring a promotional email for a new market, AI can help companies move at the pace expansion demands — without sacrificing brand voice.

The key is feeding the system context: your specific tone, customer persona, and messaging pillars. From there, you refine the output like an editor. The process is collaborative — human insight paired with machine speed.

For example, you can use AI to generate localized social posts that celebrate philanthropic community events. Simply provide details — donation totals, partner nonprofits, and a few photos — and AI drafts posts, captions and thank you messages in minutes. It's efficient storytelling that can help keep community engagement visible and genuine.

Personalized Messaging That Anticipates Behavior

Carwash demand is deeply tied to weather, seasonality and habit. AI can help anticipate those shifts and make messaging more relevant.

Tools like **Salesforce Einstein** and **Attentive AI** analyze customer behavior to determine when, how and what to send. They learn which members respond to SMS versus email, which times of day perform best, and even which offers drive reactivations.

Weather-aware journeys that adjust communication based on forecasts is a great example of how AI-based tools can enhance your marketing campaigns and overall ROI. For example, when rain is coming, platforms like the above can delay acquisition emails and instead send "protect your shine before the storm" reminders. When the sun returns, "post-storm clean" offers can be triggered to send to lapsed visitors.

That kind of timing used to require manual scheduling — now it happens automatically. The customer experiences a timely, relevant message; the brand sees stronger engagement and conversion.

Reputation and Local Search: AI's Unsung Hero

AI isn't just a customer-service assistant — it's a local intelligence tool. We all know reviews can make or break a site's performance. AI is absolutely imperative to helping manage reputation more effectively — whether you have a single location or hundreds.

Chatmeter and **Podium** are platform examples that leverage AI to monitor sentiment, auto-generate review requests, and even draft personalized responses that reflect a company's tone and standards. When a customer leaves feedback — positive or

With AI assistance, Express Wash Concepts Creative Director Ryan Kendall recently debuted a brand refresh featuring AI-generated company mascots.



negative — these platforms help prioritize and reply faster, potentially turning one-time visitors into advocates.

Chatmeter and Podium clients repeatedly report an increase in review volume after automating review invites. Benefits not only include an improvement in overall ratings, but more importantly, the data reveals recurring, invaluable operational themes that can help leaders improve service.

Predicting Member Churn Before It Happens

Unlimited Wash Clubs are the backbone of modern carwash success, but customer retention remains one of the biggest challenges. AI is changing that too, and can help protect those relationships at scale.

By analyzing customer visit frequency, payment data, and engagement patterns, predictive models can flag members who are likely to cancel. From there, automated retention plays — like personalized reactivation offers or “Skip a Month” options — can trigger before the customer ever hits “cancel.”

With platforms like Salesforce, results are promising: fewer cancellations, higher reactivations, and a better understanding of what truly drives member loyalty.

Scaling Local Storytelling

While AI thrives on data, it can also elevate something far more human: storytelling. Many operators pride themselves on community connection — from local charity drives to grand openings that raise tens of thousands of dollars for nonprofits. But sharing every story across multiple channels can be time-consuming. With AI, it’s possible to turn a few bullet points into polished, multi-channel narratives. Provide the who, what, where, and why and the system drafts a press release, social post, and internal newsletter blurb. The time saved allows human teams to focus on what matters most: engaging with communities, building relationships, and capturing those authentic stories in the first place.

Building the Right Data Foundation

No AI strategy works without clean data. Every operator should connect their CRM or POS system to their marketing

platforms, allowing ad campaigns and automation tools to learn from real customer actions — not just clicks.

When your marketing ecosystem can see that a customer actually joined the Unlimited Wash Club, upgraded packages,

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or cancelled, AI can start optimizing toward true business outcomes, not vanity metrics.

Think of it as closing the loop between marketing and operations — something every growing brand should prioritize.

Proceed with Guardrails

As with any emerging technology, AI requires oversight. Some potential pitfalls to consider are as follows:

Loss of brand voice and authenticity:

AI-generated copy can sound generic or off-tone if not guided by strong brand parameters. Always infuse local flavor, humor and brand personality before publishing.

Over-reliance on automation: AI can optimize toward clicks, not customers. Without human oversight, campaigns may chase short-term engagement instead of long-term membership growth and loyalty.

Data privacy and compliance risks:

Tools that analyze customer behavior or automate SMS/email exchanges must adhere to consent and privacy laws like TCPA and CAN-SPAM. Always double-check opt-in status and data-sharing permissions.

Bias and output misinformation:

Generative AI tools can inadvertently include outdated or inaccurate content. Fact-check every claim, especially in press materials or localized promotions.

Lack of integration and measurement:

AI is only as good as the data it can access. If CRM, POS, and ad platforms aren't connected, the models will optimize on incomplete or misleading data — creating false confidence in "smart" results.

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The Human Side of AI

AI should enhance your brand's humanity, not replace it. The magic happens when data science meets empathy. When used correctly AI offers the ability to reach the right customer, tell the right story, and deliver the right experience — faster and more effectively than ever before.

The future of carwash marketing won't be written by robots, but it will be written with them. The operators who embrace AI early will find themselves spending less time guessing and more time growing — resulting in smarter campaigns, stronger customer bases, and cleaner cars, one click at a time. **NC**

Beth Martin is the Senior Vice President of Marketing at Express Wash Concepts, the parent company of 125+ express wash locations across six states under the following brands: Moo Moo Express Car Wash, Flying Ace Express Car Wash, Clean Express Auto Wash, Green Clean Express Auto Wash and Bee Clean Express Car Wash.



Beth Martin



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Big Banks are Tightening Credit

By Michael Ford

The most recent Federal Reserve's Senior Loan Officer Opinion Survey (SLOOS) shows that big bank lending standards for businesses tightened, despite the Fed cutting short-term interest rates by 50 basis points. In consumer lending, big banks are tightening limits on credit cards, an area where standards are already tight. Demand for credit cards remained flat for most of 2025.

Among banks that reported tighter standards and terms for Commercial and Industrial (C&I) loans, many banks cited a less favorable or more uncertain economic outlook; increased concerns about the effects of legislative changes or changes in accounting standards. It is noted that, 12.5 percent of banks reported tightening their lending standards for commercial and industrial loans. That is a significant increase from the past. Banks cited economic uncertainty and a reduced tolerance for risk.

Large banks reported tighter standards and unchanged demand for commercial real estate (CRE) loans. Tighter standards affected construction and land development loans as well as other nonresidential properties. Standards for multi-family loans were steady.

The report included a special set of questions about the 2026 outlook. Big banks reported they expect lending standards to remain unchanged in the near term. Specifically, they reported expectations that CRE loans, mortgage loans and commercial vehicle loan standards will be steady.

Carwash Lending Impact

In carwash lending, the worsening of industry-specific problems like higher costs, more competition and a reduced tolerance for risk are impacting credit decisions. The reality of failing private equity backed chains is influencing the market in multiple ways. The sale of locations at a lower than market price has a short-term positive effect on the initial buyer. However, the reduced price of these fire sale locations impacts the comparable sales figures for appraisals. The lower appraised value hits hard when a carwash entrepreneur is trying to buy, sell or build.

An example of the longer-term consequence of the below market sales can be seen in the financing of construction for a new location. Say the cost to build is \$6 million. If you have multiple carwash facilities of similar size and type that have sold for 50 cents on the dollar (i.e. \$3 million), it's going to be hard for the appraiser to get your project valued at a level acceptable to lenders. Therefore, the borrower may be required to pledge additional collateral, put more money down or end up being declined for the loan.

There's Good News

The good news is that there are a limited number of smaller financial institutions that are still aggressively lending in the carwash market. Leading the way for these firms are loans backed by the Small Business Administration (SBA) and specialized equipment financing. In SBA lending, carwash operators can

finance new construction, equipment, acquisitions, remodels and even refinance existing debt. This comes with long terms (up to 25 years) and very reasonable rates (6 to 9 percent).

In SBA lending, if the project fails to appraise at a high enough value, the SBA requires additional collateral be pledged. However, if there is no additional collateral available, the SBA waives the collateral requirement. Therefore, if a carwasher has an appraisal that is impacted by the lower than market sales, the SBA loan can still close.

In recent times, equipment financing has been particularly favorable for experienced carwash operators. Borrowers can be approved for \$400,000 or more with just a single page credit application and some bank statements. Loan terms are usually five to seven years with as little down as a single payment. In some cases, payments can be deferred for the first one, two or three months.

Cautionary Lending

There is a new trend in business lending where almost every small retailer is being solicited. These loans are called Merchant Cash Advance loans (MCA's). The MCA loan amount is usually up to one month's revenue for a small business and are set up to be paid back on a daily basis. These loans are VERY expensive. In some cases, the rate of charge can be in excess of 50 percent APR. It is common for MCA's to be marketed through boiler rooms with high-pressure sales reps that call multiple times a week offering easy money in as little as a day.

MCA loans are payday loans for small business. If you need money quick, they can be the answer. However, take caution if you're considering a Merchant Cash Advance loan. They can be very hard to pay back. This is particularly true because as soon as you pay down the debt, the MCA company will offer you more cash. The other reason these loans are hard to pay back is because very few businesses have a profit margin greater than the interest rate being charged. In other words, if you make a 30 percent profit margin but the interest rate on the MCA is 50 percent, it's almost impossible the repay.

Overall, big banks have tightened their standards for business loans despite interest rate cuts from the Fed. Senior Loan Officers do not see an easing of credit conditions by banks in the near term. On the other side, easy money is being thrown around by MCA companies. Carwash operators should take caution in the type of loan they seek. They can most likely find relief for their funding needs at reasonable terms with smaller specialized lenders in 2026.

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



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When Is It Time to Replace Your Towels?

By Valerie Sweeney

Carwash towels are a key component to any wash or detail center's operations. Having an absorbent towel makes for quick and efficient drying, prevents water spots, protects paint and provides a better overall finish. To make sure your towels are operating at peak performance, here are a few signs that will let you know it's time to replace your carwash towels.

Minimal Absorbency

A towel's ability to soak up liquids and dry the car makes it imperative for any carwash with exterior drying to have absorbent towels. Absorbency is needed also when using the towel for cleaning other parts of the car like windows and the interior. An absorbent towel helps clean residue, pick up debris, and dry the vehicle. This makes the cleaning and drying process more efficient, which can result in shorter wait times for customers.

If a towel has lost absorbency, it will move the liquid rather than absorbing it. This can result in residue being left on the car or a slower drying time. When you notice a lack of absorbency, that is a sure sign that the towel can no longer be used effectively and should be replaced. If you are using Microfiber towels, it could also mean that someone washed them on high heat, resulting in irreversible damage to the towel, which would require towel replacement.

