

# AGRR

The Only Magazine Devoted Exclusively to the Auto Glass Industry

March/April 2010

Volume 12 • Issue 2

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# AGRR®

The Only Magazine Devoted Exclusively to the Auto Glass Industry

## Contents

### Features

Volume 12 • Issue 2

March/April 2010

26

#### Responsibility and Sensibility

This year's Detroit Auto Show was a bit more low-key than in years past, but still saw many innovations.

32

#### Fear Factor

Read the latest about the Auto Glass Replacement Safety Standard Council Inc.'s third-party validation review program, and hear from some of the first business owners to experience the process.

38

#### Save the 'Shields

SuperGlass Windshield Repair got its start nearly 30 years ago as a single shop, and now has franchisees all over the world. Take a look inside the multi-million-dollar company on page 38.

### Columns

- |   |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4 | <b>Field of Vision</b>   | letter from the editor   |
| 6 | <b>Customer Service</b>  | tips for quality service |
| 8 | <b>Independent's Day</b> | an iga viewpoint         |

### Departments

- |    |                          |                               |
|----|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 10 | <b>AGRR</b> Reports      | breaking news                 |
| 14 | <b>Insurance Talk</b>    | policy briefs                 |
| 16 | <b>Price Points</b>      | competitive pricing and stats |
| 18 | <b>Industry Insiders</b> | people in the news            |
| 20 | <b>On the Road</b>       | calendar of events            |
| 22 | <b>The Showroom</b>      | new products                  |
| 46 | <b>Showcase</b>          | directory of suppliers        |
| 47 | <b>Advertising Index</b> | index of advertisers          |
| 48 | <b>Avocations</b>        | competitive pricing and stats |

### Windshield and Glass Repair

- |    |                        |               |
|----|------------------------|---------------|
| 42 | <b>Ask the Doctor</b>  | helpful hints |
| 43 | <b>Repair Round-Up</b> | nwra reports  |
| 44 | <b>WGR</b> Reports     | repair news   |

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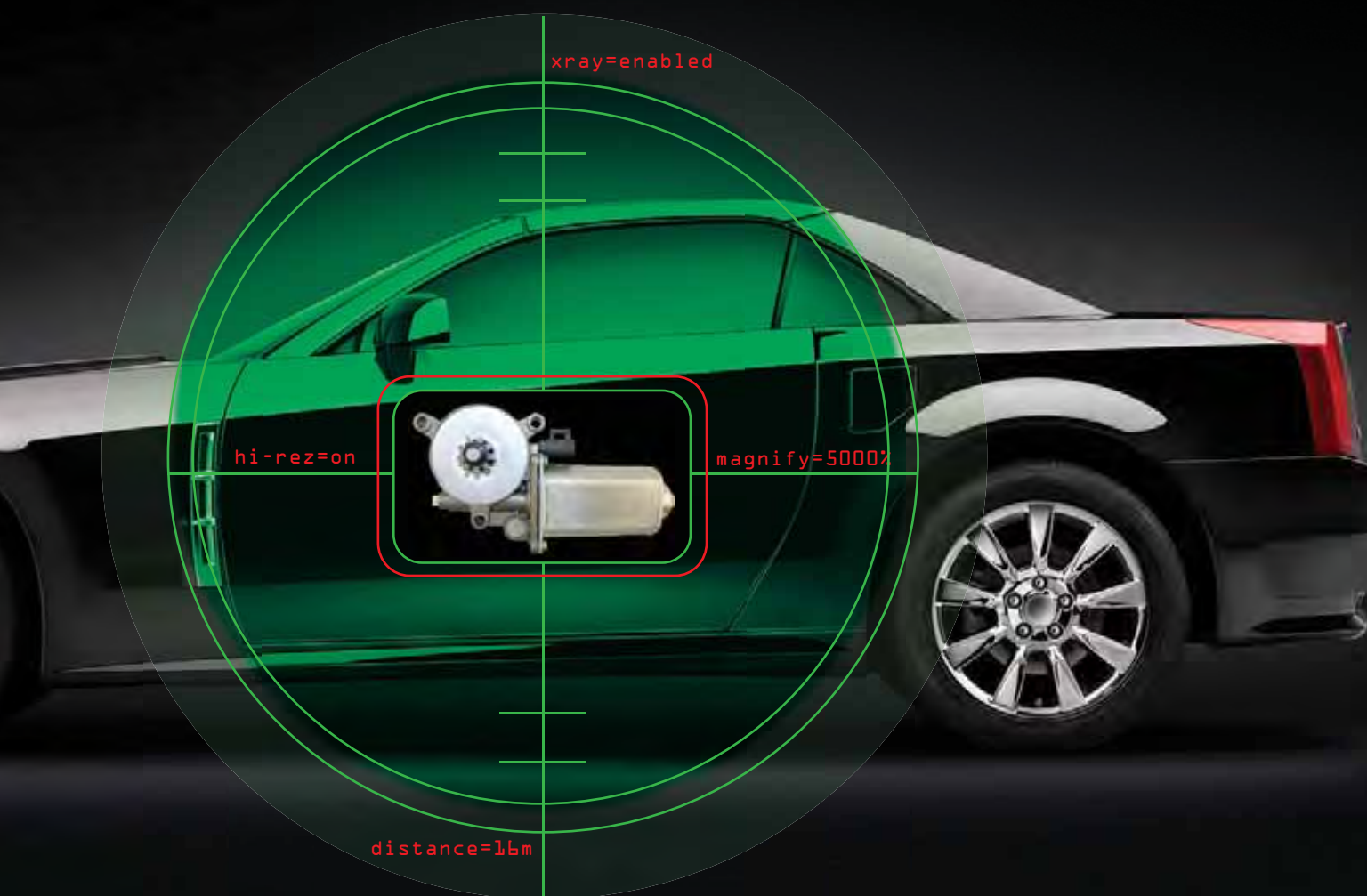
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## Field of Vision from the editor

# Safety Sense

by Penny Stacey

**E**ACH YEAR AGRR MAGAZINE chooses one issue to devote to safety, and, for the last couple of years, it has been the March/April issue. I'll admit, this is always one of my favorite issues of the year. Though we do, of course, include other content, each year we aim to include a look at the Auto Glass Replacement Safety Standard (AGRSS) and the latest occurring with the standard and its registration program.



Turn to page 32 for an in-depth look at the recently launched AGRSS third-party validation review program.

This year, that article, which appears on page 32, takes a look at some of the businesses across the United States that have been among the first ever to undergo independent, on-site third-party validation reviews by the AGRSS Council. Though I hope you'll check out the full article, one comment made to me while writing the article really stuck with me.

That comment came from Michael Paley of Freedom Glass in Richmond, Va., whose shop was the first ever validated by the AGRSS Council. Paley, whose validation review occurred on November 11, 2009, explained to me that, though many of his customers are shopping for price (which really is no surprise in today's economy), that he'll encourage them to go to the [www.safewindshields.org](http://www.safewindshields.org) site to choose a different shop.

"I figure, if they're not going to bring the vehicle to me, I want to know they will take it somewhere safe," said Paley.

And Paley's reasoning was very simple—and a bit heart-wrenching.

"I know my family and friends are going to get their windshields replaced at a safe location, because they've had to listen to me all these years, but I've got an 8-year-old son, and what if he's standing at the bus stop one day when a vehicle nearby wrecks, and that windshield goes flying?" he said. "That's why everyone needs to do this."

It's dedication like Paley's, the others featured on page 32 and all those promoting safety across the United States that will someday make all consumers aware of this important issue. If you're not already doing so, I hope you'll begin to take this issue to heart as well—if for no other reason than the one to which Paley points, the safety of the children in our midst.

