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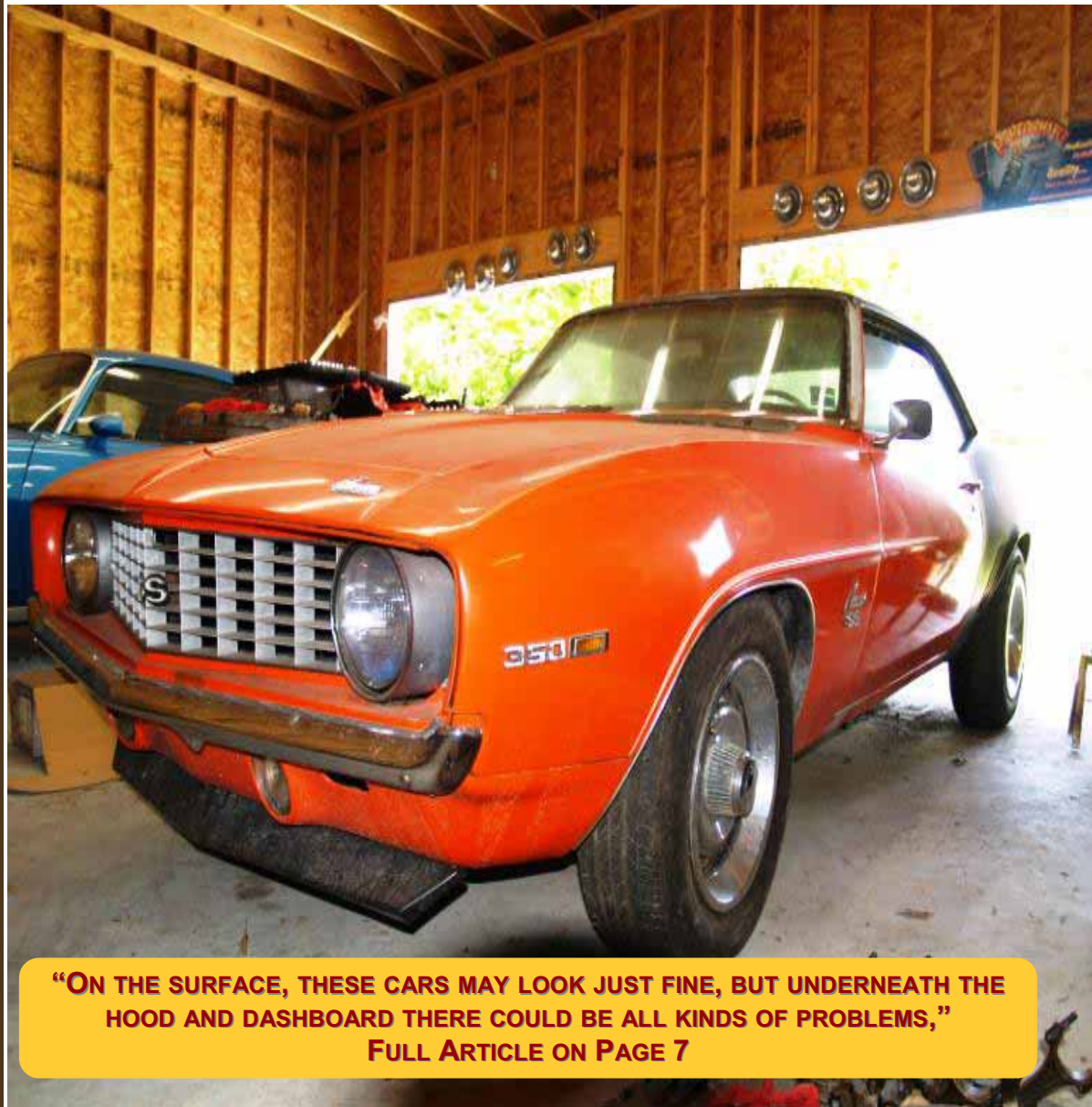
Bayou State Tire Dealer News

LOUISIANA INDEPENDENT TIRE DEALERS ASSOCIATION

Inside:

- ▶ **President's Report**
Annual Convention
- ▶ **Two Years Post Katrina - Water Damaged Cars Flooding the Market**
- ▶ **10 Common Mounting and Balancing Mistakes**
Tire Basics
- ▶ **Dealer Spotlight**
- ▶ **Preventive Maintenance**
Tire Service
- ▶ **Setting Prices, Selling Services**

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2
FALL 2007



**"ON THE SURFACE, THESE CARS MAY LOOK JUST FINE, BUT UNDERNEATH THE HOOD AND DASHBOARD THERE COULD BE ALL KINDS OF PROBLEMS,"
FULL ARTICLE ON PAGE 7**

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**Bayou State Tire
Dealer News**



