

The Official Newsletter of the Auto Body Association of Connecticut



ABAC Holds Second Annual Charity Golf Tournament to Benefit Connecticut Tech School Collision Program

"In Unity There is Strength; In Knowledge There is Power"

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ABAC President's Message

Bob Amendola

The State of Our Industry



Our industry can no longer be suppressed. The complexity of repairs will change and has already changed the balance of power. Claim payers are bracing for this. They hope to continue the fallacy of cheap repairs. It can no longer be done. With the combination of substandard parts, poor quality materials, lack of repair research, and proper repair time you have a recipe for disaster.

At our shop we are seeing an increased interest from the younger generation within our trade. If you don't invest in them there is no future for our industry.

We had a great turn out at the Auto body Association of Connecticut Golf tournament. We were able to raise a significant amount for the trade schools in our state. With all of that being said, I see a bright future for our industry.

Be the most positive person you can be and watch what happens.

Please continue to support your association; onwards and upwards!

Sincerely,

Bob Amendola

Autoworks of Westville
President - Auto Body Association of Connecticut
Autoworksofwestville@gmail.com



**AUTO BODY
ASSOCIATION
OF CONNECTICUT**

ABAC Holds Second Annual Charity Golf Tournament



ABAC Vice-President - Ashley Burzenski

On October 4th, the ABAC hosted our second annual charity golf tournament At Lyman Orchard in Wallingford to benefit the Connecticut Tech School Collision Repair Program. We're proud to announce that the event raised approximately \$18,000!

Over 75 attendees enjoyed a beautiful fall day on the green. The event brought so many of our members together for a good cause, while also creating a sense of camaraderie throughout our association. Participating in events like this not only supports a great cause but offers opportunities for our members to socialize and network together too.

On behalf of the board of directors, we'd like to especially thank Dave Esposito of Kemperle, Tony Cavallaro Jr. and Joe Cavallaro of Airport Road Auto Body for all of their hard work and dedication in organizing the event and making it such a success.

Thank you to our event platinum sponsors: Mauro Motors Stores- BMW of North Haven, Mercedes-Benz of North Haven & BMW of Bridgeport.



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A special thank you our sponsors:

- **Diamond Dinner:** National Coatings & Supplies / Single Source
- **Gold Grand Prize:** Axalta
- **Silver Breakfast:** Parts Authority
- **Hospitality:** Auto Body Supplies And Paint Inc
- **Beverage Cart:** North Haven Auto Body
- **Hole in One:** Express Recalibrations
- **Cigar Table:** Dent-Away, LLC

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Hole Sponsors

asTech	Airport Road Auto Body	Connecticut Calibrations
Suzio Insurance Center	Express Recalibrations	Metroplitan Car-O-Liner
Lamore's Service Center & Towing	Bald Hill Dodge Chrysler Jeep Ram Kia	Dawley Collision

Tee Sign Sponsors:

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Autoworks of Westville	Stanley's Auto Body
Lorensen Auto Group	BASF
Shamrock Sales - 4 Signs	Buckley, Wynne and Parese Personal Injury Attorney - 2 Signs

With the success of our second annual golf tournament The board of directors have decided that the proceeds raised for the Tech School Program should go to the WBL (work base learning).

This program allows students in the Collision Repair program to work in shops during their shop cycle. Shops employ the students, and they work in a real time environment. When the school year is over the shop has the option of keeping the student employed or thanking them for their service throughout the school year and parting ways.

This is a great opportunity not only for the student, but also for the shop to hire an entry level technician. What we are hoping to accomplish is to fund transportation for these students that do not have their own transportation to be transported to and from shops.

The specifics are not complete, but we are working with the Advisory committee to try and work out the details to make this happen. We will keep everyone informed and we strongly suggest you contact your local Tech School Department head teacher to find out if they have qualified students to participate in the WBL program.

Check the list on Page 6 for contact information.

Your support and participation is very much appreciated. Thank you to everyone who supported this event. Without your support, we would not be able to host events like this to support the next generation of technicians.