And, if you've had good luck in convincing consumers to seek safety, please e-mail me at [pstacey@glass.com](mailto:pstacey@glass.com) and tell me what has worked for you. I look forward to hearing from you. ■

Penny Stacey is the editor of AGRR magazine.



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## Customer Service

tips for quality service

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# So, What's **That** Cost?

by Carl Tompkins

**T**RAVELING THROUGH AGRR land during the first couple months this year has led me to hear many comments revolving around money, and, with the state of our economy, for good reason. Some of the more common quotes are, "I can't afford that," "I sure need to reduce expenses," "We're cutting back" and even, "I'm certainly not going to buy that."

No doubt that a tough economy causes businesses to be very careful in how money is spent, but I sometimes wonder if companies truly understand what things really cost. More to the point, I wonder if the thoughts and actions taken by many during this test of tough times are going to help.

The best way that I can cause readers to reconsider their current positions in running their businesses is to share a story with you.

## The Hamburger Guy

A man once lived by the side of the road and sold hamburgers. He couldn't see or hear very well and he didn't have much, but he sold good hamburgers.

He put up a sign, telling the world how good they were. He'd stand on the side of the road and encourage people to buy his hamburgers—which they did.

He started buying his meat and ketchup in bulk, and he even upgraded his kitchen appliances. But then one day, his daughter, who helped him with the business, came home and advised him the Great Depression had begun.

This made the father think, "Well, my daughter is a smart, college-educated girl. She is up on current events." So, he cut back on his ground beef and ketchup orders and no longer bothered to stand outside encouraging people to

buy his hamburgers.

His business started to fail, and he thought his daughter must have been right about the Great Depression.

## The Right Attitude

I truly hope that the moral of the story rings loud and clear for everyone. The right attitude and supporting activities is important at all times, but especially when times get tough. You must maximize productivity and sales to help offset thinner margins and reduced demand.

Productivity is based upon well-trained people following effective and efficient policies using quality products. To maximize sales is to interface with potential customers as much as possible through as many mediums possible. Investments are critical to support sales. Those business leaders possessing the greatest wisdom are those who are expanding their businesses at this point in time. One distributor of products within our own industry is buying a company and adding salespeople. Why? Because all good salespeople return ten times what they're paid in the form of additional revenue, and when each territory is yielding fewer potential dollars, you must add new territories to offset the losses. Hey, didn't Warren Buffet just buy a railroad company? Hmmm ...

Finishing up on the "attitude" side of things, don't fall prey to excuses! Typical excuses I hear are, "Well, we certainly

**"Do not be one who merely floats along with the current of the time and economy. Start paddling hard and making some waves due to your own current!"**

haven't had the winter we need to drive our sales," "Boy, the only guys doing any work are those who are giving it away," and "I've never seen it so bad." Now, when I refer to "not falling prey" to such excuses, this does not imply that we don't have problems and that the weather, cheap prices and a bad economy don't affect our industry. These are, in fact, hurdles, but they are not dead-ends. Instead, don't allow such excuses to become a call to sit back and do nothing. While many will whine and conduct layoffs, you get out there and hustle-up some new business. Do some new things with your time and efforts and get everyone involved. A technician without an installation is someone who should be out looking for one. Do not be one who merely floats along with the current of the time and economy. Start paddling hard and making some waves due to your own current! There is no better way to avoid the waterfall ahead.

(By the way, the man by the side of the road is putting back up his sign, having now added two new products to his menu that are being advertised in four colors instead of two. The hamburger was great and the fries and peach-iced tea were even better!) ■

Carl Tompkins is the Western states area manager for SIKI Corp. in Madison Heights, Mich. He is based in Spokane, Wash. Mr. Tompkins' opinions are solely his own and not necessarily those of this magazine.



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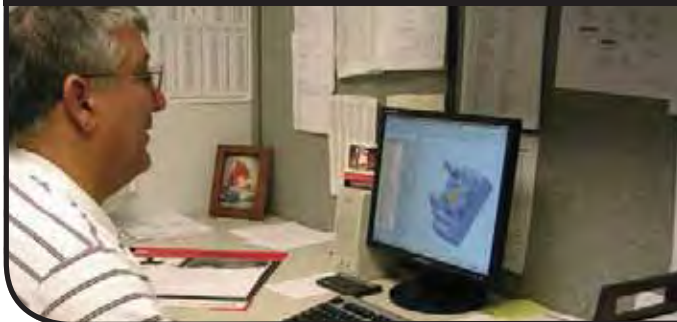
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## Independent's Day an iga viewpoint

# In God I **Trust**: All Others, Bring Data

by David Zoldowski

**“I’LL BELIEVE IT WHEN I SEE it.”** This is probably one of the more frustrating retorts in the English language. While this phrase may come up in conversations about unruly teenagers, politicians and teams with losing records, it also is one of the most common mantras of the auto glass industry. Independent shops will believe unfair business practices are being eliminated when they see it happen. More than anything, others will see steering for the serious problem it is when they see examples

of how it is hurting each individual independent shop.

We all experience incidents of steering in our own shops, but often they go undetected outside of our front doors. It’s become the mission of the Independent Glass Association (IGA) to collect all of the data about these incidents in one place. Our anti-steering database is located at [www.iga.org](http://www.iga.org) where you will find a button that says “Report Steering.”

Not only has the IGA vowed to collect these incidents, but we are recognizing

the most shameful of these examples and making them public. While all private information will be kept confidential, the IGA will be releasing a “Steer of the Month” that will tell the story of an independent shop facing the practices of competitor-administrators.

The IGA will select the worst steering incident from the many incident reports being tabulated in our anti-steering database. The company that is selected each month will be in the running for the dubious honor “Steer of the Year” award to be presented at



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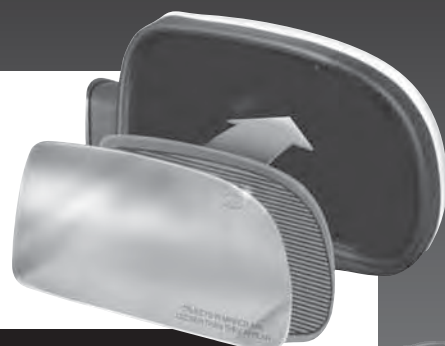
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**"The real winners, however, will be our industry, if we are successful in shining a light on unethical steering with real-life examples and hard data."**

the 2010 IGA Annual Conference in May in Ft. Myers, Fla. While the monthly winner will receive a tongue-in-cheek anti-steering t-shirt, the IGA also will invite the member with the most egregious "Steer of the Year" to attend the IGA Spring Conference on Sanibel Island in Florida.

This month's "Steer of the Month" came through the IGA's Steering Report Form in October. The shop's employee attempted to file the claim via phone inside the shop with the insured present. The competitor-administrator asked to

speak with the insured. Upon completion of the claims process the customer hung up the phone and began to walk out of the shop, looking quite frustrated. The employee asked if the competitor-administrator was able to help him file his claim and the customer stated, "Yeah, but they just took the business away from you guys. They are making me call this number now." The competitor-administrator had told the customer to hang up and call their phone number to schedule an appointment with the glass company it owned.

If you experience a steering incident please log on to [www.iga.org](http://www.iga.org) and click on the "Report Steering" button on the right side of the page. The IGA will treat all information that you share as confidential and we will not release any personal details in our "Steer of the Month" award. ■

**David Zoldowski** is the president of Auto One in Brighton, Mich., and president of the Independent Glass Association (IGA). Mr. Zoldowski's opinions are solely his own and not necessarily those of this magazine.

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## COMPANY NEWS

# Safelite to Move East Coast Distribution Center to New Facility in Georgia

**S**AFELITE® GROUP WILL BE moving its main East Coast distribution center from Enfield, N.C., to a new 357,000-square-foot facility in Braselton, Ga. The new distribution center is expected to become operational in September, and will be its largest to date (and parent company Belron's largest in the world).