Carwash towels with high absorbency will come in a variety of materials, including cotton terry, microfiber and cotton huck towels. Cotton terry towels are a staple in the carwash industry because they are absorbent, durable, and versatile, as well as being great for drying the exterior of a vehicle. Microfiber towels are lint-free and non-abrasive and often preferred for cleaning windows, mirrors and interior detail work, but they also make excellent body towels. Huck towels are another great lint-free option for windows.

Fraying Edges

As towels deteriorate, they will start to lint, and also develop frayed edges. As you launder the towels, you may notice more lint in the lint trap, or lint appearing on the towel itself. This is a sign that the towel is breaking down. You should always wash new towels separately from old towels so that the lint from the old towels does not transfer onto the newer towels. To prevent frayed edges, selecting a towel with a selvedged edge may reduce or prevent fraying and unraveling. These towels are durable and can withstand repeated washings, retaining their soft texture for various uses.

Cross-Contamination

Carwash towels are used to clean various surfaces of the car, including the body, windows, interior, wheel wells and door-jamb. Using one cloth for multiple purposes can result in grease

getting on the windows or upholstery. Some cleaning products are specifically designed for use on certain surfaces. Cross-contamination of cleaning products may result in damaging the surface or windows of the vehicle. If a towel has been cross-contaminated, replace it with a new one.

To avoid cross contamination many companies purchase towels in more than one color. You'll commonly find towels in colors like blue, green and red, making it easy to assign each color to a specific cleaning task. To make your towels last longer and prevent cross-contamination, designate specific colors for certain tasks. Organize towels by color and label them for easy identification by your employees.

Mold Growth

Storing damp towels can lead to mold growth. A moldy, non-absorbent, old, or damaged towel can retain a foul odor. Replace moldy or odorous towels not only for hygiene purposes but also to prevent damaging customers' cars. When maintaining your carwash towels, make sure they are always thoroughly cleaned and dried before use. This will help enhance the longevity of your towels. Microfiber are a great choice since there is no malodor, and they do not harbor bacteria like traditional cotton towels.

Properly caring for your towels and replacing them once they lose their effectiveness will help ensure you are providing your customers with a clean and shiny vehicle after it's been through your wash. Regularly inspecting, cleaning, and replacing your carwash towels is essential. By ensuring your towels remain absorbent, soft and contaminant-free, you'll protect your customers' vehicles, improve efficiency, and reinforce consistent standards. Investing in proper towel care ultimately enhances your wash results and reinforces your reputation for delivering a spotless customer experience with every wash.

NC

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



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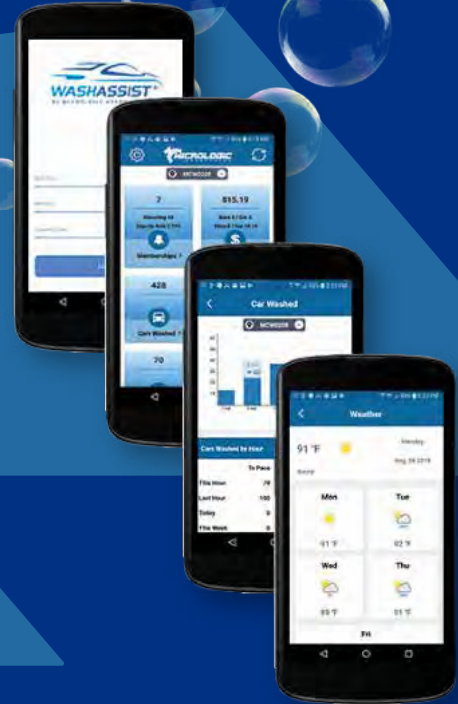
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Dear Venus and Mars,

What is your "business" New Year's resolution?



Venus Says

As a rural carwash owner, my New Year's resolution for 2026 is to use technology to enhance our locations by improving the consistency of our operations. Running a carwash in a rural community is both a privilege and a challenge. We serve neighbors, families we know, and people who have been coming to our bays for decades. But we also deal with unpredictable weather, limited to no staffing, and equipment that works hard around the clock. This year, I am committed to bringing together the best of both worlds— small-town service with modern-day tools including AI.

The first part of my resolution is to integrate AI-assisted planning into our day-to-day operations. This doesn't mean replacing people. The goal is to use technology in ways that ease the burden on us as owner-operators and create a smoother customer experience. One of the easiest and most valuable changes is adopting AI-driven weather scheduling. In a business where a single sunny weekend can define the month or season, having a system that predicts wash volume based on weather trends is invaluable. Instead of guessing when to stock supplies I want to use AI to analyze the past and mingle in current weather predictions.

Another key part of my resolution is to use AI to support maintenance consistency. Equipment in a rural wash works hard, often in extreme temperatures. My intention this year is to log weekly equipment and chemical use into a simple AI tool that can help identify when a repair is likely coming. If we could forecast big repairs, it would reduce down time.

I also want to use AI as a research tool. Instead of manually searching dozens of carwash websites, publications and conferences, I can use AI to scan industry articles, supplier blogs, case studies, and even locate conference materials. AI can quickly identify proven strategies, emerging trends, and best practices that are already working for successful operators around the world which makes staying on top of the latest carwash news easy with little additional time invested.

In 2026, my goal is to do more with my time using AI and tech to enhance our rural washes. Just having something new to explore will bring great energy to the year ahead with no financial ramifications. **NC**



Mars Says

When the calendar flips to a new year, most people start thinking about personal resolutions such as exercising more, eating better, getting more organized. But in our line of work, I think it's just as important to set a business New Year's resolution too.

Running a carwash isn't just about soap and water — it's about people, systems and consistency. Every year, I like to take a step back and ask myself, "What's one thing I can do better this year?" Not 10 things, not a giant overhaul, just one or two meaningful improvements that will make a real difference.

For me, this year's resolution is simple, "focus on consistency." No matter how busy we get, how hot or cold the weather is, or how many cars are lined up, the goal is to deliver the same great experience every single time. Consistency builds trust! When customers know they'll get a clean car and a friendly smile no matter when they come in, they'll keep coming back.

Of course, everyone's resolution might look a little different. Maybe it's improving communication with your team, tightening up maintenance routines, or paying closer attention to customer feedback. Whatever it is, the key is to keep moving forward. Small steps equal steady progress. And at the end of the day, that's what a new year is all about. A fresh start, a chance to do things just a little bit better than before. So, as you kick off 2026, take a few minutes to think about your business resolution this year?

Here's to a year of clean cars, happy customers, and continued growth one wash at a time. **NC**

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.the-carwashblog.com. Paul Vallario owns LI Car Wash Consultants and is a co-owner of BeeSeen Solutions. You can reach him at iwashcars@optonline.net or 631/484-5829.

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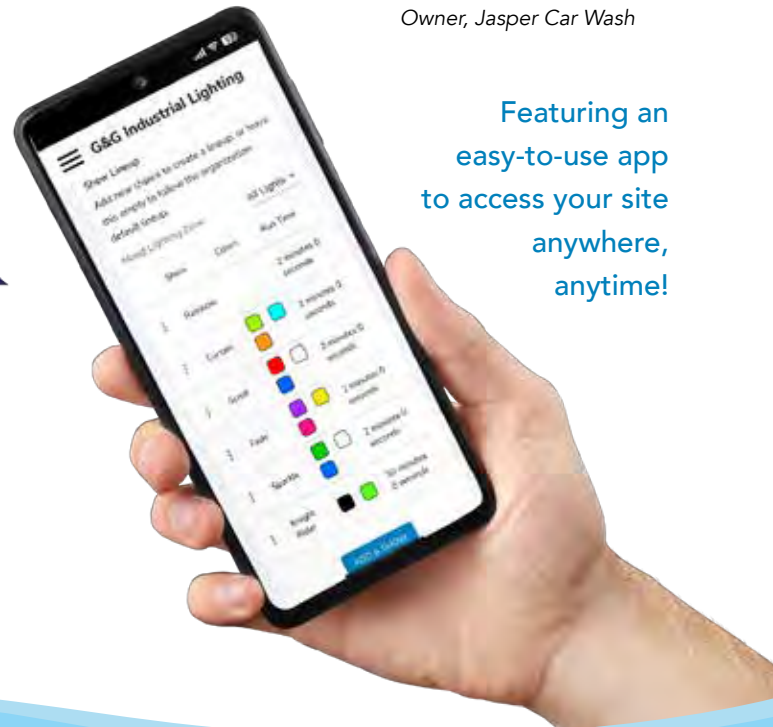
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Contracting a Network

By Gary Sokoloski

There are many different types of networks we work with everyday. Most people automatically think of their Internet, phone or cable providers. While they are important, the networks we really need to work with, and on, are the contractors and vendors who help to keep our businesses running. Having a strong relationship with these professionals will bring your business to the next level and provide you and your customers with consistent and outstanding service.

For the large projects you might undertake, such as a new building or a complete remodel of your existing site, choosing the right general contractor will make all the difference. All too often price is the determining factor with so many projects. Be sure to include the reputation and experience in building a carwash when choosing a contractor. The contractor with the lowest price might not be the one with the resources and experience to meet your timeline and make sure the job is done when promised. A low initial bid may seem

appealing, but could end up costing more in the long run due to delays and items not included in their scope of work.

When choosing individual contractors for day-to-day projects it is important to use the same process as if building a new site. Be sure the contractor is familiar with the environment in the carwashing industry. They must understand the nature of your business and that any sunny day is not the time to be doing repairs or upgrades that would keep you from washing cars. Sometimes this is a hard match to find and

it may take some trials and errors with various contractors to find the one that understands your needs and business.

If you are just adding some lighting or reworking your entire electrical system, make sure your electrician understands the nature of the carwash environment. All too often operators will use the company that wired their house to work on their carwash. This is usually a costly mistake in the long run. Most residential contractors are not familiar with industrial controls and installations. Make it a point to find someone fairly local and has a strong industrial background. This will ensure the work performed today will still be working years from now.

The same is true for your plumbing contractor. You might have a great company that can clean out a clogged drain at your house. That may not be the company that can determine pressure loss and flow rates to keep your water tanks full on your busiest day. This is true for your heating, cooling and pneumatic needs as well.

Those are just a couple of examples of the types of contractors who keep your business running. Every operator has a choice with whom to contract. These choices can be seen from the appearance of the signs they have on their building, to the cleanliness of their equipment rooms. The price for a service is often lost in the cost of professionalism. Take some time to evaluate who you contract with and their ability to perform the jobs you need accomplished.

After years of service work and countless installations there is one constant. The choices made when choosing contractors and building a team to complete a job is one of the most important you might make. Most of time cost is almost always the driving consideration. Take the time to analyze the cost and the price of your decision and keep your eye on the end goal "Your Successful Business."

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



Gary Sokoloski



The price for a service is often lost in the cost of professionalism.