Ashley Burzenski

Autoworks of Westville - Vice President - Auto Body Association of Connecticut
Autoworksofwestville@gmail.com

School	Department Head/Instructor
A.I. Prince Technical High School 401 Flatbush Avenue Hartford 06106	Matthew Kamfonik (DH) matthew.kamfonik@cttech.org (860) 951-7112 x5509
Ella T. Grasso Technical High School 189 Fort Hill Road Groton 06340	Steve Violette (DH) Steve.Violette@cttech.org (860) 441-0360 Jose Rios (Instructor) Jose.A.Rios@cttech.org 860-441-0361
H.C. Wilcox Technical High School 298 Oregon Road Meriden 06451	Robert Turcotte (DH) Robert.Turcotte@cttech.org (203) 317-5920 Robert Catan (Instructor) Collision Repair Technology Teacher (203) 317-5938
Harvard H. Ellis Technical High School 613 Upper Maple Street Danielson 06239	Instructor Grades 11&12 Steven Pambuku (DH) Steven.Pambuku@cttech.org (860) 412-7500 x7548 Instructor Grades 9&10 Tom Senuta Thomas.Senuta@cttech.org (860) 412-7500 x7524
Henry Abbott Technical High School 21 Hayestown Avenue Danbury 06810	Eric Maher (DH) Eric.Maher@cttech.org (203) 797-4460 X4050
Oliver Wolcott Technical High School 75 Oliver Street Torrington 06790	Robert Ducey (DH) Robert.Ducey@cttech.org (860) 496-5300 x5377 Rui Moreira (Instructor) Rui.Moreira@cttech.org (860) 496-5300 x5376
Platt Technical High School 600 Orange Avenue Milford 06461	Richard Benedict (DH) Richard.Benedict@cttech.org (203) 783-5360 Jesse Morton (Instructor) Jesse.Morton@cttech.org (203) 783-5383
Oliver Wolcott Technical High School 75 Oliver Street Torrington 06790	Robert Ducey (DH) Robert.Ducey@cttech.org (860) 496-5300 x5377 Rui Moreira (Instructor) Rui.Moreira@cttech.org (860) 496-5300 x5376
W.F. Kaynor Technical High School 43 Tompkins Street Waterbury 06708 203-596-	Robert Hipp (DH) Robert.Hipp@cttech.org (203) 578-8724 James Lilienthal James.Lilienthal@cttech.org (203) 578-8727



HIRING?

In light of the ongoing technician shortage, the ABAC has begun a long-term campaign to promote the collision repair industry to potential candidates. As a benefit to our membership, we created a page on our website dedicated to career opportunities exclusively with our member shops.

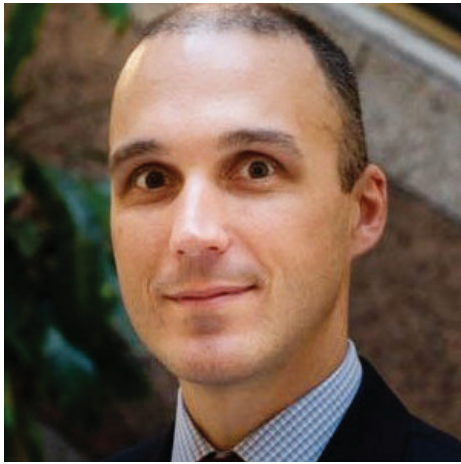
As part of our campaign, we will be promoting this section of our website in an effort to direct potential candidates to our members.

If you have any open positions, simply visit abaconn.org, select the careers page and complete the form. Please complete the form for each position separately.



AUTO BODY
ASSOCIATION
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ABAC Government Relations Update



***By Andy Markowski, Esq.,
Statehouse Associates, LLC
ABAC Lobbyist***

Will an influx of EVs be in every shop's future?

State legislature could decide...

As the summer season has reached a conclusion and the leaves are falling off the trees in Connecticut, one of the hottest policy issues at the Capitol has neither reached conclusion nor consensus. So-called "blue states", like Connecticut, are taking a cue from California's clean car and truck rules as they seek to bring down greenhouse gas emissions, reduce vehicle pollution and hasten the transition to zero-emission vehicles.