The facility will support distribution to states east of the Mississippi River. The new facility is 36 percent larger than the distribution center in Enfield, allowing for storage of 250,000 windshields and 90,000 other



**Safelite's new East Coast distribution in Braselton, Ga., is expected to open in September 2010.**

vehicle glass parts, according to the company.

As a result of the move, Safelite will be restructuring the Enfield distribution center, which is connected to its manufacturing plant. The company says it will retain its manufacturing operations there, along with 288 employees in that capacity, and the current distribution center in Enfield will now serve as a warehouse, and some of the distribution center employees will move to the manufacturing part of the facility.

"We considered maintaining our East Coast distribution center operations in Enfield, which are adjacent to the manufacturing plant, but because of the inability for us to further expand in that location we had to consider new options," says Tom Feeney, president and chief executive officer of Safelite.

Safelite explored several options for the facility, according to a company statement, and looked at various sites along I-85 between Atlanta and Charlotte "in areas that would allow for more efficient and lower-cost transport of manufactured glass to points east of the Mississippi River."

Safelite officials say they plan to expand 12 more warehouses in 2010, though details were not available at press time.

## Novus Holds 2010 Super Session in San Diego

Novus Glass franchisees from across the country gathered in early March in San Diego at the Hotel Del Coronado to share education and experiences. The Novus Super Session 2010 featured a number of educational seminars and an interactive vendor fair, as well as the company's annual franchisee awards.

The 2010 Novus Awards Banquet also was held during the event. Franchisees were treated to dinner and cheered on their fellow franchises as director of national accounts Jim Olson announced the winners. **Mark Pixley**, **George Lytton** and **Vanessa Terrell** from Sheridan, Wyo. were named Franchises of the Year, while **Gary Fix** and family from Mora, Minn., and **Rusty** and **Carrie Cox** from Chehalis, Wash., were announced as the runner-ups. Novus recognized those who have been in business the longest, including the presentation of a 30-year award to **Paul Torgerson** from Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

In a recent interview with **AGRR** magazine, Allan Skidmore, co-executive chairperson and chief executive officer of TCG International Inc., parent company of Novus, predicted that more and more auto glass transactions will take place online in the coming years. Skidmore's company, which also owns Speedy Glass, Trans America Glass Network and Shat R Proof, launched its own site for this, [www.windshields.com](http://www.windshields.com), in late 2007.

"A very big change I expect to occur in the next ten years are more online glass transactions, which are already starting to take place through Internet media such as [windshields.com](http://windshields.com)," says Skidmore. "Online glass transactions will form a major part of the retail glass business. Businesses will need to embrace this new way of operating to survive. With this change, I still expect to see the independent family operations existing with the major operators throughout Canada and United States."

Windshields.com offers an auto glass business locator service, quoting mechanisms and a variety of information about auto glass to consumers. It also offers an online option for auto glass businesses to sign up to be listed.

▶ [www.windshields.com](http://www.windshields.com)



## EFTEC Aftermarket Sold to Dutch Company

The EMS Group, which previously owned industry supplier EFTEC Aftermarket, has sold its aftermarket adhesive division to a Dutch company, Facilitas Bergeyk B.V. Specific terms of the purchase were not disclosed, but in its statement about the sale, EMS notes that the purchase price was a "high single-digit Euro million figure." EMS Group will retain its OEM adhesive division, EMS-EFTEC.

The transfer of ownership has already occurred, and Facilitas has taken over EFTEC's production site and lo-

gistics center in Lugde, Germany.

In a company statement, EMS notes that this expands the automotive aftermarket offerings of FACILITAS and that the company has made a long-term agreement to now supply aftermarket auto glass adhesives to EMS. Likewise, EMS-EFTEC will continue to supply FACILITAS with its product, which is made in Romanshorn, Switzerland.

EFTEC North America spokesperson Joseph Renzi says no changes are expected for the way the company operates or for its customers.

"It's an absolutely huge opportunity for us," he told AGRR magazine/glass-

BYTES.com™. "We're extremely excited about it, because we are now expanding our operations."

## SIKA Acquires ADCO's Replacement Adhesive Systems Business

SIKA AG has announced that its U.S. subsidiary, SIKA Corp., has acquired the automotive glass replacement business of ADCO Products Inc.

According to a statement from SIKA AG, ADCO will be integrated into SIKA's aftermarket business unit in the

*continued on page 12*

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## AGRR Reports

continued

United States and its industry division in Canada and Latin America.

As part of the transaction, SIKA acquired the rights to the "Titan" brand name of auto glass adhesives. Four sales representatives from ADCO's AGR division are expected to join SIKA's existing 21-person sales force, according to the press release. The names of those moving to SIKA had not yet been released.

### Reid Achieves ISO 9001:2008 Certification

Reid Manufacturing Co. in Coopersville, Mich., has become certified to ISO 9001:2008 standards.

"The system streamlines everything," says Reid president Jeffrey Cothery. "We can respond to customers faster, implement changes faster, and manufacture products faster while we make sure our quality remains extremely high." ■



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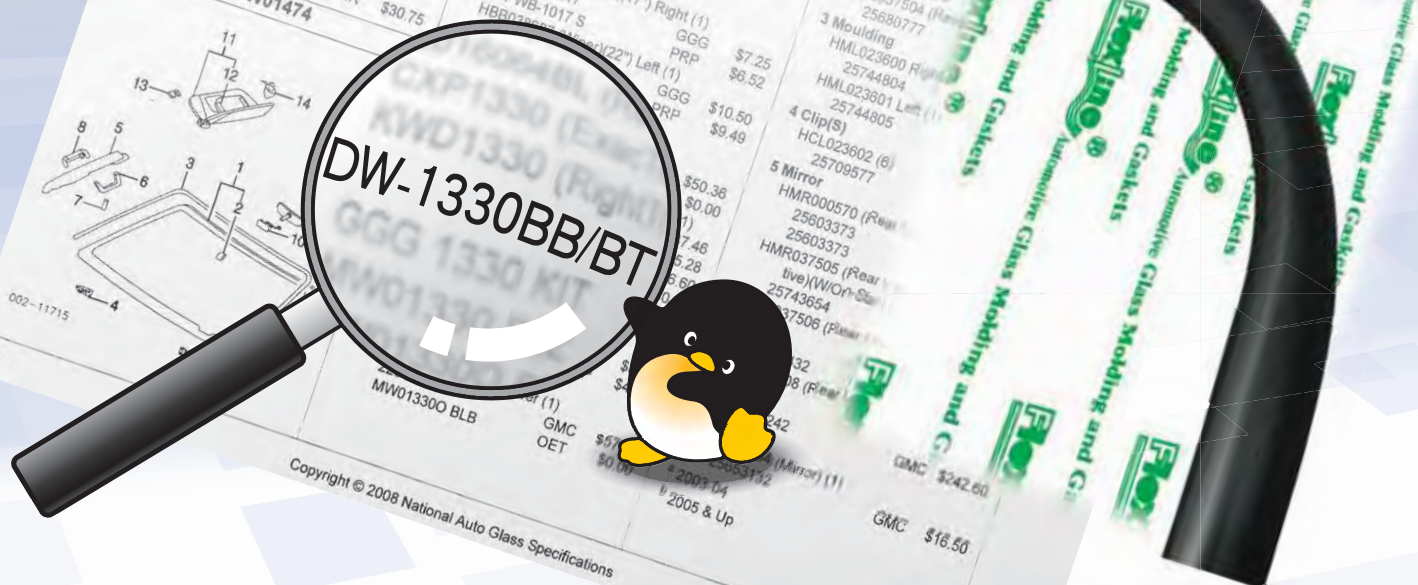
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## Minnesota Court Upholds \$400,000 Arbitration Settlement

**T**HE U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR the District of Minnesota issued an order in March upholding an arbitration settlement of more than \$400,000 from Farmers Insurance and Mid-Century Insurance Company for more than 1,100 “short-pay” claims filed by Minneapolis-based Alpine Glass. The original suit by Alpine asked the court to rule that it be allowed to engage in arbitration with the insurers to settle the short-pay disputes; though Farmers had filed a counterclaim alleging that it was not liable to Alpine, the court had ordered that the companies should arbitrate the short-pay claims “in a single consolidated proceeding,” according to the most recent opinion issued in the case. Farmers then motioned for the court “to vacate that award,” according to court documents—and that motion also was denied with the most recent ruling.