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All Dressed Up, But Nowhere To Go

By Doug Rieck

As I write this column, we are in the pre-holiday season blahs. The summer has come and gone with our children back in schools and at colleges. We are in a shoulder season, or a travel period between peak and off-peak seasons. There has been no snow or salty road situations in my market yet, although not the case further north in upstate New York and Vermont. In my stretch of the Jersey coast we have had some monumental flood and rain events, almost Sandy levels, which did not bring customers out and caused lost days of washing. As it has always been, weather rules our industry and it is difficult to generalize conditions.

Part of the blahs has been the disinterest of customers in washing their cars due to clouds, rain, the governmental shutdown and malaise. One of my locations is on an approach road by a major military base and road traffic is down.

The good thing about carwashers is that generally we are optimists. That bunch of clouds is going to bring snow and business. That coastal storm in the fall or spring is going to bring customers out to wash off salty cars. We love sunny days both for the sun and the immediate potential for business.

A Club Plan Believer

I have been privileged to be part of the carwash industry for many years now and I have seen the many changes and influences that have affected our industry. A positive addition has been the development of club plans. Having operated a gated-entry conveyor carwash for more than 15 years, I had an early club plan that was among the first in my state. I am a believer. Club plans help even out the low points and keep the price of carwashes reasonable. Not washing cars because of weather costs us money and our prices must rise to reflect our inefficiency. In cleaning out my office, I found a price card from 1983 and at that point I was charging \$3 for an exterior conveyor wash. Today's average is \$9 in South Jersey. According to the "inflation price guide" \$1 in 1983 is equivalent to \$3.15 in 2024, so the same price today should be from \$9.45 to \$10.

NRCC Shines Bright

This past October we had the Northeast Regional Carwash



Rieck just installed a new drop-shelf vendor that uses TapToPay.

Convention (NRCC) in Atlantic City which was spectacular. It was a great show all around but the educational track was the star. My regret was not being able to attend all the educational sessions. The Monday opening event was the traditional Virtual Carwash Tour moderated by Tom Hoffman, Jr. The selection of washes hit home for me and has been helpful in planning my changes and a further appreciation of what a state-of-the-art carwash looks like as four were featured. What we saw and was brought home by the moderator and presenters would take weeks of time to recap. Being in the same room with other carwash operators and seeing the same presentation and discussing it drives the value and importance of the NRCC home.

This year the show floor was helpful for personal decision making. Also, it was helpful for family unity. I live on the island north of Atlantic City, so my wife and son came to walk the show floor. The opportunity to show them what we were going

to be spending money on, and changes that needed to be made, was much better and more effective in person.

I am replacing the self-service pump stand at my busiest and oldest location. I installed the original Sherman pump stand in 1987. The coin boxes and card systems have been replaced at least three times and in the equipment room the only original parts are the tanks and frame, and amazingly the 3 hp motors. My 21-year-old son has despised that equipment room because the primary pump stand is rusting apart, oily and old. In my defense, the Cat Pumps on it are new.

I'm sure that many have been to Disney and seen the Carousel of Progress and as the stage changes, you go from the Horse and Buggy-era to modern times. Well, this carwash equipment room has all those stages working together. But, it's time to move the entirety up to 2026 and the new direct-drive VFD pumps. I will not miss drive belts or the mass of air driven low-pressure service pumps, and clusters of quarter-inch poly tubing snaking all over. When I did my install in 1987, I had the early Sherman system of fluid-driven pumps for low-pressure services. That was replaced quickly with air driven ARO pumps which then morphed into the Flow jets that we all know and love. A primary change will be that all the low-pressure services will now be dispensed by the bay Cat Pump at about 125 psi as compared to the

Continued on page 59 ...

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Make the Most of Your “Teachable Moments”

By JoAnna Brandi

Here we go again. The economic news turns gloomy, and instantly, leaders pull back. Training budgets tighten. Off-site workshops get postponed. And somehow, the very people who serve your customers — your frontline ambassadors — are expected to keep shining without fresh tools or inspiration.

As a consultant, coach and trainer, I see it often:

- Budgets get trimmed or vanish entirely.
- Teams shrink, so no one feels they can step away from the desk (or line) for learning.

Even when business rebounds, there’s lingering fear: “What if it dips again?”

Meanwhile, employees shoulder more stress and fewer resources. That tension ripples through your workplace — and right into the customer experience.

The good news? Training doesn’t have to stop. You can keep your people growing by tapping into what I call “Teachable Moments.”

These are spontaneous, everyday opportunities to turn real-life situations into mini-learning experiences. They cost

nothing. They take minutes. But they make a lasting impression — because they happen in the flow of work, when the lesson really sticks.

Here are six ways to put Teachable Moments to work in your business:

1. Turn Stories Into Learning Fuel

When employees share their own customer experiences — good or bad — listen closely. Ask: How did that interaction make you feel? What could the business have done differently?

When people connect emotionally with their experiences as customers, they become more aware of the impact they have on your customers.

2. Catch People Doing it Right

When you see someone living your company values, name it out loud and on the spot. “I loved how you walked that customer through our process so patiently. That shows how dependable and knowledgeable we are.”

Specific praise reinforces culture better than any policy manual ever could.

3. Reframe Complaints as “Free Consulting”

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JoAnna Brandi is a Certified Chief Happiness Officer and Chief Well Being Officer with 34 years of experience helping companies create more positive, productive and profitable cultures!

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When grumbling surfaces about a customer complaint, help your team reframe it. Ask:

- What is this customer teaching us?
- What gap just got revealed?
- How can we use this to improve?

It takes courage to complain. Customers who speak up are giving you a gift — feedback you didn't have to pay for.

4. Appreciate forward thinking

When someone makes a tough call that benefits the company long-term — even if it's not the easiest route — acknowledge it. "I like the way you think."

Simple words. Huge motivational power.

5. Model Calm in Chaos

When stress spikes, remind your team to breathe — literally. Encourage a quick reset: a stretch, a sip of water, a step outside.

Your calm is contagious. Leaders set the emotional tone for everyone around them.

6. Spread the Good News

Invite everyone to spot co-workers who create "wow" moments for customers or teammates. Collect those stories and post them on a shared "Brag Board" — physical or digital. Celebrating what's right builds momentum, pride and positivity.

Teachable Moments won't replace formal training, but they do something equally powerful: they build a culture of continuous learning and appreciation.

When employees feel seen, valued and supported, their energy spills outward — straight to your customers.

And here's the bonus: as your team's soft skills grow, your hard results follow. Customers feel cared for. Employees stay longer. Loyalty deepens.

This isn't the first tough time we've faced — and it won't be the last. The organizations that thrive are the ones that keep investing in people, even (and especially) when times are tight or challenging.

So, keep your eyes open for those Teachable Moments. They're free, fast, and full of potential. And if you've got even a small training budget? Call me. I've got plenty of creative, low-cost ways to help your team learn, grow, and delight customers — no matter what the economy is doing.

Remember, the companies that keep learning are the ones customers keep coming back to.

Reach out to JoAnna with your questions, comments and congratulations! JoAnna@ReturnOnHappiness.com **NC**



JoAnna Brandi, a Certified Chief Happiness Officer and Certified Well Being Officer, is the author of three books and hundreds of articles on customer and employee happiness. She is the creator of the online course: The Practice of Positive Leadership: Use the Science of Happiness to Keep Employees Engaged and Customers Happy. Visit her site at returnonhappiness.com

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JoAnna Brandi

previous Flow Jet pressure of 50 psi. I think that the better pressure will bring about greater customer satisfaction and better usage of the low-pressure services. This change is a win for the customer and for me.

It was pointed out by a friend on the show floor that this system will use more water and chemicals. That's OK. I think the anticipated increase in customer satisfaction will be worth it. Happier customers spend more time — and money.

Love my Frictionless Unit

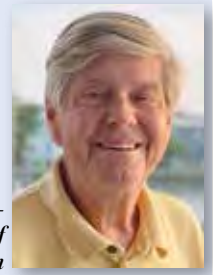
In my fall column I wrote about replacing a soft cloth friction inbay with a new touch-free unit. This was my third inbay machine at this location and a change from friction to frictionless there. After three months the answer is YES! It was a great move. Unfortunately, the past three months since re-opening have been rather slow, not just here but at my other wash as well. So I really have not given it a work out — yet.

At my other wash I have a nine-year-old Laser 360 which is my third touch-free machine installed in that bay. I love it. The newly installed Laser 360 Plus is wonderful, and has solved so many issues for me. There is much less worry in running a touch free as compared to a friction inbay. I don't have an attendant at either location and touch free is easier to run that way. Wash quality, yes, a friction machine can have slightly better wash quality. There are improvements in chemistry and process which have markedly improved touch free cleaning. There is an ample market for customers who prefer touch free or have different concerns. After installation I keep on finding new features and Easter egg-type surprises. There have been so many changes and improvements. My only comparison is that I loved my 2018 F 150 truck, but my new 2025 F 150 Hybrid is so much better.

TapToPay All the Way

I saw at the show floor drop-shelf vendors with plexiglass windows which just use TapToPay, no coins selling \$5 vend bundles. Yesterday I finished installing them at one location in the bays next to the coin boxes. This could be the answer to solving declining vending sales. Currently, most customers use cards or bills and few leave the bays to visit the changer and the vending machine. With TapToPay you can now put vending like this in a bay. I'll let you know how it works out in a future column. In the meantime, have a great winter washing season. I don't know what to expect or who to believe about future weather, but what I do know is that if roads are salty and it is cold, home hoses are turned off and we might wash some cars. Here's hoping we wash a lot of them! **NC**

Doug Rieck operates Pemberton Carwash and Waretown Carwash. He is the Immediate Past President of the Car Wash Operators of New Jersey. You can reach him at 609/597-SUDS or dougrieck@gmail.com



Doug Rieck



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PACARWASH.ORG

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

As we kick off a new year, winter is already in full swing across Pennsylvania and with it comes one of the most important seasons for our industry. Salt and snow are driving customers to the carwash in strong numbers, creating a surge in volume that many operators/vendors rely on during the colder months. While winter can be unpredictable, it also presents one of the best opportunities to showcase the value of routine vehicle care and bring in new customers who may become regulars throughout the year.

Cold-weather operations can be challenging, but they also highlight the importance of staying engaged, staying connected, and staying prepared. This is where strong membership participation within the Carwash Association of Pennsylvania (CAP) becomes so valuable. The more we share ideas, compare experiences, and support one another, the stronger our entire industry becomes.

As we start 2026, we encourage all members to stay active within the association. Attend events when you're able, participate in discussions and reach out to fellow operators. Whether you're navigating frozen equipment, managing long lines of customers, or preparing for the next warm day, remember that there's a statewide network of operators/vendors facing the same challenges and opportunities.