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEEP) recently proposed regulations which would tie Connecticut's vehicle emission standards, for both "light" duty vehicles (i.e. passenger cars and trucks) as well as medium and heavy duty vehicles, to those being put in place by California. Effectively, what this would mean for Connecticut is that no new gas-powered cars could be sold in state after 2035. While the proposed regulations would not impose a ban on the ownership or sale of used gas vehicles, manufacturers would only be allowed to sell new vehicles that are zero- emissions.

The backstory here is that California received federal permission in March to enact an Advanced Clean Trucks rule that requires an increasing percentage of zero-emission heavy-duty trucks and other large vehicles to be sold beginning in 2024. Its Advanced Clean Cars II rule, adopted in 2022, will require all new cars sold to be zero-emission vehicles by 2035. Eight states, through rulemaking or legislation, took actions this year to follow in California's footsteps. Colorado and Maryland adopted the truck rule in April, while Massachusetts finalized the clean car rule in March. New Mexico, New Jersey, Maine and Rhode Island, and now Connecticut, all recently announced the states would take action to adopt one or both of the rules. Four more, Washington, Oregon, Vermont and New York, adopted the car rule last year.

The state of Connecticut, through DEEP, is proposing the regulation under a longstanding law, passed by the legislature in 2004, that says the state is to remain consistent with and adopt California's emissions standards for motor vehicles. DEEP has received hundreds of comments, both in support and in opposition, to the proposed regulation, and soon state legislators may decide if the proposal moves forward this year or not.

Even though the state legislature is not currently meeting in session, under Connecticut's unique rulemaking procedure proposed regulations from a state agency like DEEP must first pass through a special, bipartisan legislative committee before they can be enacted. Some lawmakers are now questioning whether DEEP has exceeded its legislative authority with the proposed rule, while others, including some opponents of the rule, are questioning its infrastructure practicalities and costs to consumers.

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It is anticipated that the legislature's Regulations Review Committee could meet as soon as November to decide on the initial fate of the proposed rules. Meanwhile, some lawmakers are also calling for legislation, a debate and vote by the entire legislature in 2024 before any proposed electric vehicle mandate could go into effect.

Manufacturers, dealers, collision repairers and consumers alike should all pay close attention to the course of the debate and discussion as future state mandates will inevitably impact business operations, customer preferences and an evolving marketplace. Stay tuned!

The 2023 State Legislative Session May Be Over, But That Doesn't Mean Your Lawmakers Don't Need To Hear From You – Tell Them What Matters To You And Connecticut's Collision Repair Industry!

Have a question? Want to express your opinion? Just want to know who now represents you in Hartford? Go to the website below and enter your home or business address to look up your state legislators; with a few quick clicks you can visit their official webpage, email them, or get their office phone number to make a call. Remember – as an ABAC member, your voice matters!

<https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/menu/cgafindleg.asp>

As always, if you have questions on legislation or regulations or if you would like more information on an issue, please feel free to contact ABAC Lobbyist Andy Markowski at: (860) 707-3620 or aem@statehouseassociates.com.

*Information provided is for educational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice.

Torrington Hyundai Parts



**Torrington
Hyundai**

This edition of the ABAC News turns the Vendor Spotlight on one of our newest Supporting Advertisers, Torrington Hyundai.

I recently reached out to Parts Manager Brian Albanesius, and he took the time out of his busy day to give us an idea on how Torrington Hyundai is focusing on their wholesale sales and their support of the Auto Body Association of

Connecticut.

Brian has been at Torrington Hyundai for almost 3 years. His staff focuses on their busy service department while Brian maintains a growing wholesale business. Under his purview he takes wholesale calls, creates the orders, and sets them up for delivery. One of his immediate goals is adding a separate dedicated wholesale parts phone line to alleviate any potential wait time for new and current customers. Brian tells us that he also sets time aside to call potential customers as well as make in person shop visits to introduce himself to ABAC members.