Farmers had made several claims in its motion to have the award vacated. Among these claims, the insurer alleged that Alpine had violated Minnesota’s anti-incentive statute, arguing that by promising customers “that if an insurer did not pay Alpine’s bill in full, the customer would

not be responsible for the difference.” Farmers had argued that this was a form of an incentive to encourage the customer to purchase auto glass services, according to court documents. The court ruled against this claim as well.

In addition, Farmers had argued that no assignments of proceeds were made to Alpine Glass. (This is not the first time the assignment of proceeds issue has come up. However, previously an insurer had claimed that the assignment of proceeds clause could not apply to a glass shop. Last summer, the Minnesota Supreme Court ruled that it could.) (*See related story in September/October 2009 AGRR, page 16.*)

However, the court dismissed this claim as well, as part of its denial of the motion, noting that it had reviewed the arbitration records in the case.

“Having reviewed that record, the Court finds that Alpine has established, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the 91 insureds did, in fact, assign their claims to Alpine. In every one of the 1,120 short-pay claims that were arbitrated—including every one of the 91 challenged claims—Farmers made a partial payment directly to Alpine,” writes the judge.

The judge goes on to point out that Farmers

holder before the invoice can be processed, and that Safelite Solutions, Farmers’ claims administrator, must “look for a signed payment authorization ... before it will send any payment directly to an auto glass shop.”

Farmers also had argued against the arbitrator’s ruling that “Farmers was paying a rate not based upon competitive pricing in the auto glass replacement industry in Minnesota” in its motion for the court to vacate the award.

However, the court ruled that under Minnesota’s No-Fault Act, “an arbitrator’s findings of fact are ‘conclusive.’”

Farmers went on to argue that the arbitrator should have looked at each of the short-pay claims presented separately, but the judge, Patrick Schiltz, writes that one reason for arbitration in the state is to “decrease the cost and complexity of litigation.”

“The efficiencies inherent in the ability to present and consider generalized evidence are the primary reason why the Minnesota Supreme Court permits consolidation of no-fault claims in appropriate cases,” writes Schiltz.

Alpine was represented by Chuck Lloyd of Livgard & Lloyd LLP in Minneapolis, along with Joshua P. Brotemarkle of Rabuse Law Firm P.A. Steven Kluz of Stael Rives LLP and Diane B. Bratvold of Briggs and Morgan represented Farmers in the case. ■

national claims manager Michelle Keller testified that, while an assignment specifically is not required, a work order must be signed by the policy-

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## Price Points

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# 2010 Dodge Challenger

## FOR ITS RECURRING PRICE

Points department, AGRR surveyed five major cities in the United States for the windshield replacement on a 2010 Dodge Challenger (two-door with a green tinted windshield). As usual, the companies were told that insurance will not be involved and the customer wishes to pay for the windshield out of pocket.



AGRR also asked shops to break out parts and labor. When available, this is noted at right. In some cases, shops were not willing to provide the breakdown—or would only include a portion of it—and this is noted accordingly.

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### Albuquerque, N.M.

	Total Price	Glass Price	Labor	Urethane	Glass % off NAGS	% off NAGS Total
Shop #1	\$282.56	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-53.6
Shop #2	\$260.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-57.3
Shop #3	\$270.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-55.6
Shop #4	\$235.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-61.4
Average**	\$261.89	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-57.0
Median	\$265.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-56.5

### Boise, Idaho

	Total Price	Glass Price	Labor	Urethane	Glass % off NAGS	% off NAGS Total
Shop #1	\$309.52	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-49.2
Shop #2	\$286.52	\$256.52	\$30.00	N/A	-46.2	-52.9
Shop #3	\$446.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-26.7
Shop #4	\$625.00	\$536.15	\$85.00	\$24.00	+12.5	+2.7
Average	\$416.76	\$396.34	\$57.50	N/A	-16.9	-31.5
Median	\$377.76	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-37.9

### Charlotte, N.C.

	Total Price	Glass Price	Labor	Urethane	Glass % off NAGS	% off NAGS Total
Shop #1	\$416.18	\$273.41	\$100.00	\$20.00	-42.7	-31.6
Shop #2	\$295.00	\$115.00	\$165.00	N/A	-75.9	-51.5
Shop #3	\$475.00	\$375.00	\$100.00	N/A	-21.3	-22.0
Shop #4	\$280.00	\$220.00	\$60.00	N/A	-53.9	-54.0
Average	\$366.55	\$245.85	\$106.25	N/A	-48.4	-39.8
Median	\$355.59	\$246.71	\$100.00	N/A	-48.3	-41.6

### Hartford, Conn.

	Total Price	Glass Price	Labor	Urethane	Glass % off NAGS	% off NAGS Total
Shop #1	\$295.00	\$209.00	\$48.00	\$38.00	-56.2	-51.5
Shop #2	\$345.56	\$235.00	\$75.00	\$26.00	-50.7	-43.2
Shop #3	\$363.02	\$213.72	\$120.00	\$15.00	-55.2	-40.4
Shop #4	\$210.00	\$170.00	\$40.00	N/A	-64.3	-65.5
Average	\$303.40	\$206.93	\$70.75	\$26.33	-56.6	-50.2
Median	\$320.28	\$211.36	\$61.50	\$26.00	-55.7	-47.4

### Syracuse, N.Y.

	Total Price	Glass Price	Labor	Urethane	Glass % off NAGS	% off NAGS Total
Shop #1	\$411.48	\$235.50	\$115.50	\$30.00	-50.6	-32.4
Shop #2	\$505.24	\$405.24	\$100.00	N/A	-15.0	-17.0
Shop #3	\$355.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-41.7
Shop #4	\$325.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-46.6
Average	\$399.18	\$320.37	\$107.50	N/A	-32.8	-34.4
Median	\$383.24	N/A	N/A	N/A	-19.6	-37.0

	Total Price	Glass Price	Glass % Off NAGS*	% off NAGS Total
Nat'l Average	\$349.55	\$250.75	-47.4	-42.3
Nat'l Median	\$317.26	\$235.25	-50.7	-47.9

\*Figures calculated based on glass only.

\*\* For columns with N/A's included, only the data available was averaged.





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**industry insiders**  
people in the news

**KUDOS**

**Binswanger Tech Becomes National Hero; Rescues Six from Burning Building in Austin, Texas**

A glass technician recently became a national hero when he rescued six people from a burning building in Austin, Texas. **Robin DeHaven** of Binswanger Glass was driving to a job on February 18 when he observed a plane crashing off the highway and immediately went to help.

"It seemed out of the ordinary," DeHaven, a native of Logansport, Ind., told AGRR magazine/glassBYTEs.com™ during an exclusive interview. "The plane went south and it was going down and I didn't know what was going to happen. A big cloud of smoke came down."

That's when the U.S. Army veteran's

instincts kicked in and he decided to try to help.

"I exited right away and flew into a parking lot," he recalls. "I tried to call 911, too, but of course they were busy with all the calls."

Though he finally got through to 911, he continued to head into the direction of the building where the plane had hit. (It has since been revealed that a local man had crashed the plane into the Internal Revenue Services building to which DeHaven headed to help out.)