**LOUISIANA INDEPENDENT
TIRE DEALERS ASSOCIATION**

Senior Editor-Keli Williams
Associate Editor-Lindsay Martinez

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Baton Rouge, LA 70884
lindsay@tatmangroup.com
www.litda.org

THE BAYOU STATE TIRE DEALER NEWS

Louisiana Independent Tire Dealers Association

From the President, Paul Bernstein

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2
FALL 2007

Louisiana Independent
Tire Dealers Association
P.O. Box 82531
Baton Rouge, LA 70884

Dear Members,

I hope that many of you reading this newsletter will make plans to attend our Annual Convention and Tradeshow February 28-March 1, 2008 at the Beau Rivage Casino and Resort in Biloxi, MS. Knowing by the time you have invested in reading the newsletter you truly care about the tire industry.

LITDA is measured heavily by the success of our Convention and Tradeshow, and that is why we need your support. The Convention is the association's largest event of the year. It's a time when Tire Dealers and Suppliers from around the state can network with each other, and share their experiences. We have worked hard to develop strong educational programs that cover current topics related to the industry, along with fun networking events. LITDA is dedicated to providing new ideas, techniques, and information that will help make the Association a more significant force in Louisiana.

LITDA also invites the members to visit with the Dealers and Vendors at the Annual Trade Show, and learn about the latest technologies and innovative products. You are able to meet face to face, and take advantage of the many opportunities that you cannot duplicate anywhere else. Tire Dealers are able to get quotes for their business, make buying decisions, and after the show share information with coworkers. This proves to be a great place for vendors to exhibit and show their products to a group of pre-qualified dealers, as well as build relationships.

Whether you're a Vendor or Tire Dealer, we want to see you at the Beau Rivage Casino and Resort, in Biloxi, MS. Come be part of our 2008 Annual Convention and Tradeshow. There will be exciting and educational information for everyone, including the Annual Golf Tournament, Social Events, Tradeshow, and Educational Sessions. I trust each of you will go home with ideas that will help increase your business.

Sincerely,
Paul Bernstein



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Two Years Post Katrina: Water Damaged Cars Continue To Flood Marketplace

By: James Guyette, *Automotive Body Repair News-E-Pillar*, Sept. 14, 2007

When Hurricane Katrina surged ashore it immersed the Gulf Coast's vehicle fleet in a poisonous saltwater soup that comprised key components. Two years later, government officials now believe that some 500,000 so-called "Katrina cars" have since flooded the marketplace – driven by "title washing" that hides their waterlogged origin. Repairers who offer thorough, educated can assist their car-buying customers by providing advice on avoiding a washed-up vehicle.

This summer's widespread flooding has heightened concerns over a new wave of used cars that may look good when superficially cleaned and dried yet contain serious hidden hazards.

Shop owners need to be aware that technicians can be at risk if proper precautions aren't taken when working on a suspect vehicle, according to Coordinating Committee for Automotive Repair (CCAR). They could experience serious illness if exposed to parts contaminated by disease-causing pathogens and harmful chemicals.

Notwithstanding the biohazard issues, a car's occupants can face danger in that critical safety systems may suddenly fail and vehicles can inexplicably stall in traffic.

Immersion in saltwater can be particularly troublesome to a vehicle's performance. You've probably seen what winter roadsalt can do a rocker panel – imagine what this corrosiveness can do to sensitive electrical connections under the dash.

Freshwater from a river can be equally filthy and detrimental to a vehicle's future roadworthiness "Consumers should be aware that some businesses and individuals may try to sell salvaged and flood-damaged cars without revealing the vehicle history," says David Claeys, purchasing manager for CarMax in Richmond, Va. "Flood-damaged cars that are not structurally or mechanically sound could be repaired, re-titled, and sold to unsuspecting buyers."

Consumer advocates and government officials representing each side of the political spectrum are calling for an effective national database to reliably identify a flood car and keep it off the road forever. Pending passage of such a mandate, however, advisories continue to be issued.

Recent media accounts by *USA Today* and ABC News have drawn renewed attention to the situation, focusing on the risks to people who buy cars that have survived a flood only to become a rolling "time bomb" to those riding in them.

"Even without the influx of Katrina-damaged cars, thousands of wrecked, flooded or stolen automobiles are sold every year with clean titles to unsuspecting consumers," says U.S. Sen. Trent Lott (R-Miss.) Lott, who lost his home and a car to Katrina, has become an outspoken proponent of putting a plug in title washing.

"This situation persists because many states' motor vehicle title laws are confusing or incomplete. Right now there is no single nationwide database which tags all problem vehicles. In some states, including Mississippi, unscrupulous folks are able to practice 'title washing,' in which a car with a salvage title is reissued a clear title," Lott points out.