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By no means is this just a one man show as Brian gets help, when needed, from the rest of his staff. Growing your wholesale business is not an easy task and Brian is depending on his support of the ABAC by being an ABAC Supporting Advertiser in the ABAC News to help his progress.

He and his staff also have 6 technicians to supply as well as his collision shop that consists of 5 techs. It's never a dull moment.

With a dedicated delivery vehicle on the road making multiple deliveries each day, customer satisfaction is very important. Brian tells us, ***"I want to grow our wholesale. The more I can add to our customer base, the more I will be able to offer for services. Growth and satisfaction go together."***

Delivery areas consist of most of Connecticut, some Massachusetts as well as New York. That's a great wide area for targeting growth.

Inventory currently sits at \$150K, and Torrington uses OEConnection's CollisionLink for shops to send in their orders. Brian is currently working on adding RepairLink to help in growing the

mechanical business as well. (As of this writing, we're happy to announce that Brian has added OEConnection's RepairLink to Torrington's offerings.)

As far as the future of the parts industry, Brian offers, ***"I see more electronic offerings for the shops so that they can get their parts much more quickly. There needs to be more focus on the supply chain to offer the dealers better availability. I know that the supply chain is one of the biggest issues for all wholesaling dealers. Currently, when needed, we will locate parts for our valued customers, and we will travel as needed to satisfy their needs. I feel that customer satisfaction will allow us to continue our path to growth!"***

Brian became involved with the ABAC after his Collision Shop Manager Dave Eckhart mentioned to him what advantages there may be after attending several ABAC meetings. Brian then reached out to us via the ABAC News and contacted us to inquire about becoming an ABAC Supporting Vendor. Now he finds himself ready to enjoy the fruits of his labor by focusing on what ABAC members need.

On the personal side, we asked Brian what keeps him busy besides his work at Torrington Hyundai? He tells us, ***"I have a landscape business that I own. I can be found working every day after work and on weekends. It's something I really enjoy."***

"I'm hoping that I reach out to ABAC Members to show them what we have here at Torrington Hyundai. Please feel free to call me with any of your Hyundai parts needs. I look forward to having an opportunity to earn your business", he continued.

And that's this Edition's Vendor Spotlight. The Team from Torrington Hyundai Parts. We'd like to thank Brian for taking his time and giving us some insight into his parts operation.

And, as our ABAC President Bob Amendola reminds everyone, **Support Those Who Support You!**

Submitted by Don Cushing

ABAC Quarterly Membership Meeting Keeps Education in the Forefront

The Auto Body Association of Connecticut held their most recent Membership Meeting on Tuesday September 12th at The Woodwinds in Branford.



ABAC President Bob Amendola began by thanking everyone for their attendance and went over the evening's agenda. ***"At the risk of sounding repetitious, I again want to sincerely thank all our ABAC Corporate Sponsors and our ABAC News Supporting Advertisers. They have all made a financial commitment to support YOUR Auto Body Association of Connecticut. In return we'd like to ask all our members to remember to Support Those Who Support You,"*** said Bob. ***"Buckley Wynne and Parese and Mauro Motors are our Platinum Sponsors of the ABAC News Advertisers Directory as well as Bald Hill Dodge Chrysler Jeep Kia who is our Gold Sponsor of our Directory,"*** he continued. ***"These ABAC meetings would not be as successful as they are without the direct contributions from our sponsors. So, a big thank you to all of them"***

"I'd also like to thank tonight's meeting sponsor, Albert Kemperle Auto Paint, Body & Equipment represented by Dave Esposito and for everything Dave has done for us in the ABAC," said Bob.

"I would also like to welcome our newest ABAC News Supporting Advertiser, Torrington Hyundai." (See Vendor Spotlight on Page 9-10)

"Bob Kennedy will be our guest speaker this evening and he will be providing us with a lot of useful information for our businesses. Bob travels around the country for speaking engagements and he has a lot of energy so please enjoy his presentation," continued Amendola

Bob then introduced the newest ABAC Members

- Angelo's Auto Body
- JM Monsanto
- Shoreline Auto Body
- Traynor Collision – Fairfield

Tony Cavallaro Jr then stepped up to the podium to discuss the ABAC Gold Tournament that was held on October 4th. (See article in this edition!)