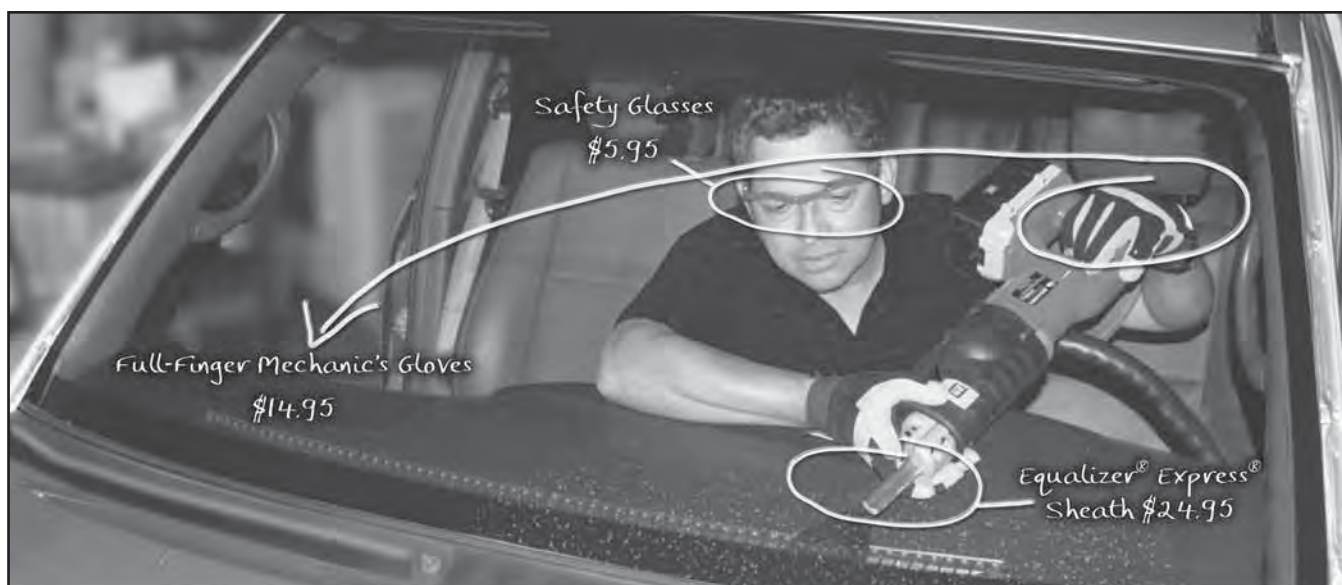
As DeHaven pulled into the parking lot, another bystander noticed he had a large ladder on the truck and asked if he would help out. Without hesitation, DeHaven says he propped the ladder against the building, trying to ensure that it was stable, and began his climb up to the second story where five people were waiting.



**DeHaven has been with Binswanger for two years.**

"We tried to put it near a brace ... I got to the top and the ladder slipped a little bit and started dropping a few inches," he says. "I grabbed the ledge and eventually got into the building through the window."

Knowing the ledge he'd used wouldn't work for the climb down, DeHaven quickly looked for another option and



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saw that there was what appeared to be a sturdier ledge at the next window over.

"There was a window still intact over it, so we had to break out that window," he says.

Once DeHaven attached the ladder to the second window, he began to attempt the rescue mission, escorting each employee out the window, onto the ledge and then onto the ladder. He rescued six people in total.

By that time, the local fire department had arrived on the scene, so DeHaven gathered his ladder (after getting the okay from the fire department) and thought he'd sneak away to have a quiet lunch break, catch his breath, and then continue on to his next job.

"I took my ladder, called my boss and told him I helped some people when a plane crashed," DeHaven says. "I thought I was just going to get my

ladder and go. I didn't say my name [to anyone there], but I guess someone called the corporate office and corporate found out and called me."

Though he remembers the details clearly, DeHaven says the rescue took approximately five minutes in total; the fire hadn't yet entered the office in which he assisted, but the hallways had already begun to fill with smoke at the point he arrived.

DeHaven attributes his ability and quick-to-assist nature to his time in the U.S. Army.

## OBITUARIES

### MGA Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Foley Passes Away

Kevin Foley, secretary-treasurer of the Minnesota Glass Association (MGA) and owner of Auto Glass Today

in Minneapolis, passed away on Thursday, January 28. He was 44.

Foley entered the glass business only a few years ago with his purchase of Auto Glass



**Kevin Foley**

Today, according to a statement from the MGA, and he immersed himself in the industry quickly. He immediately became involved with the MGA and was elected to the Board as secretary treasurer.

He is survived by his wife, Heidi; father, John Foley; sister, Debbie Foley; cousin, John Polley; parents-in-law, Fern and Stuart Johnson; sisters-in-law, Janice (Tom) Jordan; Susan (Scott) James, Joyce Johnson; brother-in-law Perry (Shelly) Johnson; and many nieces and nephews. ■

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on the road  
calendar of events

## DAY / PLANNER

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Contact: IGA and NWRA at 540/720-7484.

**May 20 - 22, 2010**

Independent Glass Association (IGA) Annual Conference and Spring Auto Glass Show

Sponsored by the IGA.

Sanibel Harbour Resort and Spa.

Ft. Myers, Fla.

Contact: IGA at 540/720-7484 or visit [www.iga.org/springautoglassshow.php](http://www.iga.org/springautoglassshow.php).

**May 20 - 22, 2010**

National Windshield Repair Association (NWRA) Annual Conference

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Sanibel Harbour Resort and Spa.

Ft. Myers, Fla.

Contact: NWRA at 540/720-7484 or visit [www.nwraassn.org/conference](http://www.nwraassn.org/conference).

**May 21, 2010**

National Glass Association (NGA) Auto Glass Certification Committee Meeting

Sponsored by NGA.

Sanibel Harbour Resort and Spa.

Ft. Myers, Fla.

Contact: NGA at 866/342-5642

or visit [www.glass.org](http://www.glass.org).

**September 14-19, 2010**

Automechanika Frankfurt

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Messe Frankfurt.

Contact: Visit <http://www.auto-mechanika.messefrankfurt.com>.

**October 10-13, 2010**

NACE Expo

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Mandalay Bay Convention Center.  
Las Vegas.

Contact: Show organizers at 972/536-6324.

**November 2-5, 2010**

SEMA Show

Sponsored by the Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA).

Las Vegas Convention Center.  
Las Vegas.

Contact: Visit [www.semashow.com](http://www.semashow.com).

Please send events for the calendar to [pstacey@glass.com](mailto:pstacey@glass.com), or add them online at [www.agrrmag.com](http://www.agrrmag.com).

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### TOOLS

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The “Tech-nician” 11-blade toolkit from BTB Tools includes blades with precise cutting depth control to cut from inside

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The tool kit is available from Equalizer Industries.

► [www.equalizer.com](http://www.equalizer.com)

### MOULDINGS

#### FlexLine is Flexible, Says Company

Yih-Tair Industrial Co. Ltd. offers its FlexLine universal mouldings, which are designed to resist deterioration caused by ultraviolet rays. The mouldings also are extruded with a



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metal filament to resist stretching and shrinkage, and are available in three widths to cover a range of parts, allowing for a reduction of in-shop inventory.

Yih-Tair also designed the mouldings so that they would attach easily to the windshield edge and lay evenly on the vehicle's body along straight areas and corners and they are said to be pliable as well, easing installation in cold-weather temperatures, according to the company.

► [www.flexline.com](http://www.flexline.com)

## Get Mouldings Quickly

The newest moulding program from Pilkington North America allows retailers to place orders for mouldings through its quick delivery program: the Pilkington Express Expedited Moulding Program. The company says using this program, mouldings will be delivered to

your door in less than five business days.

► [www.pilkingtonexpress.com](http://www.pilkingtonexpress.com)

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stay securely attached to the glass; resist cracking, fading, discoloration and shrinkage; and reduce the inventory auto glass businesses need to have on-hand, according to the company.