Become Engaged

Membership engagement also drives the strength of CAP itself. The insights, feedback, and involvement of our members shape the events, resources, and initiatives we offer throughout the year. The more engaged the membership, the more value CAP can deliver back to the industry. This year, we look forward to expanding on that momentum with more opportunities to connect, learn and support one another.

I am really excited for another year to keep doing what we all love and enjoy. Here's to a strong start to 2026, continued collaboration, and a winter full of steady wash traffic throughout the Commonwealth.



Cameron Alleman, CAP President

Visit: pacarwash.org for details on our valuable member benefits and upcoming events!



Carwash Association OF PENNSYLVANIA

2026 EVENTS

NEW!

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27**

**EDUCATIONAL NETWORKING
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**APRIL
16**

TOPGOLF NETWORKING EVENT

**MAY
11-13**

ICA

JULY

BASEBALL NETWORKING EVENT

**SEPT
16**

**ANNUAL DINNER & TABLETOP
SHOW**

**SEPT
17**

GOLF OUTING & PICNIC LUNCH

**OCT
5-7**

NRCC

**OCT
23**

SPORTING CLAY SHOOT

CARWASH ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA
WWW.CARWASH-PA.ORG

2025



ANNUAL DINNER & TABLETOP SHOW



Attendees enjoyed the tabletop show at the Antique Automobile Club of America, Hershey



The Carwash Association of Pennsylvania was proud to award **Verlyn Melhorn** as the CAP 2025 Pennsylvania Carwasher of the Year.

Left to Right: Verlyn Melhorn (2025), Scott Soisson (2023), Dave Edwards (2022), & Cheryl Anderson-Martin (2021)



Mel Ohlinger of OhmCo presented valuable information regarding online presence.



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*deceased

CWONJ.COM

PRESIDENT’S LETTER

On November 5, the Car Wash Operators of New Jersey (CWONJ) convened for their annual membership meeting at the Suburban Golf Club in Union, NJ. The event provided an opportunity for industry peers to connect, discuss best practices, and explore strategies for business growth.

The meeting’s Guest Speaker was Joseph Noel, representing Autobell Car Wash, headquartered in Charlotte, NC. Joseph delivered an insightful presentation focused on the expansion and management of multi-site carwash operations. He touched on the following during his presentation:

- **Effective Growth of Multi-Site Locations:** *He shared proven methods and strategic approaches for scaling carwash businesses across multiple sites. Attendees gained valuable insights into site selection, operational efficiencies and brand consistency.*
- **Recruitment Strategies:** *The discussion included actionable techniques for recruiting talent in a competitive market, emphasizing the importance of attracting candidates who align with company values and culture.*
- **Employee Retention:** *Joseph offered advice on how to create a supportive work environment and implement programs that encourage employee loyalty and long-term retention.*

The annual membership meeting was a success, fostering collaboration among New Jersey carwash operators and equipping attendees with practical tools for business growth. The insights provided by Joseph were particularly valuable, highlighting both operational and human resource strategies essential for thriving in today’s industry.

If you missed the meeting, please mark your calendar for our annual Car Wash Tour on Tuesday, April 28 when we’ll visit some outstanding sites in and around Eastern Pennsylvania. Make sure to visit our website, cwonj.com, for more information to come.



Dino Nicoletta, CWONJ President



Prestige Auto Spa Adds Site, Celebrates 4 Years in Business

In 2025, Prestige Auto Spa, Toms River, NJ, celebrated two milestones — adding its second location and celebrating its fourth anniversary as a full-service carwash and automotive care center, said a company press release. Since opening in 2021, Prestige boasts more than 2,500 Google reviews averaging 4.9 stars and more than 1,600 monthly wash members. Managing Partner Jeff Kovatch credits the company’s success to its commitment to personalized service and strong community values. “We don’t cut corners or replace people with machines,” said Kovatch. “Our team hand dries, vacuums and details every vehicle that comes through our tunnel. That personal touch keeps customers coming back week after week. Prestige is built on relationships, not algorithms.”

Operating Partner Jorge Mendoza says he and Kovatch proudly promote from within and train their team on technique and hospitality. “Our success starts with our people,” said



Mendoza. “We don’t just hire employees — we build a team and a culture. The pride our crew has in their work is the reason customers trust us with their vehicles. When you come to Prestige, you’re not just a ticket number — you’re part of the family.”

In 2025 Prestige Auto Spa opened its second site in Wayne.

We’ll take a deeper dive into Prestige and its operating philosophy in our spring 2026 issue. **NC**

For more information visit prestigeautospanj.com

2026 Application Available at cwonj.com



Meet New Board Members
Mark Tarnofsky & Reed Taylor
In the Spring issue!

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CWONJ Fall Meeting Features Autobell's Noel, Carwasher of the Year Recipient

UNION, NJ — The Car Wash Operators of New Jersey (CWONJ) met Tuesday, November 5, at Suburban Golf Club for its Fall Membership Meeting. The evening event featured a buffet dinner and presentation by Autobell's Joseph Noel, the company's district manager of the Mid-Atlantic Region with seven full-serve locations in Maryland, Virginia and Delaware that he oversees. Noel, who joined Autobell 22 years ago, started while he was still in college as a part-time crew member. He shared with the group of 60 his rise in carwashing and his love of the business. He also touched on how to effectively and efficiently grow multi-site locations, as well as the importance of listening to, and accommodating younger staff. "To grow effectively and efficiently you really need to look within your ranks," he said. "Hiring from within your company is very important, but it takes a lot of work to keep your culture intact."

He added that flexibility is key with younger staff. "Our youth employees are very important to our operation. You need to form a deep, lean roster to expand your sites, and tapping into high school and college students is critical. If someone can't work on a Thursday due to a weekly commitment, work with them. And remember that a good employee can recruit for you. Just try to stay flexible."

Think Outside the Box

Finding and growing the brand often requires thinking outside of the box, Noel added. "Sometimes you need to get creative when you want to grow in a specific market or area. "We converted a Capital One bank outside of Annapolis and we've also converted restaurants and a BMW dealership. If you find a great site you sometimes need to work with what's there, especially if the municipality is not keen on a carwash in their town."

Noel also noted that when seeking out new employees it's not always a benefit if that individual has already worked at a

carwash. "We look for employees who have not worked at a wash as sometimes it's hard to break old or bad habits that they may have acquired elsewhere," noted Noel.

About Autobell

Autobell operates 91 locations across five states. The company was established in 1969 in Charlotte, NC, by the late Charlie Howard. Autobell boasts 3,000 employees and washes nearly 5 million cars annually.



Autobell's Joseph Noel shared insights on "Effectively and Efficiently Growing Multi-Site Locations" through hands-on employee management at Suburban Golf Club in Union, NJ, November 5.

2025 Carwasher of the Year

Also during the meeting, President Dino Nicoletta awarded the 2025 Carwasher of the Year award to Express Auto Spa's Mark Tarnofsky. Tarnofsky operates sites in Colts Neck, Iselin, Jersey City, Lakewood, Livingston, Paramus and Toms River, with additional sites on the drawing board in New Jersey and New York.

The Carwasher of the Year award recognizes an outstanding operation that embodies professionalism, innovation and the high standards of today's professional carwash facility. "Mark is a great operator and someone I have known for years. He is very deserving of this award," said CWONJ President Dino Nicoletta.

Tarnofsky was presented with an acrylic award and banner to display at his wash noting the new designation. In addition, he also just joined the CWONJ board as an operator. "I am really



Kal Wahba with 22 Auto Spa won the 50:50 raffle and was presented with his prize by CWONJ President Dino Nicoletta.



John Agosta, Doug Karvelas, Scott Freund and Mike Conte look happy after a great meal and event.



Car Wash of the Year Winner Mark Tarnofsky was presented with an acrylic and banner to display at his wash from CWONJ President Dino Nicoletta.

honored and thankful for this award,” said Tarnofsky. “It means a great deal to me and my team.”

The association’s next event, it’s Annual Carwash Tour, is slated for Tuesday, April 28. **NC**

For more information on the CWONJ visit cwonj.com and for more information on Autobell visit autobell.com



CWONJ President Dino Nicoletta and Autobell’s Joseph Noel, the event’s featured speaker.



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Speeders Adds Garden State Locations

Speeders Car Wash, Palm Beach Gardens, FL, has added two new sites in New Jersey. The company, formerly Russell Speeders, is a membership-focused brand and part of Summit Wash Holdings. The new sites are in Middletown Township and Fair Lawn, marking the company's fifth New Jersey location, according to a company press release.

The brand expanded into New Jersey in 2025. "We're excited to expand our presence in New Jersey with the opening of another Speeders Car Wash location," said Ray Underwood, Chief Development Officer at Summit Wash Holdings. "Every new site reinforces our promise to deliver a fast, convenient and top-quality carwash experience."

"As we continue to grow across the Garden State, our focus remains on making it simple and enjoyable for our customers to take pride in every ride." **NC**



For more information visit speeders.com

Speeders has added two new New Jersey sites to its lineup in Middletown Township and Fair Lawn, marking the company's fifth location in the Garden State. These photos are from the Fair Lawn site.



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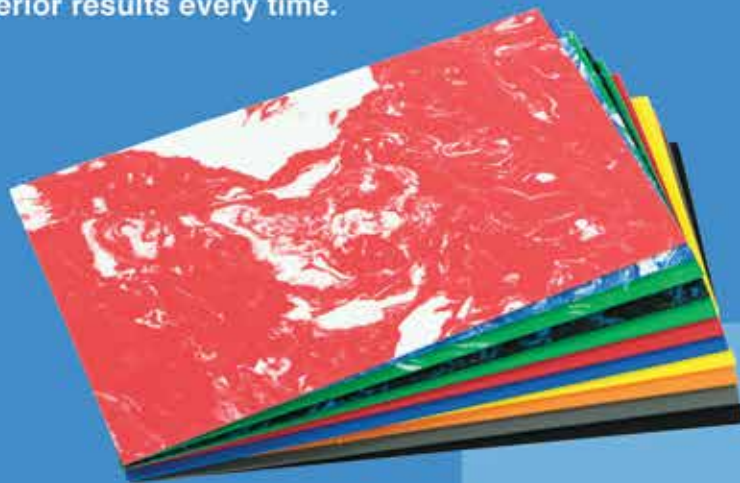
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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

I'm proud to share that the Mid-Atlantic Carwash Association (MCA) experienced a very successful 2025. Across the region, carwash owners, operators, and industry partners showed up — eager to connect, learn, and strengthen the network that powers our shared success. Whether through education sessions, site tours, or regional meet-ups, the enthusiasm was unmistakable. This sense of community is what continues to push our industry forward.

We were also pleased to welcome two new board members — Carl Evory and Melvin Reyes — each bringing insight, leadership and a commitment to advancing MCA's mission. Their addition strengthens our board at an important time of opportunity and growth.