"This legislation is particularly needed in Katrina's wake, but it's hardly a new problem," he asserts. "An estimated half million vehicles were damaged by Katrina, and there is evidence that these cars are being cleaned up and sold to unsuspecting consumers. A number of these cars are unsafe and shouldn't be on the roads. And folks are overpaying for vehicles they believe are mechanically sound. To the untrained eye, they appear to be in good shape," Lott adds.

"On the surface, these cars may look just fine, but underneath the hood and dashboard there could be all kinds of problems," he says. "Today's automobiles are laden with complex electronics and computer systems very susceptible to moisture. They don't just 'dry out.' The damage may not manifest itself until after you've bought the car."

"Once a vehicle has been flood-damaged, many critical auto safety features are compromised," concurs Glenn D. Turner, chief of staff at the Florida Division of Motor Vehicles "If a consumer unwittingly purchases one of these potential road hazards, they are jeopardizing their safety, and the safety of others."

LOUISIANA INDEPENDENT TIRE



2007 SEMA Show, LAS Vegas
pictured are Lindsay Martinez & Keli Williams



Michelin Exhibit, SEMA Show



2007 SEMA Show, Las Vegas

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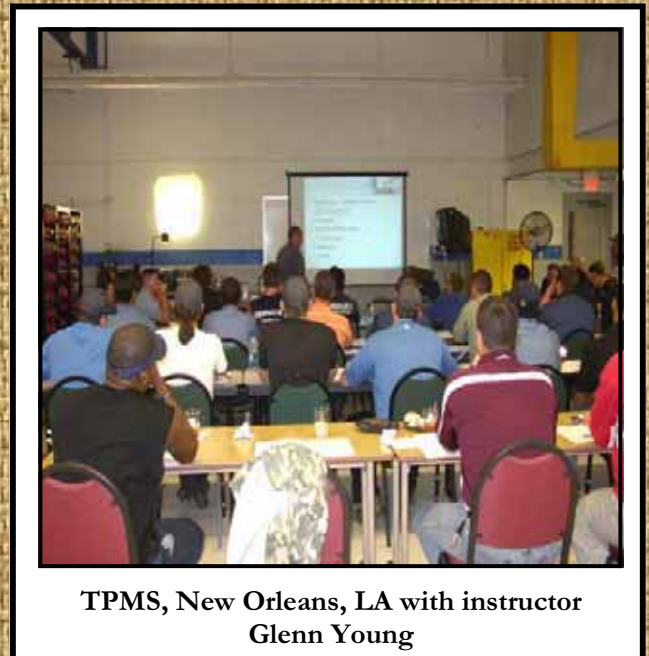
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A Message from the Executive Director, David Tatman

Louisiana voters elected Bobby Jindal to be their next Governor on Saturday, October 20, 2007. The 36-year-old Republican captured the prize that eluded him just four years ago.

By winning the race in the primary with 54% (699,275 votes) of the vote in a field of 12 candidates, Jindal became the first non-incumbent candidate to win an open gubernatorial seat since Louisiana adopted open primary system in 1975 and the first member of a racial minority to become the state's chief executive since Reconstruction.

The 36-year-old Jindal becomes the nation's youngest Governor and the first chief executive of any state who is of Indian-American descent. When he officially takes over from Gov. Kathleen Blanco in January, he will be the second-youngest person to serve in that office after Huey P. Long, who was 35 when voters first elected him in 1928.



Despite beautiful weather throughout most of the state, turnout for the election that featured statewide, legislative and local races was only 46 percent. And while 1.4 million voted in the 2003 Governor's race, the number was down to 1.3 million in the first gubernatorial race since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. In New Orleans, voter turnout dropped from 121,841 four years ago to 75,880 in this election.

Jindal's victory came despite the presence of two wealthy, self-financed candidates in State Sen. Walter Boasso of Arabi and New Orleans-area businessman John Georges. They spent millions of their own dollars trying to push Jindal into a runoff, but failed to make significant inroads with voters.

Jindal spent much more of the 2007 election in rural areas and it paid off. Primary Election returns showed Jindal making significant gains in parishes where he was viewed as underperforming in 2003. For example, Jindal won 54 % of the vote in Rapides Parish (44% in 2003), 55 percent of the vote in Grant Parish (40% in 2003) and in Acadia Parish he received 54% (43% in 2003) of the vote.

Jindal's tactics changed from the 2003 campaign, where his loss was attributed to his refusal to answer negative campaign ads by Kathleen Blanco. In this election, he responded to negative campaigning quickly and decisively. In addition, he gained several years of experience as a U.S. Representative that allowed him to counter claims that he had never accomplished anything.