► [www.creativeextruded.com](http://www.creativeextruded.com)

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Precision Replacement Parts (PRP) recently launched a universal cavity-style moulding sold on a 75-foot single-line spool. The RPW16R moulding is designed to retain contact with the vehicle's body all the way around, even on tight radius corners such as those on the Toyota Sienna or Dodge Caravan. Key features of the mouldings are a unique profile design and custom compound that is designed to remain flexible in all climates.

► [www.prp.com](http://www.prp.com)



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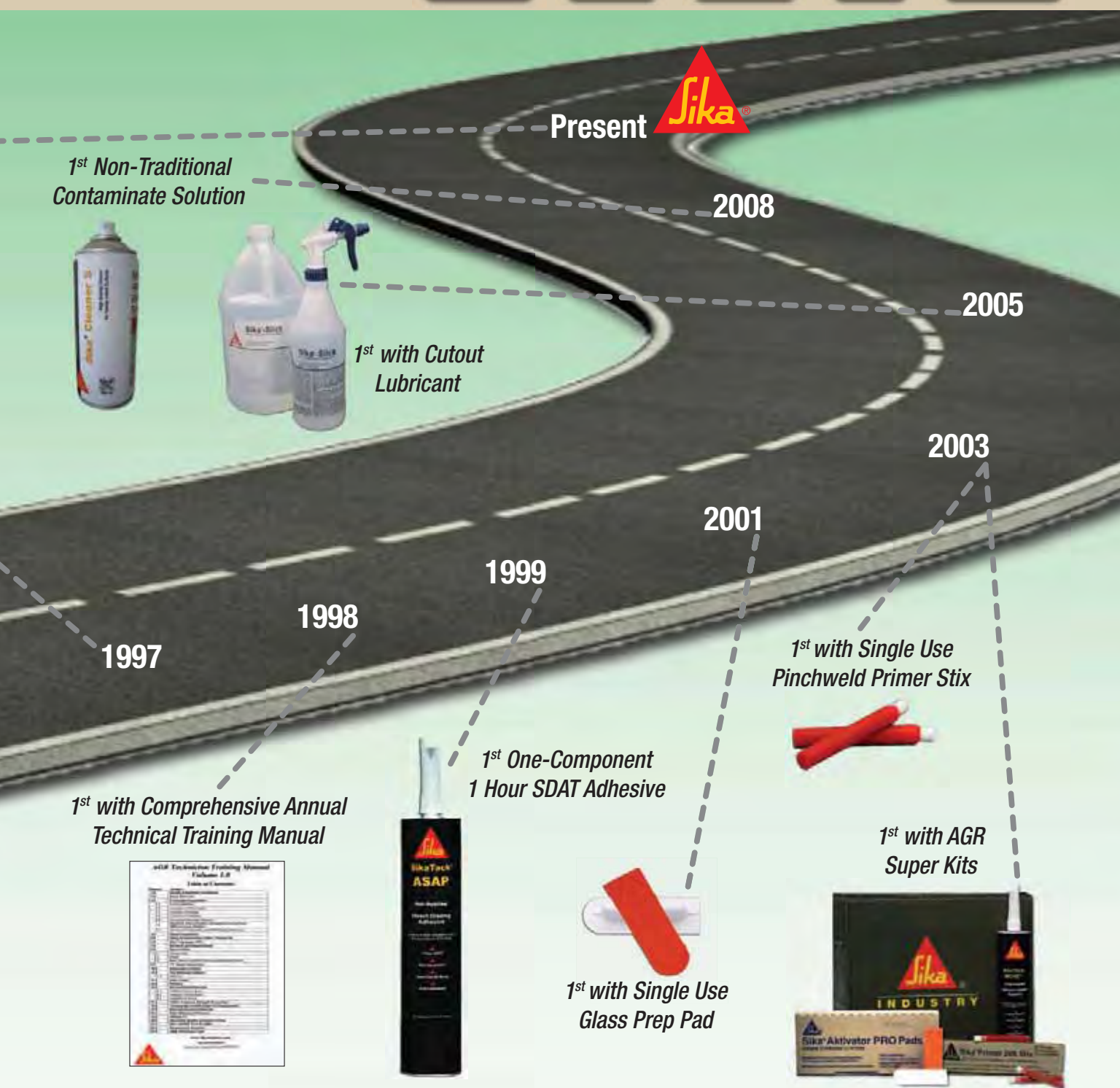


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# Resp and

## 2010 Detroit

by Gene Nichols

**R**esponsibility and sensibility set the tone for many car makers at the 2010 North American International Auto Show in January. What was not present at the auto show this year was lots of gala, replaced instead by simple "here-it-is" presentations. Many of the domestic auto makers in a pinch have been forced to make changes. This is not surprising when you drive through small-town USA and see the ghost of what once was a thriving dealership. It was apparent General Motors had trimmed the Saturn, Pontiac and Hummer lines and, along with other car lines, made way for the all-new Electric Avenue exhibit sponsored by Dow Chemical. This exhibit featured "green" cars of today and tomorrow. The line-up of vehicles includes production models, near production models, prototypes and some wild concepts.



# onsibility Sensibility

Auto Show Auto Manufacturers Took Simple Approach

## The Future

What does the future bring anyway? We are in a stage of transitional powertrain solutions such as gas-electric hybrids and genuine zero-emissions vehicles. Plug-in electric seems to be the ultimate solution. While I do like the idea of not chasing down the best deal of the day to fill my gas tank, I do not see myself driving an electric golf cart around town. Not yet anyway. I'll save that for when I retire in a warmer climate. Many predict traditional gasoline engines will prevail at least for the next decade.



## Watch This One

Nissan says the Leaf is not just for use as a specialty urban runabout, but rather as an everyday vehicle—a "real car" whose 160-kilometer+ (100-mile) range meets the needs of 70 percent of the world's motorists. In the case of U.S. consumers, Nissan says that a full 80 percent of drivers travel less than 100 km per day (62 miles), making the Leaf a solid fit for America's motoring majority, even taking into account power-sapping external factors like hilly terrain, accessory draw and extreme temperatures.

continued on page 28



## Responsibility— and Sensibility

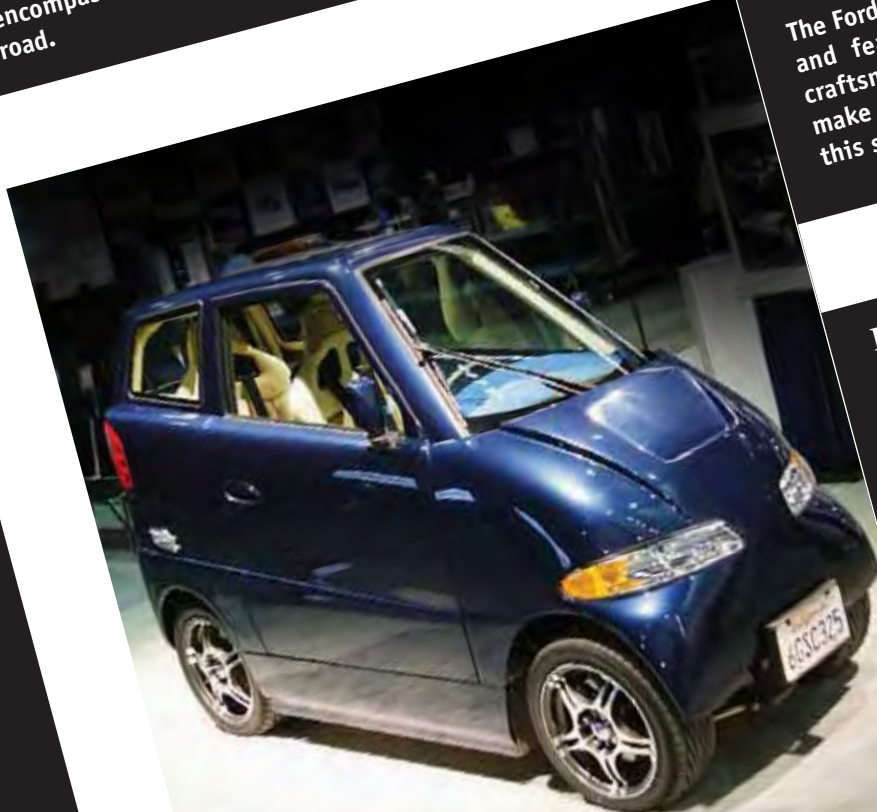
continued from page 27



**Continuous Change**  
Change is happening. Auto makers can no longer just get by on good looks. This year the appeal is functionality as well as style. Those safety, security and convenience features, once only available on more expensive cars, are becoming common on more mainstream cars. That means auto glass continues to play a major role not only in design, but also in the efficiency of our driving experience with features such as cameras for lane departure and special coatings. Likewise, auto glass is encompassing more of the vehicle's roof on cars we see on the road.