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We then heard from Dave Fogarty who lightly covered a few of the subjects that have been discussed at past meetings such as: Labor Rate Surveys; Short Pays; Steering; Educating Customer; Psychological Warfare, among other topics.



John Parese then presented a pamphlet that he put together that, he feels, is a great tool to winning the hearts and minds of your customers by helping explain what the insurance companies are trying to do as far as steering them away from shops and whatever angle the insurance companies are attempting to do to cheat the customer. ***"You can use this as a resource, in your shop, in case there is a concern over what an insurance company doesn't want to pay for, you can use this tool to show the appraiser the Connecticut Law and what the customer is entitled to. You will also find a number of Frequently Asked Questions to help you help your customer"***, said John. Parese then passed these out to all attendees.

President Amendola then introduced our guest speaker of the evening, Bob Kennedy, Independent Consultant who gave us a presentation on Financial and Performance Evaluation.

He covered:

- Incoming vs. Outgoing Revenue In All Areas, Financial Health In Shop Labor, Admin Payroll, Parts and P&M
- Performance Health in Shop Techs & Administration
- Estimating Health
- Work Source Evaluations (DRP's?)
- Brick & Mortar Utilization, Stall Utilization, Booth Utilization
- Equipment Utilization
- Shop Performance in Total Cycle Time & Touch Time
- Areas Of Improvement, Recommendations, Goals, & What's Needed to Get There



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We asked Bob Kennedy to tell us a little about himself. Here's his words:

"I have been in the collision industry for 38 years starting in Massachusetts, my father was involved in collision management and the local association, that's where my love for the industry began. I went to work for BASF in 1993 for the waterborne launch in California and conducted OEM certification for 16 years. The last 15 years of my life have been in consulting and business development with the WESCO group... locally Kemperle," said Kennedy.

He continued, ***"I spend much of my time in collision center KPIs both performance and financial, helping develop DFR structured shops, team and culture along with pay plans for both techs and admin. I work in shops to find what thresholds they are bumping into, areas of growth and limitations as well as a road map for future goals. The owner's group on Nov 8th will be a day of open forum discussion in all these areas and more."***

The evening ended with a 50/50 Raffle along with several gift cards provided by the Auto Body Association of Connecticut.

The ABAC would like you all to consider becoming a member of this strong association. Just by attending these meetings you will offset the cost of a yearly membership.

"In unity there is strength. In knowledge there is power."



Submitted by Don Cushing



What does AI think of Steering?



John M. Parese is a partner at the New Haven-based firm of Buckley Wynne & Parese

BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP! The alarm clock blared. Dazedly I hit snooze and rolled over to drape my arm around ... Don Cushing. Wait, what?! “Got my article?!” Don casually implores. “Go away, Don, I’m sleeping!” I beg. No dice. “I gave you plenty of time,” Don passive-aggressively reminds me. “Go away!” I stammer. “You’ve had months to write this article ...” I sit up: “Hey Chat GPT, write Don Cushing a god damned article,” I mutter, then crash back to sleep.

AI is worth talking about. The recent developments in Artificial Intelligence have been prevalent in almost every industry. Businesses big and small have utilized developments in AI to automate tasks, expedite research, and increase efficiency. But how far will this technology go?

Could AI really take care of this article for me? I figured that tasking Chat GPT with: “write me an article” was probably too much. Instead, I endeavored to see what Chat GPT thought about steering. The response was compelling.

“Chat GPT” is the most widely used platform for AI, with over 180 Million people accessing the software since its launch in November 2022. The user inputs a question or prompt into Chat GPT, which then scours the internet for relevant information, ultimately producing a thorough structured reply. Chat GPT and AI software in general have been met with mixed reviews. One criticism is that OpenAI software programs such as Chat GPT should be able to guide consumers in an objective way.