Jindal has named Rolfe McCollister, publisher of Baton Rouge Business Reports, as the head of his transition team. Jindal and McCollister will have more time to build a team with his Primary Election victory. Jindal will be inaugurated on January 14, 2008 and plans to call a Special Session of the Legislature to address ethics reform shortly thereafter.



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10 Common Mounting and Balancing Mistakes: and How To Avoid Them

By Mike Manges, Modern Tire Dealer Magazine, April 2007

It may sound overly simplistic, but an independent tire dealership's success in the high performance tire retail market ultimately depends upon two things: correct tire/wheel mounting and correct tire/wheel balancing. "How many times do you get a second chance with a customer?" says Dan DeLoss, director of sales and marketing for McCourt Industries, which sells Corghi tire changers and balancers. Knowing and practicing correct mounting and balancing techniques will satisfy finicky high performance tire and wheel buyers.

Here's a look at 10 of the most common high performance tire mounting and balancing mistakes.

Here are the five tire mounting mistakes:

1) Mounting mistake: Failure to recognize tire pressure monitoring systems, run-flats and other special technologies.

"Is the vehicle equipped with a tire pressure monitoring system (TPMS)?" asks Michael Alusick, worldwide product manager, undercar products, for Snap-On Equipment, which sells John Bean and Hoffman brand tire machines. "You have to pay attention to what type of TPMS is on the vehicle. If the sensor is at the valve, it has the potential to be damaged." Make an official notation that TPMS sensors are working before you service any vehicle. This will protect you from customer accusations that you damaged their tire pressure monitoring systems during mounting or demounting, says Dave Scribner, product manager for Hunter Engineering Co.

2) Mounting mistake: Improper handling of reverse mount wheels.

Reverse mount wheels are becoming extremely common, according to DeLoss. "For example, Toyota has some reverse mounts at OE." He recommends using a reverse mount adaptor to avoid scratching the wheel's surface. "Scratches on a chrome rim turn into rust." When clamping, use jaw protection to avoid damage. "Most tire changers will give you specs for outside clamping," says Alusick.

3) Mounting mistake: Inserting the bead breaker the wrong way.

If you don't insert the bead breaker closely enough, you run the risk of damaging sidewall plies. Wheels also can be damaged by an incorrectly inserted bead breaker.

4) Mounting mistake: Not using the proper amount of lubrication.

Lube should be used both when the tire is mounted and when it's removed." Too much lube or incorrect mixtures

with excessive water can cause tire-to-wheel slippage and vibration problems," says Scribner. "Too little or no lube can cause damage to the tire and wheel." In addition, using incorrect lubricants can create long-term wheel corrosion, leakage and premature failures. Make sure you lube the inner toe area of the tire bead, the bead seat and the balcony of the wheel drop center.

5) Mounting mistake: Holding the bead in the drop center by using hand-held bars.

"If the bar slips and the tire comes up, you're going to rip the tire bead," says Fred Ison, a McCourt trainer. You also may damage the rim. "You may get away with (using bars) 100 times in a row, but that 101st time when you damage a \$2,000 wheel negates all of that." Techs also can be hurt if a bar suddenly breaks loose. Use a mechanical or pneumatic assist to hold the tire into the drop center while mounting the upper bead, says Alusick. "With most changers, you can place the bottom bead on the rim without difficulty. But you must get the upper bead into the drop center of the wheel without damaging the tire and rim.

"As we get into 30- and 40-series tires, sidewalls are fairly stiff, so it's difficult -- if not impossible -- for a tech to drop that bead using only hand pressure." "Take your time when mounting," says Kevin Keefe, director of marketing for Hennessy Industries Inc. "I can't emphasize this enough. Take all the proper precautions. Don't skip any steps. "You should be following standard practices already, but standard practices are all the more important with low-profile, stiff sidewall tires."

Balancing errors

Balancing tire and wheel assemblies requires more care than ever due to the increasing complexity of vehicles, says Keefe. "Vehicles have gotten lighter and suspensions have gotten stiffer. You have to pay attention to the basics."

(Continued on page 12)

NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT!

The Board extends a warm welcome to our newest member:

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Here are five common balancing mistakes:

1) Balancing mistake: Outside coning.

The use of outside cones can lead to wobbling and run-out, according to McCourt Industries' DeLoss. He recommends placing a cone on the back of the assembly and then applying the correct-size plate by centering it on the lug holes. The idea is to make sure you have mounted and centered the assembly in the same manner it will be mounted and balanced on the vehicle, explains Keefe. "The cone provides centering, and a pin plate will exert clamping force on the lug holes on the wheel in the same manner in which the wheel will feel clamping force when it's back on the car." Most aftermarket rims, on the other hand, are lug-centric, he notes. With lug-centric wheels, "you still use the cone and pin plate on the outside. Again, you have replicated the mounting condition it will see on the vehicle. This will solve 60% of vibration issues."