The Ford Focus offers more affordable technology and features than ever; along with detailed craftsmanship and outstanding fuel economy make this a new standard for driving quality in this segment.



**It Takes One to Tango ...**  
Definitely no two-man set windshield on this ultra narrow electric car ... with more than 1,000 pounds of torque starting at zero rpm and a 600-kW (805-hp) motor controller, the Tango accelerates from zero to 60 mph in less than four seconds. It finishes the standing quarter-mile in about 12 seconds at more than 100 mph, and can reach more than 130 mph with no gear-shifting. Wow!





There's no better way to see the Mustang panorama roof. It cuts 90 percent of ultraviolet light down, yet lets in tons of light—offering the feel of a convertible without messing up your hair.



**A Welcome Sight**  
Spot mirrors let you see the other guy that is just to the left and a little behind you. This is a much better approach than the stick-on mirrors. This Lincoln MKS also includes a security approach lamp to warn you of a vehicle closing in on you.



## Beat the Heat

For 2010, the third generation Toyota Prius is now available with a \$3,600 solar roof package on upscale models III and IV, which include the navigation package, power tilt/slide moonroof, solar-powered ventilation system and remote air conditioning system. The solar-powered ventilation system helps keeps the air temperature inside the car to that of surrounding ambient air when parked directly in the sun. The solar roof generates 80 watts of power, which engages the car's ventilation fan (same used for heating and cooling) to bring in outside air—thus making it a bit less unbearable when you return to the car and makes for shorter cool-down time. Also included is an AC button on the remote that turns the car's air conditioning on cooling the interior even further and will run for three minutes before shutting off. Additionally, you can turn off the solar panel option, which makes sense for cooler days. The panels in this display appeared to be a complete three-glass panel unit, but they are available as separate parts through dealers.

*continued on page 30*



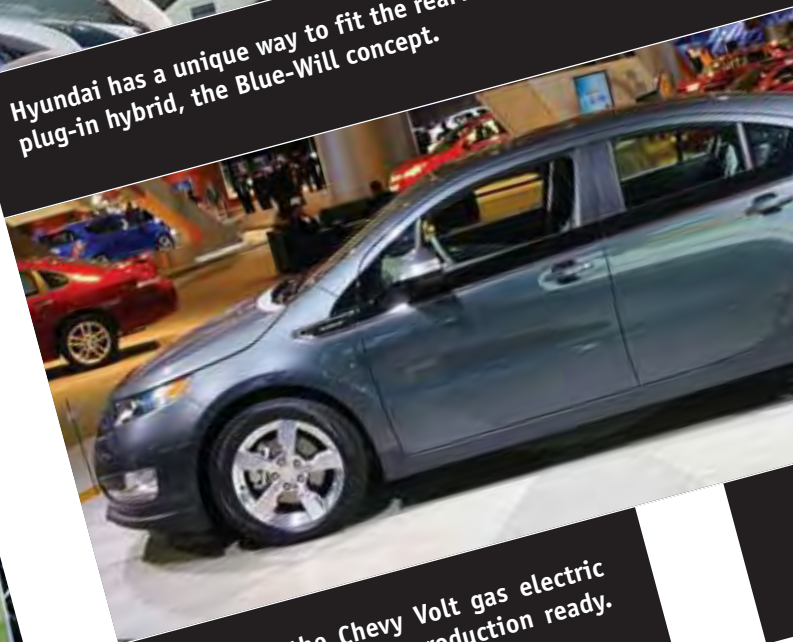
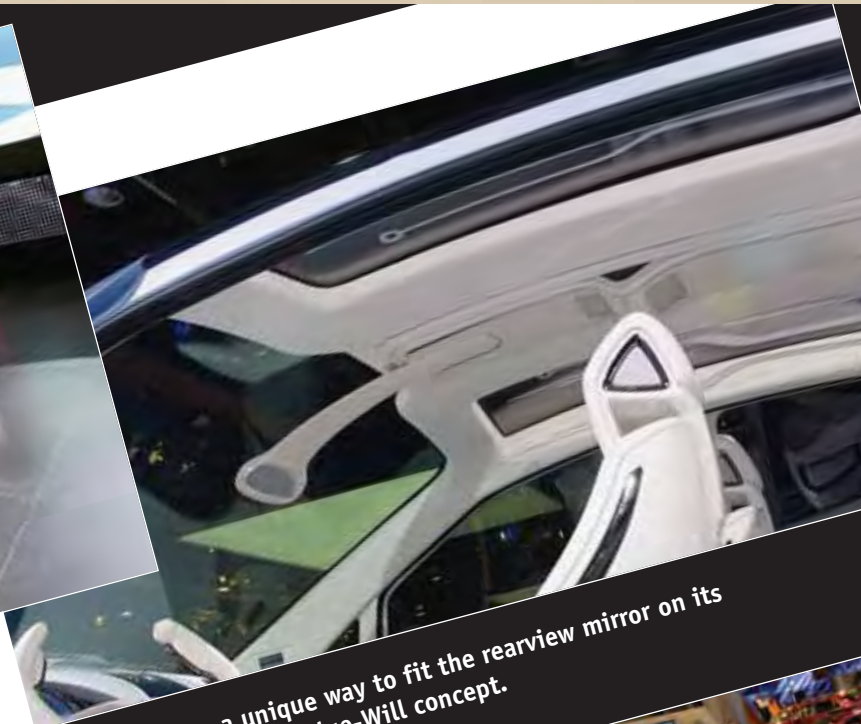
## Responsibility and Sensibility

continued from page 29



GM introduced the Granite concept which combines an urban-industrial design aesthetic with functionality aimed at young professionals. Granite has four doors, hinged on each side to open like a set of French doors. While its length is a full 2 feet shorter than the new GMC Terrain compact crossover, it is complemented by a wide, 70.3-inch overall width and a tall, 60.5-inch height that creates unique proportions dramatically different from conventional minivans, SUVs or crossover designs.

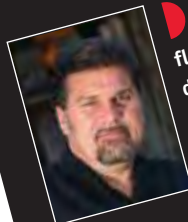
Hyundai has a unique way to fit the rearview mirror on its plug-in hybrid, the Blue-Will concept.



GM reports the Chevy Volt gas electric hybrid is 60 percent production ready. We're ready, GM ...



Could this be the mobile glass unit of the future? CT&T, the world's largest manufacturer of electric vehicles, offers a wide range of recreational and utility vehicle configurations, including maintenance and shuttle vehicles, neighborhood delivery, medical and other service uses. The c Zone line delivers a superior ride, range and charge times while offering a number of unique features, including heated seats.