I decided to put this to the test, asking Chat GPT a familiar question. Here’s what it said.

Q: Why shouldn’t I trust my insurance company to refer me to an auto body shop after a car accident?

While your insurance company may provide you with a list of recommended autobody shops after an accident, it’s important to approach these recommendations with a degree of caution and skepticism. Here are some reasons why you might be hesitant to trust your insurance company’s referrals entirely:

1. **Financial Incentives:** Insurance companies often have established relationships with specific auto-body shops. These shops may offer discounts or work on a preferred provider network basis. While this can save you money, it might also mean that the autobody shop is more interested in keeping the insurance company happy than in providing you with the highest quality repairs. In some cases, this could lead to shortcuts or subpar work.

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2. **Quality of Work:** The autobody shops recommended by your insurance company may not always be the best in terms of quality and craftsmanship. Insurance companies may prioritize cost savings over the quality of repairs, potentially resulting in substandard workmanship.
3. **Limited Choice:** You might have limited options when you rely solely on your insurance company's referrals. This can be problematic if you have a preferred shop or if you believe that another shop can provide better service.
4. **Conflict of Interest:** Insurance companies are businesses that aim to minimize their expenses, including repair costs. Recommending specific auto body shops may be influenced by the insurance company's desire to control costs rather than ensuring the best repair for your vehicle.
5. **Repairs Might Not Be Guaranteed:** Some auto body shops recommended by insurance companies may offer warranties on their repairs, while others may not. It's important to clarify what kind of warranty or guarantee you'll receive before choosing a shop.
6. **Your Rights:** In many regions, policyholders have the right to choose their repair shop, and insurance companies cannot insist on a particular shop unless it's part of your policy agreement. Be aware of your rights as a consumer and your ability to choose where your vehicle is repaired.

To ensure that your vehicle is repaired to your satisfaction after an accident, it's a good idea to do your own research. Get multiple repair estimates, read reviews, ask for recommendations from friends and family, and visit autobody shops in person if possible. Ultimately, you should choose a shop that you feel comfortable with and trust to do a thorough and reliable job, regardless of whether it's recommended by your insurance company or not.

All things considered, I was relatively impressed with how Chat GPT addressed this nuanced question. Eh, maybe the question was a bit loaded, but the response was solid. In a matter of seconds, the software was able to provide a litany of reasons why consumers should be wary of insurance company recommendations. It was also savvy enough to remind consumers of their right to choose the shop of their choice. That is pretty impressive.

As it turns out, AI was able to help me write this god damn article after all. And at least for the time being, it got Don Cushing off my back (and out of my bed). Not bad. Until next time, Don. Until next time.

John M. Parese, Esq. is a Partner with the law firm of Buckley Wynne & Parese and serves as General Counsel to the ABAC. Buckley Wynne & Parese maintains offices in New Haven, Hartford and Stamford, and services clients throughout all of Connecticut. The opinions set forth in Attorney Parese's articles are for education and entertainment purposes only, and should not be construed as legal advice or legally binding. If you have any questions or concerns about the content of this or any of Attorney Parese's articles, you are encouraged to contact Attorney Parese directly.

As workforce shortage grows, SEMA presentations offer guidance for collision repair facilities



The U.S. workforce has been thinned out by economic growth and now an additional 3 million employees are needed to keep pace, according to a University of Tennessee economics professor who spoke during the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals' Annual EDGE Conference this week.

As reported by DC Velocity, Professor Marianne Wannamaker told attendees that the unemployment rate has reached a 22-year-low.

"And there are more job openings than there are unemployed people, so the idea that we are going to solve our problem by just retrain-

ing the unemployed people doesn't hold water in today's economy," Wannamaker said. "That's not our current situation. Instead, we don't have enough bodies."

The ongoing skilled trades shortage contributes to the current unemployment rate and is no surprise for collision repair facilities that are caught in an ongoing struggle to attract and retain technicians. Part of the shortage is caused by vacant positions left by techs that retire.