For me, each year, a major highlight is the Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC). I would suggest that this year's was one of the best in memory. The event delivered an outstanding lineup of presenters who offered not just expertise but actionable insights, reflecting the evolving landscape of our industry. The exhibitors were equally impressive with innovations that demonstrate how rapidly the carwash sector continues to advance. That more intimate environment of the NRCC creates incredible access — to conversations, to new relationships, and to meaningful interactions with both partners and carwash owners.

You can walk the floor and quickly find yourself in discussions that spark ideas and deepen understanding. I was encouraged by the number of prospective carwash owners in attendance. Their energy and curiosity reinforced the value of the NRCC, not just for seasoned professionals but also for those exploring their first steps into the industry. The mix of experience and fresh perspective is part of what made this year's convention so dynamic.

As I look ahead to 2026, the MCA will continue to engage with owners/operators and partners across the region with events planned in Virginia Beach, VA, western Maryland/West Virginia, Delaware, Washington, DC, and, of course, our signature annual crab feast on Kent Island.



The MCA remains committed to creating opportunities for connection and growth. If this year has shown us anything, it's that our region is full of passionate, forward-thinking people — and when we come together, our industry is stronger for it.

Tom Morris, MCA President

**Meet New Board Members Carl Evory & Melvin Reyes
In the Spring Issue!**

MCA's Crab Feast Draws Record Crowd

The Mid-Atlantic Carwash Association (MCA) closed out 2025 with one of its most successful gatherings that year: the annual Suds, Shells & Sunshine Crab Feast on scenic Kent Island, MD. Nearly 70 attendees — primarily carwash owners and operators from across the region — turned out for an afternoon that blended professional insight, industry networking and Eastern Shore hospitality.

The event kicked off with an engaging behind-the-scenes tour of Autobell, generously hosted by Operator Vice President Joseph Noel. Attendees had the chance to tour the unique site (a former bank) and have candid conversations about equipment, staffing, and workflow — truly a highlight among operators eager to see how others innovate.

From there, the group shifted gears for a standout presentation by Frank Downs, an internationally recognized cybersecurity expert with a distinguished tenure in U.S. intelligence. Downs has conducted cyber operations for both the National Security Agency (NSA) and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and has authored Presidential Daily Briefs for the White House. His depth of experience set the stage for a timely session on one of the industry's fast-emerging concerns: cybersecurity in the carwash business.

Downs broke down practical, accessible security strategies for tunnel operators and IBA/self-serve owners alike — covering everything from network vulnerabilities and payment system risks, to steps operators can take immediately to harden their sites.

The Q & A session that followed was lively, with attendees eager to dig deeper into the specifics. Even after the formal discussion wrapped, Downs was surrounded by operators lining up with more questions, illustrating just how critical this topic has become.

With minds full and curiosity sparked, it was time to refuel — and few things do that better than a Maryland crab feast. Piles

Crab Feast attendees enjoyed a day of sunshine, camaraderie and seafood.



of crabs, corn, sunshine over the water, and long picnic tables created the perfect setting for relaxed conversations. Attendees lingered well past the official end time, swapping stories, sharing advice and enjoying the atmosphere.

By every measure — from turnout to engagement to the sheer number of hand shakes and crab mallets — the event was a resounding success. Suds, Shells & Sunshine once again delivered what MCA does best: bring the carwash community together to learn, connect and enjoy the unique camaraderie of this industry.

As we look forward we are planning events in the Virginia Beach area, Western Maryland/West Virginia, Delaware and of course the Annual Crab Feast in Maryland. **NC**

For more information visit mccarwash.org



Frank Downs, an internationally recognized cybersecurity expert educated the group on cybersecurity in the carwash and steps to take to harden their sites.



Attendees got their fill of crab and conversation at the annual event.



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Greenhill Supports Fire Companies

Greenhill Car Wash, Wilmington, DE, supported local fire companies to commemorate First Responders Day on October 28 at its Middletown and Georgetown, DE, sites, said a company press release. Greenhill donated \$1 from each tunnel wash and new club membership activated on the 28th.

Greenhill supports communities in each of the company's six Delaware locations, said the release. Some of the community activities include its long-standing support for the Wilmington Grand Prix and food and clothing drives ahead of the back-to-school and holiday seasons.

In November Veterans receive a free carwash on Veterans Day by presenting a military ID at any of Greenhill's full-service locations.

Greenhill opened its first location in Wilmington, DE, in 2009, and its sixth site in Georgetown, DE, in 2024. **NC**

For more information visit greenhillcarwash.com



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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

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How do we as operators continue to grow same-store sales? I believe the answer can be summed up in one key focus: hiring and training the right team.

If your experience back in 2022 was anything like mine, the main qualification for hiring new employees was simply having a heartbeat. It was a particularly difficult year for recruiting and training, with an extremely tight labor market. But as the saying goes, tough times don't last, tough and diligent businesses do.

In today's competitive and customer-centric carwash industry, success hinges not only on location or equipment, but most importantly, on the strength of your team. Hiring and developing the right people is essential for delivering consistent service, upholding safety standards, and fostering long-term customer loyalty.

First impressions matter. In many cases, our employees are both the first and last point of contact for customers. A friendly, knowledgeable, and professional team can be the difference between a one-time visitor and a loyal, repeat customer. Hiring individuals who not only have the necessary skills but who also align with your company's values and customer service mindset is critical.

Equally important is training. Even the most qualified hires need clear guidance and support. Comprehensive training ensures team members are well-versed in equipment operation, vehicle handling, safety protocols and customer interaction. Well-trained staff help minimize operational errors, reduce damage claims, and contribute to a clean, efficient and professional environment. In a business where customer experience and care go hand in hand, training directly impacts your bottom line.

Moreover, investing in ongoing training and development fosters a culture of accountability and growth. It improves job satisfaction and helps reduce turnover, an ongoing challenge in our industry. Hiring the right people and equipping them with the tools to succeed isn't just best practice, it's a strategic advantage. A reliable, motivated team elevates the customer experience, protects your reputation, and drives long-term success.

NECA Events and Highlights

On another note, the New England Carwash Association (NECA) held its annual golf tournament in September to support the organization's scholarship and charitable initiatives. This year, NECA proudly awarded five scholarships to deserving recipients:

- Andrew Sanft – Son of Bob and brother to Alexandra, both of Global Partners
- Kenny Arango – Employee of ScrubaDub
- Owen Flanagan – Son of Jay Flanagan from ScrubaDub
- Kenna Hill – Daughter of Joseph Hill of Charger Water Treatment Products
- Mya Santos – Employee of Global Partners.

Congratulations to all the recipients, we look forward to seeing your continued success!

This year's Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC) was outstanding. I especially appreciated the speakers, who shared valuable insights into improving website performance and team leadership. The networking was equally valuable, it's always a pleasure to connect with vendors, explore new equipment and marketing solutions, and share ideas with fellow operators.

As I write this, the NECA just hosted its Fall Employee Appreciation Event at Topgolf in Canton, MA. While it was clear some attendees are more skilled golfers

Continued on page 77 ...



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Annual Golf Tourney Raises Money for Officers Needing Assistance



Tournament winners from ScrubADub included Kevin Hytha, Jon Bosowski, Brandon Desorecy and Greg Fleischer.

On October 15, 2025, the New England Carwash Association (NECA) hosted its Annual Golf Outing at the stunning Hopkinton Country Club, this year benefiting Officers Needing Assistance. Nearly 80 attendees came together for a fun-filled day on the course, complete with great weather, friendly competition, and plenty of laughs.

The outing was not only an enjoyable event but also a meaningful fundraiser, supporting an incredible cause. Thank you to all golfers, sponsors and supporters for making the day such a success.

Tournament Winners

1st Place Team: Kevin Hytha, Jon Bosowski, Brandon Desorecy and Greg Fleischer

2nd Place Team: Matt Delaney, Michael Delaney, Josh Rodriguez and Rob Poutas

3rd Place Team: Alison Hutson, Evan Hutson, Jack Hutson and Kyle McKay

Men's Longest Drive: Branson Desorey

Closest to the Pin: Jeff Arimento, Jack Frisbie, Larry Saggese

Straightest Drive: Alison Hutson

Putt for Prize: Matt Delaney

NC



Alex Paisner and Ann Marie Previte.



John and Diane Shalbey, Scott Goodreau and Al West.



than others (I count myself among the less experienced!), the event was a resounding success. It remains one of NECA's most anticipated gatherings and a meaningful way to recognize and thank our hardworking teams for everything they do to keep our washes running smoothly. For this event, the NECA also decided to thank all of our sponsors who supported us in 2025 by giving them all free sponsorships during this event.

Lastly, the NECA is in the midst of planning its Vendor Showcase which will take place on January 27 at Foxwoods. Join us at Foxwoods Resort Casino for a one-day event celebrating innovation, education and collaboration within the carwash industry. The NECA Vendor Showcase will feature more than 30 leading vendors, informational education sessions, lunch and a networking reception, all designed to connect carwash owners, operators, and industry professionals.

Let's keep pushing forward with great teams, excellent service and continued growth throughout 2026.



John Shalby

John Shalby, Jr., NECA President



NECA President John Shalby presents a \$1,000 scholarship to Andrew Sanft pictured with his father Bob Sanft.

2026 NECA Board

The 2026 NECA Board includes John Shalby, Jr., Jeffrey Katseff, Chris Linley, Bob Sanft, Matt Unger, Dark Delaney, Chris Ouimet, Chris Bossa, Anthony Ciampi and kneeling is Bob Bibbo and Alex Paisner.



Employee appreciation night a hit

Great Swings, Company at TopGolf Event

The New England Carwash Association's (NECA) 2025 Member Appreciation Night at Topgolf Boston — Canton was a hole-in-one success! More than 100 members joined us for an evening of connection, celebration and friendly competition.

The night was a hit — literally! Members stepped up to the tee for some lighthearted fun and good-natured competition. Between swings, everyone enjoyed great food, drinks, and the chance to unwind and catch up with colleagues in a relaxed, social setting.

A highlight of the evening was the introduction of the 2026 Board of Directors, who will help guide NECA through another exciting year ahead. The association also took this opportunity to thank all of its 2026 sponsors for their continued support and partnership.

It was the perfect way to wrap up the year and show appreciation for the association's amazing members and partners. Thank you to everyone who came out — we can't wait to see you again at our upcoming events!

NC

Paulo Silva and Jeffrey Katseff of Turnpike Car Wash, Mark Delaney of Allston Car Wash, Bob Katseff of Turnpike Car Wash and Mike Delaney of Allston Car Wash.



Chris Bossa from Simoniz USA crushes a drive at TopGolf.