2) Balancing mistake: leaving residual static imbalance.

Residual static imbalance is the amount of balance left in the assembly when you have dynamically balanced the assembly to zero, says Keefe. "You can end up with a maximum of a half-ounce of residual static. A half-ounce will bring a lot of vehicles back to your shop." Get rid of residual imbalance by adjusting wheel weights.

3) Balancing mistake: using second-hand wheel weights.

Once a steel clip has been used, it no longer has the retentive capabilities of a new clip. Used clips come loose and fall off. "If you lose a weight, you'll get vibration," says Keefe.

4) Balancing mistake: ineffectively reducing radial run-out.

"How round is that assembly?" asks Keefe. An out-of-round condition "will mimic static vibration." He recommends re-positioning wheel weights to reduce run-out. "In some instances, a wheel with run-out can be re-mediated by putting the high spot of the tire over the low spot of the wheel."

5) Balancing mistake: incorrect mounting after the assembly has been balanced.

"Once the assembly is off the balancer, you still have another major opportunity for error: putting the assembly back on the wheel," explains Keefe. It's absolutely imperative to torque the assembly to manufacturers' specs. Variance in lug nut torque is a major cause of vibration. If you use consistent torque, it eliminates one of the variables that can cause a comeback." It also bears repeating that proper maintenance of equipment is critical to correct mounting and balancing, says Hunter Engineering's Scribner. "Tire changers use high mechanical force when changing tires. Periodically check machines for loose hardware and calibration."

And before you mount or balance anything, note pre-existing tire and wheel conditions "to be sure that any cosmetic damage, missing hardware and broken studs are not blamed on the shop who has received the vehicle for service."

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DEALER SPOTLIGHT

Chabill's Tire Center



Born in New Orleans in 1942, Charley Gowland attended grammar school at Incarnate Word Elementary, and two years of high school at De La Salle there, before his family moved to Morgan City in 1957. He completed high school in 1959 at Sacred Heart High School in Morgan City, and attended Nichols State University for two years before transferring to

Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, LA where he completed his history degree in 1963. He continued his education at Northwestern and Nichols in business and accounting and in 1965 entered his father's accounting practice in Morgan City.

As fate would have it, he met a B.F. Goodrich tire salesman at a business he was doing accounting work for and happened to ask why the tire company didn't have distributing in his hometown, Morgan City. The salesman replied that he'd been working on it for a while and wanted to know if Charley would be interested. Charley was very interested, and in September of 1968, he and his partner for the past 40 years, Billy Parker, opened Chabill's in a leased and personally renovated building in Morgan City. In that 40 years, Chabill's has grown from a staff of three to over a hundred, from one store to thirteen, with plans for more expansion each year.

Direct tire suppliers include Michelin, Goodyear and Cooper. Most of the company's parts are supplied by NAPA.

Charley has been married to Peggy or as her 14 grandchildren lovingly call her, "Geggy", for over 40 years. They have four children, Catherine who is a stay at home mom, Beth who is business development director at Chabill's, Charles who is a plaintiff attorney in Tallahassee, Florida and Joanna who is a counselor in Lafayette Parish. Catherine's husband Tim David is the human resource director and Beth's husband Carey Barron is the company's training director.

The grandchildren keep the couple pretty busy; however between babysitting duties they enjoy travel, reading good books and having dinner with family and friends. Charley still attempts golf and loves LSU football.

He says in business, it's the same old story. Develop a good business plan, believe in it, be willing to make changes as things change around you and surround yourself with good people. He's an active member of LITDA, having served as Vice President and President. He has also held a position on its board of directors for 11 years. He claims that many of the ideas that have come from the interaction and networking with fellow dealers have played a large role in the growth of his business. He says that Louisiana tire dealers who don't participate in their state organization are missing a great opportunity to become more profitable in their businesses. He says, "Some of my best friends are my competitors."

HALL OF FAME

Please Nominate your next LITDA Hall of Fame Winner!

Nominate an individual you know who has played a significant role in the growth and development of the Tire Industry and the Louisiana Independent Tire Dealers Association.

Each Individual must have been a dealer or supplier and a current member of the LITDA.

Please turn to page 14 to fill out your nomination form and mail or fax to:

LITDA, P.O. Box 82531, Baton Rouge, LA 70884

Fax: (225) 767-7648

For more information email lindsay@tatmangroup.com or call

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Application Deadline: December 1, 2007



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Major Tire Industry contributions/achievements give basic resume, dates, and accomplishments:

(use attachment if needed)

How many years has nominee been in the Tire Industry? _____

Other major contributions/achievements including business, civic, religious, etc.