An upcoming Society of Collision Repair Specialists (SCRS) Repairer Driven Education (RDE) presentation during the SEMA Show, "Talent Shortage – Ensuring We Have Collision Technicians in 5 Years," will address the reported need for 1 million auto, diesel, and collision technicians by next year.

Panelists will discuss how collision repair facilities can attract, develop, and retain talent through business culture, developing career paths, and leveraging available resources.

Brandon Eckenrode, managing director at the Collision Repair Education Foundation (CREF), is among those set to take the stage to discuss solutions to the issue. "The industry's talent shortage is something that affects all segments of this industry, either directly or indirectly," Eckenrode told RDN. "The talent shortage topic is commonly listed as one of the top issues that this industry, like many other technical trades, is facing. This is not something that will be resolved overnight and it will take the industry getting involved and invested into their local technical school programs."

He said doing so is necessary to ensure students are properly trained, and that local markets will have access to a pipeline of entry-level workers as those students graduate.

"It's imperative that you are preparing and adapting your business to meet the needs of collision repair technicians to ensure the future of your business," Eckenrode said. "CREF is looking to connect with those industry members looking to support their local collision school programs."

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He said those who attend the presentation can expect to learn more about CREF's latest initiatives, as well as what industry members can do to support collision programs, students, and instructors in their local markets.

Other panelists include:

Jennifer Maher, executive director at TechForce;

Laura Lozano, collision repair technology professor at Contra Costa College; and

Donna Wagner, vice president of industry and media relations at the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE).

The session will be moderated by Jeff Wildman with BASF. Ahead of the conference, Wildman told RDN said the session will address one of the industry's most pressing issues and what can be done to solve it.

"Everybody wants to talk about the talent shortage but nobody knows what to do about it and I think the big thing is none of us can fix it alone," he said. "We all have to do our part. Each of us needs to do something."

A separate presentation as part of the RDE IDEAS Collide Showcase at the show, called "Fixing the Faucet: How to Increase the Flow of Technicians into the Industry," will feature Alex Crays, an auto body instructor at the Career Technical Education Center.

Crays will share his experience as an instructor who is involved in fostering talent among those interested in entering the industry and the strategies he's learned along the way.

Meanwhile, the Collision Industry Conference (CIC) meeting happening Oct. 31 in Las Vegas will also tackle the issue through a panel focused on the talent shortage from a technician's perspective.

The session will include Aaron Schulenburg, SCRS executive director and Dara Goroff, I-CAR's vice president of planning and industry talent programming, who will introduce guest presenter Meredith Collins, a Ducker Carlisle director who helped lead the I-CAR and SCRS study.

"This presentation will help better define what actions repairers can take to manage the technician crisis — both how to draw in new technician talent and retain those in collision shops today," Collins told RDN. "[It] will share key findings from a recent survey of over 800 collision technicians. The audience will walk away with details on how the collision industry stacks up against other automotive verticals as well as recommendations for how the industry can shift attention to solutions that will both draw in and retain talent. We'll dig into the key drivers of collision technician satisfaction, their career goals and needs, and provide a deeper understanding of what motivates collision technicians today.

"Ducker Carlisle has over 30 years of globally recognized automotive industry syndicated research and benchmarking experience. Within this presentation, we will share our expertise in the technician space, comparing the results from our recent collision technician survey against data from past technician surveys in other automotive sectors."

Collins is referring to a survey developed by SCRS and I-CAR to better understand what collision repair technicians think about working in the industry; specifically, job satisfaction, earning capacity, and other aspects that either encourage or diminish retention. The survey, which concluded Aug. 30, was facilitated by Ducker Carlisle.

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Goroff said the goal of the presentation is to share data that can help the industry elate the perception of collision repair careers.

“Our goal is to share data that can help the industry elevate the perception of a career in collision repair to future talent,” Goroff told RDN. “The presentation will validate some things we already know as an industry while bringing new insights to light,” Goroff told RDN. We’ll identify areas where they are immediate and meaningful rewards for becoming an entry-level technician and areas that, as an industry, we need to do better to attract and retain new talent.”