Prestige Expands with Nice N' Clean Acquisition

Prestige Car Wash, Canton, MA, has expanded to 49 locations across New England with the recent acquisition of 15 Nice N' Clean sites, according to the company's website, prestigewash.com

The expansion strengthens the company's presence throughout Massachusetts and marks their first step into Rhode Island with a location in Johnston. The recent acquisition included Massachusetts sites in Bridgewater, Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Halifax, Holbrook, Middleborough, New Bedford, Raynham, Rockland, Somerset and West Bridgewater. "As a family-owned company, our mission has always been to provide quality, convenience and value to every customer," said Tony DeBarros, Operations Manager. "These new locations allow us to bring the Prestige experience to even more neighborhoods."

While rebranding the Nice N' Clean sites to the Prestige brand will take some time, the company is committed to state-of-the-art wash technology, eco-friendly practices and exceptional customer care.



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Speeders Opens New CT Express Sites



Speeders, Palm Beach Gardens, FL, formerly Russell Speeders, has opened a new express wash in North Haven and Norwalk, CT, according to a company press release. The North Haven wash features two pay lanes, a 95-foot wash tunnel and state-of-the-art equipment and 21 vac spaces. “We’re thrilled to continue our growth in Connecticut” said Ray Underwood,

Chief Development Officer at Summit Wash Holdings. “Each new site reflects our commitment to bringing fast, convenient and high-quality carwash services to the communities we serve. With our expanding footprint across the state, we’re proud to be making it easier than ever for our customers to keep their vehicles looking their best.”

The Norwalk site is another Fred’s Car Wash location acquired by Summit Wash Holdings and rebranded as a Speeders.

NC



Speeders' Norwalk, CT, location is now open for business.



Speeders recently opened a new express in North Haven, CT. The facility is colorful and expansive.

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Congratulations to all the carwash associations on another successful Northeast Regional Carwash Convention (NRCC). This year's trade show and educational sessions were some of the best we have ever offered. As a co-chair of the show along with Chris Kubarak, I would like to extend a special thank you to all our vendor partners, sponsors and attendees, board members and especially to Suzanne Stansbury and Heather Courtney for pulling all the strings together behind the scenes to make this event such a success. The work is already underway for next year's NRCC – one you won't want to miss.

Like the NRCC, the work of the NYSCWA never takes a break. We are hard at work planning educational programs for our members and exploring ways to partner with the other Northeast associations to continue to bring value and education to all. Keep an eye out for more information on these events in the new year.

Lobbying for You!

One of the most important roles of the NYSCWA is our work with our long time respected Lobbyist Bill Crowell in monitoring legislation that will have a direct impact on the carwash industry across the state. I encourage you to read Bill's column on page 93 and his overview of what legislative challenges the carwash industry in New York state is facing as the legislature comes back to session. It's critical that as small business owners we speak up to the legislators not only in Albany, but locally, to share the impacts of some of these proposed laws and regulations. Many times, these proposals are born from a legislator's constituents, and rarely are the industries directly impacted ever contacted for input. Bill's work monitoring these proposals and alerting the board is critical to our ability to address them and their potential impact.

I've heard from other business owners who say, "Why bother? I'm just one person, one business. My input won't make a difference." If recent elections tell us anything — every voice and vote matter. It reminds me of a motivational poster I saw a long time ago that said, "A single grain of sand alone is an insignificant obstacle, but put together they become an impassable desert."

The NYSCWA is willing and eager to work with government agencies and legislatures to improve the business climate, opportunities, employee protection and future of businesses across New York state. We have been working to create a relationship with legislators and agencies where we partner together to create realistic proposals to improve the business climate for all small business, where employees and business thrive together — not in spite of each other. If you are interested in becoming part of the solution, consider joining the NYSCWA and if you are already a member — thank you for the support. We will continue to lobby and work for your best interests.



Walt Hartl, NYSCWA President

Why safety matters

How to Protect People, Property, Profit

By Meeghan Sheckler

For carwash owner-operators, safety isn't just about compliance — it's about protecting your team, customers and reputation. Accidents lead to higher insurance costs, employee turnover and downtime. A safe carwash operation, on the other hand, runs smoother, builds customer trust, and lowers your long-term expenses.

Whether you operate a tunnel wash, inbay automatic or self-serve location, taking proactive safety steps can reduce your risk exposure — and help you stay in good standing with your insurer.

The Most Common Hazards

Even a small slip or equipment malfunction can lead to major problems. Below are the top risks insurers see in the industry — and what you can do about them.

Slips, Trips and Falls

Risk: Wet floors, soaps, and oils make carwashes a hot spot for slip injuries.

Prevention Tips:

- Install non-slip flooring and keep walkways clear
- Use bright “Caution: Wet Floor” signage
- Regularly clean and squeegee high-traffic areas and
- Inspect drains to ensure proper water flow.

Equipment and Machinery

Risk: Rotating brushes, conveyor belts, and dryers can cause crushes or entanglement injuries.

Prevention Tips:

- Train employees on safe equipment operation
- Use lockout/tagout (LOTO) procedures during maintenance
- Post clear operating instructions near all controls and
- Schedule preventive maintenance regularly — not just after breakdowns.

Chemical Safety

Risk: Cleaning agents, waxes, and detergents may contain corrosive or toxic materials.

Prevention Tips:

- Always keep Safety Data Sheets (SDS) accessible.
- Store chemicals in well-ventilated areas, away from heat sources
- Use labeled containers — never reuse drink bottles for chemicals and
- Provide PPE like gloves, goggles and aprons.

Electrical and Fire Hazards

Risk: Water and electricity are a dangerous mix. Faulty wiring can cause shocks or fires.

Prevention Tips:

- Conduct regular electrical safety inspections
- Keep all panels and outlets covered
- Train staff to immediately report frayed cords or sparks and
- Install GFCI outlets and fire extinguishers near key stations.

Customer and Vehicle Safety

Risk: Vehicle damage or customer slips can lead to expensive liability claims.

Prevention Tips:

- Use clear signage and employee direction for car alignment
- Keep waiting and vacuum areas clean and dry
- Have a documented incident reporting process and
- Install surveillance cameras to help verify claims.

Safety from an Insurance Perspective

From your insurer's standpoint, safety directly affects:

- Your premium costs – frequent claims or OSHA citations can raise rates
- Your insurability – insurers favor operations with strong safety records and
- Your liability exposure – poor documentation makes claims harder to defend.

Keeping good records (maintenance logs, training checklists, inspection reports) is key. This reporting demonstrates that your business takes safety seriously — and can often result in better insurance terms or reduced deductibles.

Building a Culture of Safety

To build a culture of safety at your carwash you need to continuously train your employees.

- Conduct new-hire safety orientation.
- Hold quick “Safety Huddles” weekly to review one key risk and
- Encourage employees to report hazards without fear of blame
- Keep a daily safety checklist (drainage, signage, PPE, equipment)

Continued on page 87 ...

30 empire state sites and growing, nearly 160 overall

GO Sees Itself as Dynamic, Adaptable



By Frederick Jerant

Given the coast-to-coast market penetration enjoyed by GO Carwash (currently 157 locations in New York, Virginia, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Texas, Nevada, California, and Oregon — with more on the way), you might presume that the company has been a player for a long time.

But its entry into the carwash marketplace began in 2019, when Imperial Capital — a Toronto-based mid-market private equity firm with a focus on partnership opportunities in the U.S. and Canada — funded the establishment of

the first GO facility in Kansas City, KS. Its first acquisitions of existing properties were two Travel Clean Express Car Washes in Overland Park, KS, and Lee's Summit, MO. By year's end, there were a total of 13 (nine in KC & four in Las Vegas, NV) GO facilities — and the company never looked back.

We spoke with Justin Carozzolo, Director of Operations — New York, about the company's explosive growth and other topics.

Carozzolo came to the industry indirectly; he had previously been Construction Supervisor for Zelasko Construction, which had been involved in other carwash construction projects. His biggest surprise was discovering the intricacy of the carwash business. "There's so much that goes into a carwash — pneumatics, hydraulics, plumbing, utilities and many other trades — and every one of them integrates with all the others."

The company supports charities like In My Father's Kitchen noting that clean cars can change lives.



Go's Bear Road location in Syracuse opened in May 2025.



Their attractive signage stands out.



And if the company's corporate colors seem familiar, well, there's a reason for that. GO draws inspiration from the world of auto racing — especially the Ford GT40 shepherded by the legendary Carroll Shelby to consecutive victories in 1966, 1967, 1968 and 1969 at The 24 Hours of Le Mans. As of 2024, the GT40 remains the only American-built car to win that iconic race.

"We liked the orange-and-blue combination, and admired Shelby's years of success, so we adopted the colors and a 'racing' theme. It's been a great strategy for GO," Carozzolo said, adding that the company has no business arrangement with Shelby's estate.

GO's three-pronged growth strategy comprises acquisitions, new site development, and same store growth. "We see ourselves as dynamic and adaptable," he says. "As the marketplace changes, we change strategy so that we can maintain our mission and never drive down the value. We make sure our customers see a great overall value, and excellent customer service. If we acquire a 10-year-old site, we'll spare no expense to make it look brand new."

Although Carozzolo declined to specify how the company selects its next region for expansion, he said that it's partly based on an area's population density and its need for multiple carwash facilities. Whether it's through new construction or acquisition, the company prefers to make an impact by adding several GO washes at once. "That's why you won't see a state that has just one GO carwash location," Carozzolo said.

GO's emphasis on consistency and a familial atmosphere means it doesn't take a "new broom" approach to staffing its acquired properties. "We try to retain everyone," Carozzolo said. "In fact, when we acquired Superior Car Wash in Utica, former owner Vincent Surace worked with us in partnership to develop more sites in upstate New York."

And those efforts have been quite successful. GO currently operates about 30 washes in Cicero, Webster, Depew, Marcy, Canandaigua, Hamburg, Buffalo, West Seneca, Niagara Falls, Greece, Orchard Park, Macedon, Liverpool, Rochester, Victor, Brockport, Williamsville and Syracuse.

He added that, although GO has its own operational



Radio station 92.1 The WOLF helped promote the company's newest Syracuse location opening.

formula, the system isn't implemented quickly. "Although the wash name and employees' uniforms may change overnight, we make our internal changes gradually," he said, "so our employees can get used to them. We've found that, 95 percent of the time, we see overall improvements. If something doesn't

Continued ...

work as expected, we get it fixed within 24 hours. The result is an average 99.7 percent uptime.”

He compares the GO employee experience to receiving “a college education in carwashing” without paying for it. And the size of GO’s wash network enables employees to readily capitalize on opportunities at other company-owned facilities — they already know the systems and procedures, so they’re likely to fit in immediately. “We want our employees to view working here as a career, not just a job,” Carozzolo said. “GO is committed to develop our people as much as possible. For example, each team member receives ongoing training in the best-of-industry standards and practices. When you invest in your people, you get exceptional service.”

In addition to well-trained staff, GO relies on state-of-the-art technology to keep operations running smoothly. “Our internal app, developed by Go Car Wash, enables all sites within a region to share information, monitor performance, and maintain consistent execution.”