Purpose:

To honor those individuals, who played a significant role in the growth and development of the Tire Industry and the Louisiana Independent Tire Dealers Association (LITDA). Membership in the Hall of Fame is to recognize and honor those individuals who have achieved success within this industry, as well as public service for the community at large, where they work and live. Either regular and/or honorary members, suppliers, or associate members from LITDA are eligible.

Qualifications:

One must have been a dealer or supplier and a member of the LITDA in good standing for the period of contribution; provided outstanding advancement within the Tire Industry and LITDA through personal achievement, leadership, and example.

Rules:

1. The annual quota for inductees will be two per year.
2. Candidates must have served within the Tire Industry and LITDA for a minimum overall length of time totaling five years to be considered.
3. The Hall of Fame committee will present candidates to the board of LITDA, a majority of 2/3 vote is needed for induction.

This completed form along with other background data such as resumes, photos, etc. should be submitted to:

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Deadline for application is December 1, 2007

Preventive Maintenance: Is \$ 62 Billion Worth Changing The Way You Do Business? Duh!

By Mike Manges, Modern Tire Dealer Magazine, August 2007

How much is the do-it-for-me preventive maintenance segment of the automotive aftermarket worth? It is a huge, untapped market, according to the Automotive Aftermarket Industry Association, which estimates the market at \$62 billion. It's hard enough convincing consumers to pay for broken parts, much less worn parts, however. Many dealers and their technicians need educating as well. "A shop is only going to sell the things it is comfortable selling," says William "Mac" McGovern, director of marketing and training for KYB America LLC.

There are more vehicles on the road than ever before. The average age of passenger cars and light truck tires is rising. Annual miles driven nationwide are increasing. So, how do you take advantage of \$62 billion? "That's \$700 per day, per technician in lost sales," says Aaron Shaffer, KYB's marketing manager. "The only way to get someone to buy maintenance is for them to feel it is a goal, such as trying to keep your vehicle fully functional for 200,000 miles," says McGovern, who defines "maintenance" as identifying and replacing worn parts. "There has to be an agreement on need before there is a solution."

To help tire dealers with this problem, KYB has developed a "Vehicle Ride Control Exercise Worksheet" that helps a tech compare the car's current condition against the vehicle's capability. McGovern prefers "tire control" to "ride control" because "it all affects the tires. Tire control is only as good as your weakest component." In addition to parking lot and highway exercises ("If you're not willing to test drive, we'll shake your hand and move on," says McGovern), there's a visual inspection checklist for tires, suspension products, brakes and struts and shocks. However, the "real power" behind the worksheet is the illustrations of the vehicle condition, says Shaffer. For the consumer, KYB has point-of-sale materials that explain vehicle control and the need to replace worn parts. "The key is changing the mindset," says McGovern. "It's not technical training." "The manufacturer and industry don't give dealers enough facts to back up the sale," adds Shaffer.

Training the tech to teach

"Who better to know the difference between failed parts and worn parts than the technician?" says McGovern. "But it's all about failed parts. They do not exit our vocational system knowing about worn parts." Steve Cartwright, chassis/brake systems curriculum manager for Federal-Mogul Corp., gets the chance to teach experienced and inexperienced techs how to help sell preventive

maintenance.

"The first thing I always tell my students is to put themselves in the customer's shoes," says Cartwright. "If you tell (a customer), 'You've got 1/8th of an inch of play in your idler arm, and I need to fix that before I can align your car correctly,' he's going to say, 'Why do I have to do that? It's only 1/8th of an inch of play.' Most customers don't know what an idler arm is." He advocates letting the customer see the worn part, feel it and push on it.

"He'll see the difference in his own mind and see it is deficient, not broken. Then, bring him back in after you replace it to push on it again and see it is fixed. You won't do a better job of selling the service than that."

At least that's the goal, says Cartwright. "You can say you're going to do it every time, but then the shop gets busy and you've got 15 cars backed up."

He also suggests using visual aids such as cutaways or old parts - an idler arm, a tie-rod, a ball joint -- to get your point across. "Pictures are good, but a lot of customers just won't see what you're talking about until it's on their own car or they have a part in their hand."

If you have to, make your own cutaway. "Take a new part and cut it open. It may be a \$60 part, but it could be used to sell 10 more of them."

50,000 miles or bust

In 2004, Tenneco Inc. began promoting a 50,000-mile ride control replacement recommendation based on its research of shock and strut use "under a variety of common driving conditions." "Shocks and struts wear out very gradually, so drivers might not notice the change in steering, stopping and stability until they are in an emergency situation," said Richard Alameddine, vice president of marketing, at the time. "By following a 50,000-mile recommended replacement cycle, consumers can enhance these key driving characteristics and help protect the performance of their tires and brakes." Bill Dennie, director of channel management, says Tenneco hoped to establish a regular interval for shock or strut replacement, like "oil changes every 3,000 miles." Drivers also tend to get a new set of tires around the 50,000-mile mark. . There's a lot of correlation between worn tires and worn suspension parts." KYB also subscribes to the 50,000-mile recommendation, because by then, most gas or hydraulic shocks and struts no longer provide the handling and control of which your vehicle is capable.