Those interested in learning more about the show or planning to register can do so online. To learn more about SCRS’ RDE series during the show, go to <https://scrs.com/sema-rde-%20registration/>

Those planning to attend, or considering attending, can explore the RDE track in greater depth or add sessions to their show planner by visiting SCRS: Repairer Driven Education on the [Map Your Show](#) site.

Source: www.RepairerDrivenNews.com - Article By Michelle Thompson

Zoomers on the Road



How shops can capture the attention of the younger generation

As vehicles continue to age and change, so do people. Staying in touch with trends among younger demographics and learning how it will relate to your business’s advertising is something every successful business is conscious of.

Sara Fraser of Haas Performance Consulting is not only familiar with how to market for independent shops, but how to make that marketing appeal to all age demographics. She’s shared her insights on what shops can do—and avoid—to capture the attention of Generation Z and beyond.

Making Your Virtual Mark

The biggest way to reach younger audiences is online, and investing in online advertising is a simple and effective way to make your business seen. The best platforms to focus on are typically Instagram and TikTok, as data has shown that most users on these platforms range from 18 to 34.

An online advertisement will stick with most younger people if it seems genuine, and a shop can achieve this by portraying themselves as transparently as possible. Using photos taken of the actual shop and its employees in advertisements as opposed to stock photos is a good way to communicate that sentiment.

“They’re really looking for honesty, transparency, upfront information, they want the facts—like they are going to do their research, they’re going to read reviews—that kind of stuff,” Fraser says. “So [avoid] anything that’s kind of gimmicky, or just not transparent and truthful.”

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Indeed, most young people are proficient with the Internet and like to do research before paying money for a product or service. A shop that has its information easily accessible is more likely to capture the attention of the young Internet researcher—especially in an automotive emergency. If they must click through several tabs to find basic information, such as the shop's address or services offered, many will simply go to the next shop on their list rather than scour through the website. One way to keep this from happening is to create an FAQ page.

Another key step to focus on is setting up your shop's Google profile. This is commonly overlooked but can in fact lose the attention of many prospective clients.

A Google profile contains information that will be used to direct related searches toward your business. If a shop hasn't looked over its Google profile and included what services it provides, it may affect how often it shows up in online search results. And when marketing to the young generation of Internet researchers, having that Google profile set up to include you in as many search results as possible is crucial in gaining their business.

Miles of Road Ahead

A decline in the demand for automotive work doesn't seem to be likely with the incoming generation.

Though rideshare services have become more common, most younger people still plan on owning their own vehicle. Having a personal vehicle makes life easier in many ways, but it can also serve as a source of income for many, especially young people trying to get by.

Shops can not only gain clients from understanding how to connect with the younger generation, but also attract people in that demographic that are looking for a career.

As the industry faces a shortage of technicians, it's important to learn how to market not only your services to potential customers, but your workplace to potential talent. Fraser has assisted many shops with the hiring and interview process and has found the most important thing for those entering the field is having a job that provides security. "I always ask in an interview, you know, 'what are the three most important things for you in your next job?' And in this age group, it tends to be that safety is always in one of those top three," Fraser says. "So they're looking for a safe environment—and that's physically safe, and also mentally safe, they want to know that they're not going to have to deal with harassment and bullying at work."

This can be achieved by expressing sentiments in job ads about the company culture and showing that your staff are team players that take care of one another and have a good work-life balance.

Hosting outings or lunches with the shop staff is also a great way to build a genuine bond that can appeal to that demographic of young people first entering a field.

With the entirety of Generation Z soon being able to own and drive their own vehicles, it's certainly not a group of people the auto industry should ignore.

Many strategies for attracting younger demographics, such as increasing your business' presence in search results, will yield successful results, but being aware of Generation Z's role as the informed customer and their specific concerns will help attract potential lifelong relationships, if not the beginning of a successful career in the automotive aftermarket.

Source: <https://www.fenderbender.com/>

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