“Everything from developing and prioritizing work orders, to data for the damage claims section, quality control operations, and inventory control can be accessed through the app. The information is available in just minutes, and no one needs to wait for a returned phone call or email,” he said.

GO Car Wash understands that its success — whether in terms of cars-per-hour/day, the number of club memberships sold, or the skills of the local labor pool — rests with its

communities, and so creates a symbiotic relationship.

Here’s a recap of the ways GO gives back to its New York communities:

- **GO Wash Ticket Fundraising Program** enables local schools, youth teams, and nonprofit groups to purchase discounted GO Big! wash tickets for resale at face value. The groups pocket the difference, raising funds without the hassle of time and labor-intensive fundraising activities. “These tickets raise real money fast, and they’re something the community actually wants,” he said. “It’s a clean car and a great cause. Everybody wins.”
- **The Community Heroes Program** salutes local change-makers who rarely seek credit. “Our customers vote for deserving organizations, such as first-responders, teachers, and the like,” he said. Through the team-created initiative, groups can receive:
 - › A day of free washes
 - › Free GO Big! (a premium package that includes a graphene coating, ceramic wax, tire shine, and other features) wash tickets
 - › A direct financial contribution and
 - › Spotlight promotion across GO’s channels.

Targeted local donations — which include cash donations,

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“ We’ve been testing lots of custom wrap material and a big sticking point was finding quality material that was safe for our customers’ vehicles, cleaned their vehicles exceptionally well and was made in the USA. DYNAMO WAVE has checked all these boxes. Thank you, Erie Brush!
-Tyler Slaughter,
Camel Express Car Wash ”

SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESS

giveaways of wash tickets and other forms of support — benefit deserving community programs. These are just a few of the groups that have benefitted from GO's contributions:

- WNY Heroes
- American Red Cross
- HUGS Foundation
- Webster Comfort Care
- Sleep in Heavenly Peace
- Pitt Hopkins Research Foundation
- Local VFW Post
- Volunteer Fire Departments (multiple locations)
- Animal Shelter of Cicero

GO recently hosted members of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce and partnered with My Father's Kitchen in Syracuse, a local non-profit that helps individuals transition from homelessness to employment and stable housing. The effort raised \$2,000 for My Father's Kitchen in a single weekend.

"When our teams give back, it's personal," Carozzolo said. "We're part of these communities. And when they shine, we all do."

So what does the future hold for GO Car Wash? "We intend to expand our coverage by moving into additional states, with multiple locations in each one, whether we build new facilities or acquire existing ones. I can't say exactly what the future holds, but I know that our current business model works exceptionally well, and we'll keep striving to make it even better," he concluded. **NC**

Frederick Jerant is a freelance writer based in Allentown, PA.

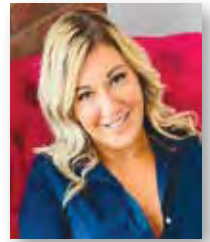
- Log all maintenance and repairs and
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Your insurance agent and carrier aren't just there after something goes wrong. Many carriers offer risk control resources, including on-site safety audits and employee safety training. They can also provide you with recommendations for compliance with OSHA and EPA standards.

By investing in safety, you can reduce downtime and injuries and lower your insurance costs over time. And remember, a clean car is important — but a clean, safe, and well-managed facility is what keeps your business thriving.

Safety isn't an expense — it's an investment. Each step you take to protect your employees and customers helps prevent costly claims, strengthens your insurance profile, and builds long-term success.

NC



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

Meeghan Sheckler

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Welcome Future Carwasher!



Congratulations to Doug and Frances Kleeschulte on the birth of their beautiful daughter, Mila Rose, on December 24, 2025, at 9:09am. She was 6 lbs and 10 oz. **NC**

Hoffman Car Wash Fall Food Drive a Success

Hoffman Car Wash, Albany, NY, has again supported local food pantries in October with its annual Food Drive, according to a company press release. The effort, over the October 25-26 weekend, welcomed customers to donate a non-perishable food item at any exterior or full-service location for a free Ultimate Car Wash as a “thank you.”

For more than a decade the company has been partnering with local food pantries to fight food insecurity in the communities it serves. The most recent effort supported 20 regional food pantries across upstate New York and southern Vermont.

Practice Kindness Initiative

The Fall Food Drive, along with the Spring food Drive slated for April 2026, is part of Hoffman Car Wash’s Practice Kindness initiative, an effort to spread goodwill and make a positive difference in the lives of others. In addition to this initiative, Hoffman Car Wash proudly supports organizations such as the Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless (IPH), Breakthrough T1D (formerly JDRF), the American Red Cross, the ALS Regional Center, and the Saratoga Senior center to name a few.

The company also empowers local nonprofits and youth programs through its Helping Hands Program. **NC**

For more information visit hoffmancarwash.com



Hoffman Car Wash supports 20 regional food pantries across upstate New York and southern Vermont annually.



20th year supporting Grace for Vets

Hoffman Car Wash Honors Veterans

For 20 years, Hoffman Car Wash, headquartered in Albany NY, has participated in Grace for Vets, a one-day program that offers a free carwash to all Veterans and active-duty and retired military personnel. They were the second wash to participate in the program founded by Pennsylvania operator Mike Mountz in an effort to honor and giveback to our service men and women. Mountz was presented with the 2025 Northeast Regional Carwash Convention's (NRCC) Most Distinguished Person Award in October for his efforts with the program.

Hoffman Car Wash gives each Veteran an Ultimate Car Wash, on the honor system, not requiring a military ID. Since the launch of this event, the company has washed nearly 80,000 vehicles.

"Veterans and members of the Military sacrifice so much time, comfort, and security so the rest of us can go about our daily lives. Offering a free carwash is a small way for us to show that their service is very much appreciated. After 20 years, this event remains one of the most meaningful days on our calendar," said CEO Tom Hoffman, Jr. "Also, despite the weather, we washed 2,632 cars."

This event is part of Hoffman Car Wash's "Practice Kindness" initiative, which spreads positivity and goodwill in the communities it serves. By practicing kindness, Hoffman Car Wash hopes to make a positive impact and inspire others to do the same. **NC**



Hoffman Car Wash has been supporting the Grace for Vets program since its inception in 2004 when it was founded by Pennsylvania operator Mike Mountz.

For more information visit
graceforvets.com and hoffmancarwash.com

Delmar Site Closed Temporarily



The Hoffman Car Wash location at 55 Delaware Ave. in Delmar was ordered to vacate in October as experts said shifting ground at the location posed an imminent threat to public safety. The site underwent extensive shoring up of its bank in 2000 after a slide, but officials say a portion of the slope on the property, which is above the Normans Kill Creek, has been actively moving again. After meeting with the Town of Bethlehem, the company made the decision to temporarily close the location out of an abundance of caution. While the wash is closed, customers are able to use their Unlimited memberships at other Hoffman locations. "We do have a plan to fix the slope," said Tom Hoffman, Jr. "It's just going to take some time to execute it." **NC**

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Fall NYSCWA Meeting Focuses on Leadership



EAST FISHKILL, NY — The New York State Car Wash Association (NYSCWA) met at Sloop Brewing Co. here on Wednesday, September 10, for its Fall Membership Meeting. The venue was established in 2011 by Adam Watson and second-generation brewer Justin Taylor, and named after the historic vessels that once cruised the nearby Hudson River. It is one of the nation's fastest growing breweries and was an attendee hit.

Prior to the meeting's start, attendees had the opportunity to visit a number of Foam & Wash sites, on their own. Spearheaded by Evan Baright, attendees got a first-hand taste of the outstanding diverse locations. The local family-owned company was founded in 1960 by Dick and Carleen Baright with their first location in New Windsor, NY. They now operate 12 locations throughout Dutchess and Orange counties including washes, dog washes, gasoline and a Laundromat. A special "thank you" to the Baright family for opening up their locations to attendees.

The meeting featured a presentation by Matthew Scarchilli, the owner of Sandler by Winning Process, a sales training company that focuses its sales methodology by building relationships and qualifying leads through a multi-step process. Scarchilli engaged attendees, many of which included managers, in discussions on leadership. "We hear it often, 'the difference is the people,'" said NYSCWA President Walt Hartl. "Matt spoke to our members about the importance of leadership in developing our teams for maximum performance. He was engaging and addressed real world issues for the attendees, and barely scratched the surface of what it means to lead effectively. Attendees were left wanting more so stay tuned as we look to partner with Matt in the future."

The meeting also included some association business including a Secretary and Treasurer reports by Rob Peter, as well as a legislative update from President Hartl. The association is currently following legislation on the state's All-Electric Buildings Act, PFOA/PFOS (Forever Chemicals), Senate Bill 2025-S4153A (accepting cash) and the Workers' Protection Act. For more information on these issues, and more, visit nyscwa.com. Longtime association Lobbyist Bill Crowell is advocating on your behalf.

President Hartl would also like to thank Event

Sponsors Micrologic and Simoniz USA, Brews & Beverages Sponsors American Car Wash Solutions and Kleen-Rite Corp. and Dessert Sponsor the Northeast Carwasher magazine for their support of the association's efforts and mission. "Their support provides us with the ability to put on great events like this one," said Hartl. "Support them!"

NC

For additional information on the New York State Car Wash Association visit nyscwa.com



Foam & Wash's Dave Costello, Gary and Evan Baright and Spritz' Steve and Sebastian Weekes at the Poughkeepsie location.



Matthew Scarchilli of Sandler by Winning Process engages the group in an interactive discussion on the leadership roles that drive team success.



Synergy Solutions' Rob Peter and Exceptional Operations & Development's Steve Sause take a moment to catch up.



NYSCWA President Walt Hartl introduced guest speaker Matthew Scarchilli of Sandler by Winning Process and updated attendees on association business.



Sloop Brewing was founded in 2011 by Adam Watson and second-generation brewer Justin Taylor, and named after the historic vessels that once cruised the Hudson River. It's one of the nation's fastest growing breweries.



NYSCWA board members Chris and Amanda Kubarek and Mackenzie Weekes Wilock, Spritz' Sebastien Weekes and outgoing Vice President Steve Weekes, catch up at Sloop Brewing's bar.



Foam & Wash's Evan Baright proudly displays signage from two of the event Brews and Beverages Sponsors.



Simoniz' Brian Albanese, Foam & Wash's Gary Baright and Simoniz' Jake Collison and Al West strike a handsome pose.



Your favorite publication sponsored the dessert at the event.

Showcasing Our Vacuum Systems

By Evan Baright



At Foam & Wash we have designed a vacuum system that not only integrates paid usage seamlessly but it also rewards our Unlimited members with complimentary access. This hybrid model provides the best of both worlds — generating revenue while also offering strong member benefits. Our washes are located in Dutchess and Orange Counties in upstate New York.