"In its promotional materials, the company sources a test conducted by the Royal Automotive Club that compares



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braking performance with shocks at 100% efficiency to shocks at 50% efficiency. It concludes that stopping distance at 60 mph will decrease 11.7% new vs. worn. "A qualified technician should inspect and road test your vehicle's shocks and struts every year or 12,000 miles," says KYB. Shaffer says 86% of vehicles in the junkyard still have their original shocks and struts. "When you start going after that 86%, price is not an issue because drivers didn't know they needed it. "Our ultimate goal is to shift shocks and struts from a repair item to a maintenance item. We can't fight forever for just the 14%."

Off-putting? Just the opposite

Steve Cartwright, chassis/brake systems curriculum manager for Federal-Mogul Corp., advises technicians to do the following when selling preventive maintenance:

1. Put yourself in the customers' shoes.
2. Put the service being done in perspective.
3. Put what needs to be done into words.

The customer is thinking, "What's in it for me?" says Cartwright. For example, if an idler arm needs to be replaced, the tech has to convince the customer that replacing the item will make his tires last longer and improve the vehicle's handling. The customer has to tell himself that making this repair "is an investment in the life of my tires."

Selling ride control: Dealers strut their stuff coast-to-coast

In 2005, KYB America LLC initiated its "Ride Control Solutions" campaign to help service providers identify worn ride control units and develop "the tools that service writers can use to effectively communicate the need for ride control service to the customer." Two of its customers have taken advantage of performing preventive maintenance.

On the East Coast, Action-Gator Tire Stores was selling 10 to 15 shocks and struts a month at its Ocoee, Fla., shop prior to implementing Ride Control Solutions from KYB. As a result, Action-Gator's technicians and service writers helped increase the store's shock and strut business by more than 700%, to more than 120 units per month.

According to an Action-Gator spokesman, the technicians "really like all of the illustrations on the worksheet (see photo), and are using the worksheet on each and every road test we do."

On the West Coast, Terry's Automotive Inc. in Olympia, Wash., was moving close to 10 shocks a month. It has increased that almost tenfold.

"Before KYB, no one had actually come into our shop to teach my people how to sell shocks," says owner Terry Holmstrom. "KYB showed us how to properly diagnose worn shocks, how to approach a customer, and how to sell ride control as part of an overall maintenance and safety program."



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Setting Prices, Selling Services: Once You Know The Color Scheme, The Rest Is All Technique

By: John Newman, Modern Tire Dealer, March 2007

Selling your automotive services may be the key to your profitability. Sell enough and you end up in the black, thanks to a lot of green. Fail to sell enough to offset costs and you may end up in the red. Basic selling techniques may be black and white, but there's always room for more colorful, innovative ideas. Here are some Best Practices in selling from Lake Region Discount Tire and Repair and Dolson Auto & Tire, directly from the mouths of their people.

First set the prices...

Both shops told us they determine all pricing based upon two things:
* the manufacturer's "flat rate" time allowed, and
* the retail price of the parts required.

Yet they both pay their employees an hourly wage. This might sound strange, but it is done to assure the technicians aren't rushed to complete repairs. (It is one reason there are few come-backs at either shop.) None of the staffs are paid commissions, either. This guarantees no one tries to hard-sell parts or services that are not required. Sometimes flat rate is less than the actual amount of time required and the customer wins, as in an engine exchange that pays 14 hours, but takes 16. Then there are jobs like the 0.5 hours allowed for changing a taillight bulb that balance things out. Both dealers follow the book on all labor charges. "When there are other factors that complicate the job, like heavy rust, we ask for a little more time because we know the job will require it", says Tom Talamini, senior technician at Lake Region Discount Tire and Repair. "But these are not frequent."

In parts pricing, the dealerships share the same system. Doug Dulgarian, general manager at Dolson Auto & Tire, says counter people are responsible for checking parts costs and retail prices. "They make sure we have the parts in stock or order them right away. They also do all estimates."

... then sell the service

The repair process is never bypassed in the course of the sale, according to Dulgarian. "The first job is to let the customer talk, write down (his or her) comments on a shop ticket and assign it to a tech. The vehicle is brought into the shop and receives a safety inspection, keeping customer comments in mind. "If the customer complained that he had a problem overheating and an engine noise, we look at all of the cooling system as well as the rest of the safety inspection. We would also listen to the water pump with the engine running. This inspection is critical to making the customer happy." The last step in selling (and pricing) the job is to present the results to the customer along with the price, he says. "If the customer doesn't understand it, we walk them into the shop and have the technician show them the problem. Since we measure every wear-related problem, like tire rod wear, ball joint wear, universal joint wear, FWD axle wear, etc., the customer is always given the factory measurement compared to the actual measurement in fractions of an inch or millimeter. Allowing them to see the actual wear makes selling the job easy." Both shops follow manufacturers' specifications on all measurements and service recommendations. This allows them to protect the customer's warranty and rights if there is a problem.