Paid Vacuum Integration

Our paid vacuum stations are simple, modern and user-friendly. Customers can conveniently pay using Tap to Pay technology with credit cards or mobile wallets. The pricing is straightforward. This ensures accessibility while

also reducing misuse, since customers tend to value and respect what they pay for. The machines are clearly marked, easy to operate, and include timers so customers know exactly what amount of time remains.

Members Enjoy Free Access

For our Unlimited members, vacuums are provided free of charge. Active members simply scan their membership card, which we rotate quarterly. They are given 5 minutes, which we find is the perfect amount of time. If they need more time they can scan again, but this helps limit over usage. This setup adds tremendous value to our membership program, encouraging loyalty and repeat business. Members love knowing that they always have access to clean, well-maintained vacuums at no extra cost. Something we found unique was that we are allowing our tunnel members to use our self-serve carwash vacuums at no cost either, really creating membership value!

Benefits of the Hybrid Model

- **Revenue Generation:** Paid vacuums generate direct income, helping offset electricity, equipment and maintenance costs.
- **Customer Satisfaction:** Members receive exclusive perks, reinforcing the value of their membership.
- **Reduced Abuse:** Paid options discourage non-wash users from misusing equipment, while still ensuring that loyal customers enjoy free use.
- **Modern Appeal:** The integration of contactless payment and QR-enabled membership access creates a sleek, modern customer experience.

Added Value Air Guns

Our paid vacuums go beyond the standard cleaning experience by including attached air guns. These powerful tools create more value and give our customers extra bang for their buck. The air jets help dislodge dirt, dust, and debris from those hard-to-reach areas — like vents, crevices, and under seats — making the vacuuming process much more efficient. By blowing out tough spots first and then vacuuming, customers enjoy a faster, deeper, and more satisfying clean.

Our vacs stations demonstrate the clean, professional setup and customer-friendly design we strive to accomplish. Our approach to vacuums exemplifies how Foam & Wash continues to innovate — striking a balance between operational sustainability and customer-first service.

NC

Evan Baright is Foam & Wash's Director of Operations.



The company's paid vacs go beyond the standard cleaning experience by including attached air guns. These powerful tools create more value while making the vacuuming process more efficient. By blowing out tough spots first, and then vacuuming, customers enjoy a faster, deeper and more satisfying clean. Foam & Wash uses Cryptopay Tap to Pay readers and Micrologic vacs with some custom boxes made by Kleen-Rite.

Temperature Regulation Bill, No Liability Bill Being Watched by Association



By William Y. Crowell III

The recent local elections in New York included a special election for a Assembly seat in the North Country which was previously held by D. Billy Jones. Michael Cashman the former supervisor of the Town of Plattsburgh was elected to fill the seat in the 115th Assembly district. Several other legislators were successful in winning New York City elected offices and their seats will be filled by special elections set by the Governor. The make-up of the 2026 Legislature will remain largely unchanged.

The 2026 legislative session will be focused on enacting a budget with New York State facing a projected shortfall of \$4.2 billion for fiscal year 2027 with a \$10 billion deficit looming for fiscal year 2028. With 2027 being a Gubernatorial election year the expectation is for no major tax increases. The mayor-elect of New York City on the other hand has been clear in his agenda to tax the rich to support new programs. Fortunately, mayor-elect Mamdani and the Democratic Socialists of America have only targeted grocery stores, utilities and chartering a bank for New York City ownership while sparing the carwash industry.

Temp Reg Bill to Watch

This upcoming session a bill that NYSCWA will focus on is A.3527 (Bronson) S.3412 (Ramos) entitled temperature regulation by employers. This bill requires specific employers to provide employees with heat protection at indoor and outdoor worksites. Carwashes are specifically included in this bill with respect to outdoor worksites. This bill sets a heat stress threshold of 80 degrees or more for employer action. To qualify as an outdoor worksite employees are required to perform work outdoors for longer than 15 minutes in any 60-minute period. The employer is required to implement the following heat protection standards where the heat stress threshold is reached: provide access to hydration, in the event of heat illness symptoms you must provide first aid treatment, access to shade, provide preventative work breaks to employees with a minimum 10-minute break where the temperature reaches 90 degrees, and employees are to be provided with personal protective equipment to include fans and air conditioning.

The employer is required to provide a Department of Labor (DOL) training curriculum to employees when they are hired. Employers are also required to provide signage and educational materials including information where an employer can be reported for non-compliance with this law.

This bill also provides for a rebuttable presumption of unlawful retaliation based on an adverse action against an employee within 90 days of the filing of a complaint by the employee.

Employers are required to maintain records of heat-related illness and fatalities for three years. In addition, employers

would need to develop a written plan on how heat stress would be mitigated, which would be made available to all employees.

The Department of Labor is charged with establishing a worker hotline to implement heat protection standards.

This bill was reported from the Senate Labor Committee last session to the Senate Finance Committee. This movement last session taken together with the fact that the legislation is sponsored by the Labor Committee chairs in both houses make this bill a priority to follow next session. Although many of the requirements are common sense, it creates an enforcement mechanism which is a burden on owners.

Another bill of interest to the carwash industry is A.4570 (Fall). This bill provides that a carwash facility which displays a sign that it is not liable for any damages caused to motor vehicles would be required to post an additional notice. This notice would reference the right of the consumer to file a complaint with the consumer protection division notwithstanding the carwash notice of no liability. The sponsor argues that consumers need transparency with respect to their options.

Every Albany legislative session presents different challenges for carwash operators and this upcoming session will provide more of the same.

NC



William Y. Crowell, III

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

Save the Date!

Join us on July 24 for an event at Saratoga Race Course trackside in one of the Stella Artois Spa Verandas!

More information to come!

NC



Getting Things Done By Tuning In



By Ray Justice

Do you ever think that you are a magnet attracting what you are thinking and believing? Try writing down some of your thoughts when you are aware of them, the ones that you seem to repeat over and over, the ones that you have a habit of expressing to others or thinking to yourself.

Then, start choosing the thoughts with a positive and upbeat attitude to go along with who you want to be and what you really want to do.

Think about and write down something good that you have accomplished to help practice the creative feeling. Writing can often be the beginning of celebrating to yourself what you are accomplishing.

Make it a Daily Practice

Begin with the end. Create the words and the vision of what you will have or be in the end. Beginning with the end in mind is a large part of how you get there.

My Writing Journey

In the early 1900's???, I became a writer.

It was not my interest at first as I was a very poor at spelling. In this case the local Chamber of Commerce kept insisting I write for their newsletter and saying that I could write anything I wanted. How could I say no?

A friend of mine made a comment to me that I also live by, she said, "I NEED A DEADLINE OR NOTHING HAPPENS." Life, in general, has many distractions that we easily are attracted to.

The following is a sample of attraction on a separate article I wrote in 1997.

Magnetism: An invisible force that has the property of drawing to, attracting or repelling.

We don't know exactly how it works, but we can learn how to use it for our benefit.

Like other mysteries of life, many of the same principles apply to us.

We all attract things and people, the big question is what are we attracting and why?

These are some things that I'm magnetized by or drawn or attracted to:

- Stars at night
- Music and singing
- Drums
- Mountains and horizons
- Moving water
- Passion and sensuality
- Books that make me wonder

- Smiles, laughter and a sense of humor
- Cheering
- Flowers and trees
- Animals
- People who are trusting, spirited and alive.

If you're not attracting things you like, something is off in your magnetic field.

Feeling good about yourself is the beginning of favorable attracting.

Start upgrading what you already have. What kind of person are you?

What kind of people and other things do you attract (or repel)?

Things that will make you a more magnetic person:

- Being truthful and authentic
- Helping others
- Mentoring, supporting and sharing
- Being your best
- Teaching and modeling
- Raising your standards
- Clearing space and creating a quiet mind
- Going with the flow
- Polishing your presence
- Being yourself (not who you should be).

The more comfortable you are with what you have, the less you need.

The less you need, the more you'll attract.

Which way does your personal compass point?

I asked A.I. the following, "How can I help or encourage myself to sharpen my focus and get things done? Is it an attitude?"

ChatGPT said: Sharpening focus is partly an attitude but also a practice. It begins with your intention: deciding clearly why something matters today. When you value a task, focus naturally deepens.

Start by removing distractions — silence notifications, tidy your workspace, and set time blocks for tasks. Even 20-30 minutes of undistracted work builds mental stamina.

Break tasks into small, clear steps. This prevents being overwhelmed, making it easier to start. Completing each step builds momentum and satisfaction, reinforcing your focus.

Your attitude does play a key role. Approach work with curiosity rather than burden. Ask, "What can I learn here?" instead of "How fast can I finish?" This shifts your mindset from pressure to engagement.

Physical state affects focus too. Sleep, hydration and

movement keep your mind alert. Taking short walks or stretching between tasks resets attention.

Finally, forgive lapses. Focus is like a muscle — strengthen it daily but expect it to tire. Gentle self-reminders to return to the present are more effective than criticism.

Sharpening focus is less about control and more about connection. Connect to your why. Connect to the moment. Connect to your breath, body and environment. Your attitude shapes your approach, but your habits build your focus. And always remember that you don't need to conquer everything at once. Just return to the next right thing, again and again, with clarity, kindness and presence.

NC

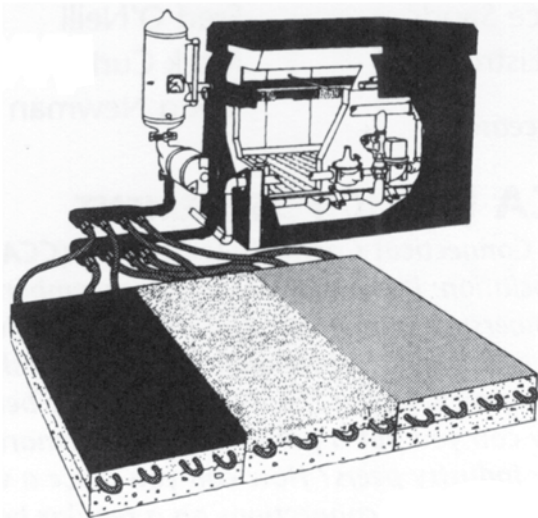


Ray Justice

Ray Justice is an Entrepreneur, Poet & Creativity Explorer. He is a former carwash operator and past president of the NYSCWA. You can follow him on Instagram at RayJusticeQuotes for ideas to create your writing topics or visit his website at RayJustice.com



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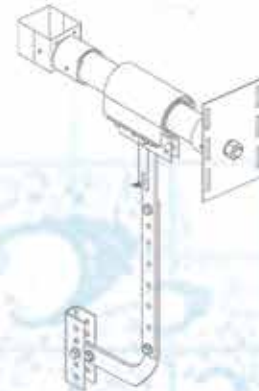
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