Selling automotive services is a matter of building a good reputation and being there when the customer needs them, according to both dealers.

Before you can sell a service, you have to know if the customer needs it. So one *must do* a thorough safety inspection when any vehicle is raised off the ground. "A safety inspection is critical from a liability standpoint, but it will also generate sales," says Moose Oakely, Dolson Auto's service manager. "We will not let a vehicle out of here without a safety report attached and noted on their invoice." Adds owner Ed Perry, "God forbid if someone has an accident because their brakes were worn or damaged right after we changed tires. We would be facing serious litigation. "A safety inspection costs money and there is no way to charge for it, but never skip it. All defects and problems are listed on their invoice, and if they choose not to repair them, that is their decision." "We always take time to give a clear explanation about any problem," says Dulgarian. "It generates a lot of work in the shop. If they do not have the time or money, we remind them that they can come in any time. If they are skeptical we show them, on the car, all measurements or parts of the vehicle that need to be repaired. "If they still are not ready to have the work done, fine. We never hard sell anyone."

One service job can lead to a lot of other work. A cooling system flush can result in water pump replacement, new drive belt(s), hose replacement and sometimes a new radiator or even a heater core.

The way this information is given to the customer is important. Do it with data and proof; do not ask them to take your word on it. At Dolson Auto & Tire, for example, specific measurements of wear or damage in fractions of an inch or millimeters are compared to OEM specifications for that vehicle and then presented to the customer. "State Inspections are also a big revenue producer, even though we only charge \$20, the state mandated inspection price," says Lake Region General Manager Mike Lofstedt Jr. "This generates repairs even though the customer is in no way obligated to use us to do them." It is also interesting that during the slow months of January, February and September, both shops will accept jobs that they normally wouldn't be in a hurry to perform. When the bays aren't busy, engine overalls and other work that take longer than three hours -- what would normally be the

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| * A/C Service | * Engine Diagnostics |
| * Alignment | * Exhaust |
| * Brakes | * Nitrogen |
| * Battery/Electrical | * Shocks/Struts |
| * Chassis/Suspension | * State Inspections |
| * Cooling System | * TPMS |

maximum time for a vehicle to be in their shops -- help keep their expensive equipment and people busy.

These are the services offered by both New York dealers discussed in these articles, excluding tire or tire-related services:
Best Practices Tips: Buying parts Getting parts at the lowest price is obviously a key to making a profit, but getting the parts on time and not having to worry they will fit and not fail is far more critical.

(Continued from page 16)

Here are two places outside the jobber channel where you can get the supply you demand.

***Warehouse Distributors.** You can buy from a jobber, but if your store is willing to buy a minimum stocking package, you may be able to buy directly from a WD. This can help the bottom line only if the inventory is managed properly to make sure overstocking doesn't occur. Dolson Auto & Tire has a WD

stocking program.

*** Car dealerships.** Lake Region Discount Tire and Repair's Mike Lofstedt says he has built a good relationship with most new car dealers in the area, and they give him margin with which to work. "Will Fit" parts are cheap and plentiful, but are you willing to lay your reputation on the line just because they are less expensive? Neither dealer interviewed will buy parts that their WD or jobber won't back up in writing.

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AC Machine	34700Z-CQ	Robinar	Less than 1 year	Call for Information	Excellent	\$2800		\$2800	
Battery Tester 6/21/05	3165	OTC	2 years	Newnan, GA	Good	\$210		\$210	
Engine Analyzer	PDA2100A	Interro	2 years	Merrilville, IN	Good	\$3550	\$50	\$3600	
Genisys 9/26/05	3762	OTC	1 year	Arlington, TX	Good	\$600		\$600	
Genisys Scanner	3434	OTC	3 years	Raton, NM	Good	\$1600	\$50	\$1650	\$62.79 36 mo
Gun Washer	UG3000S	Uniram	2 years	Lancaster, SC	Good	\$750	\$50	\$800	
Pressure Washer	3112T	Alkota	2 years	Laurel, MS	Fair	\$1800	\$100	\$1900	\$69.16 36 mo
Rolling Jack 6/21/05	79324C	Nor	2 years	Newnan, GA	Good	\$825		\$825	
Scan Tool 8/10/05	WAE 81065	Hickock	1 year	Metarie, LA	Good	\$2995		\$2995	\$109.02 36 mo

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