Gene Nichols is the safety, technical training and fleet manager for Guardian Industries' Guardian Automotive Products - Aftermarket Division. He is based in Columbus, Ohio.





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# Fear Factor

## Businesses Across the United States Undergo First-Ever AGRSS Third-Party Validation Reviews

by Penny Stacey



**W**hen David Cooper, president of Auto Glass Plus in Richmond, Va., learned last fall that his company would be undergoing a third-party validation review by the Auto Glass Replacement Safety Standards Council Inc. (AGRSS), he wasn't concerned about his technicians making an installation error or doing something that goes against the Auto Glass Replacement Safety Standard (AGRSS). But, like others that have undergone the first of the reviews, he did have some apprehension.

"I think even the most confident person is apprehensive about being in the spotlight," says Cooper, who has been in the industry for more than 20 years.

He also was worried about how it might impact his business.

"My biggest concern was not so much getting an unfavorable review, but not being able to devote enough time to the AGRSS validator and not have that time away negatively impact my clients," adds Cooper.

But fortunately for Cooper, and others, he discovered that the validation review had minimal impact on his business, and, with preparation, the validation was a mostly seamless process.

Cooper's nerves also were trumped by the pride he took in what would occur.

"In my 20 years in this industry, I was

very impressed to hear that a representative was personally flying to our location to conduct the review," he says. "This was a sign to me that AGRSS has a vested interest in ensuring our shop (as well as others) is following proper procedures and adhering to the rules and regulations of glass installation."

Cooper's company was one of several to undergo the first round of validation reviews as part of the first

company underwent a validation review this January.

John Cox, director of glass operations for Belle Tire Auto Glass in Royal Oak, Mich., agrees.

"Because of the preparatory work and communication [involved], I knew pretty much exactly what to expect," he says.

The many seminars and webinars that the AGRSS Council held in preparation for the program also helped, according to Michael Paley, owner of Freedom Glass in Richmond, whose business was the first ever to undergo a validation review.

"For us, the biggest reason the validation was what we expected was because at the AGRSS Conference in November 2009, [the speakers] not only talked about the validation process in detail, but [Glasspro's] Jeff Olive and [Orion Registrar Corp. representative] Penny Ouelette performed a mock audit," says Paley.

The seminars actually started the previous year, as preparation for the program got underway—so Paley also had started thinking about it early.

"At the conference in 2008, I began to see the value and potential importance of the validation process for each and every shop performing auto glass replacements," he says. "However, the year between AGRSS Conferences '08 and '09, my anxiety built because as an owner I knew the importance of passing

**"I think even the most confident person is apprehensive about being in the spotlight."**

**—David Cooper, Auto Glass Plus, Richmond, Va.**

cluster randomly selected in November 2009. Since then, validations of two clusters of ten shops have been completed. The validation review program, launched last fall, was designed to send independent auditors into randomly selected AGRSS-registered shops to observe a number of items to ensure they are compliant with the AGRSS Standard. Orion Registrar Corp., based in Arvada, Colo., is the company administering the reviews.

### Expectations Revealed

Cooper and others found that with preparation, training and communication, there was little unknown about what to expect from the review.

Bruce Hardy, divisional manager for Harmon Glass of Michigan, describes the process as "pretty painless." His





**Dominion Auto Glass president Charles Groves (left) and technician Doug Douse (right) work together to install a windshield. The company underwent an on-site AGRSS validation review in November.**

the validation but I was not sure I could emphasize it strongly enough to my team members. The last thing I wanted was for our team to tackle this audit haphazardly or lightheartedly, and then have to pay for a follow-up audit."

## Pertinent Preparation

Once businesses learn that they'll be validated, the amount of preparation work often varies and depends somewhat on how you've been conducting business in the past.

Charles Groves, president of Dominion Auto Glass in Richmond, Va., says as long as technicians are already well-trained and versed in the AGRSS Standard, not a lot of additional steps are needed.

"The installers just have to be educated," he says. "That pretty much all there is to it."

Groves says he also met with his adhesive manufacturer, a representative from Sika Corp., who went over some of the details of how the validation review would work.

Though Cooper felt his staff was prepared for the validation, his staff did review various processes once they were notified.

"[The time after our notification] allowed my staff and technicians and I to review the everyday practices of installation, as well as some of the more technical detail-oriented techniques needed for larger, more complicated jobs," he says.

Hardy took a similar approach.

"Everyone here tries to do every-

thing correctly all the time," he says. "We had a couple breakfast meetings to make sure everyone was up to speed."

Cox says that since Belle Tire Auto Glass has trained to the AGRSS Standard since its entrance into the business, little to no preparation work was needed.

"To tell you the truth, there was not a whole lot of additional prep work on our part to get ready for the audit, because we had been doing this since day one," he says. "We trained to it from the day we opened across our locations. We've been following AGRSS to the 't.'"

In fact, when Cox learned the company was going to be validated, he was excited about the opportunity.

"We were actually kind of anxious to get someone out to validate that we were doing things right because we thought we were and it turned out that we were correct," he says.

## Extra Hurdles

Despite optimism on the part of many company owners, such as Cox, often there is another hurdle to cross—that of nervous technicians who are concerned about the basic idea of the validation; having someone watching them closely and asking questions. Cooper said a simple reassurance to his technicians helped them.

"I reminded [my technicians] that they'd been installing glass for years by the book and that the only difference was that they'd have someone asking questions about their work, kind of like

## Rough Spots

When a business undergoes a validation review by the Auto Glass Replacement Safety Standards (AGRSS) Council Inc., there's always a possibility that they might not be found to be compliant with the AGRSS Standard. In those cases, a company has three options:

- to be deemed non-compliant and to no longer be considered AGRSS-Registered;
- to appeal to the AGRSS Validation Review Board, if there is a disagreement about the area in which the business was cited; or
- to propose an auditable remedy and explain to the AGRSS Validation Review Board explaining how the business has remedied those areas in which it was deemed non-compliant.

a fly on the wall," he says. "We also all sat down and watched the webinar during lunch one day to help better prepare ourselves with what to expect."

Though Paley's technician experienced a similar case of nerves, once the validator arrived on site, he says this feeling subsided quickly.

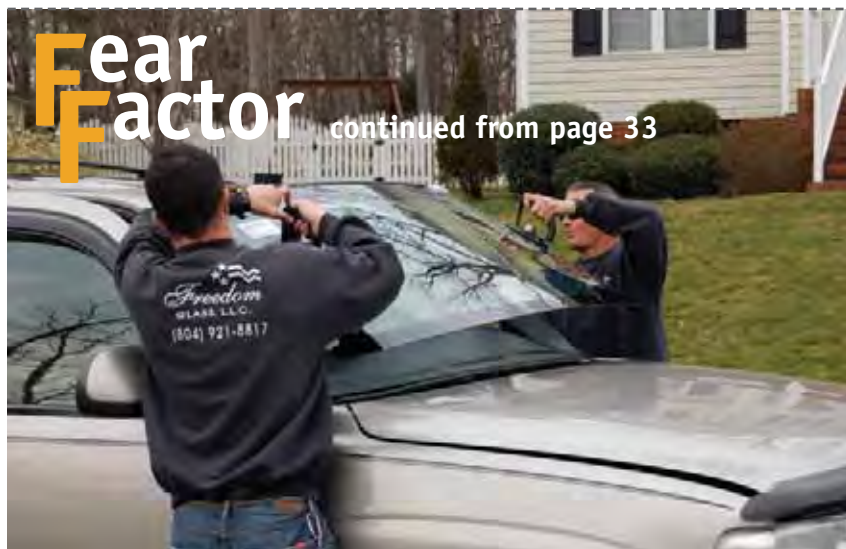
"My [nervousness] ended about five minutes into the audit process," says Paley. "[Our technician] didn't have someone standing over his shoulder as we both feared would happen. I think our technician's worries were put at ease because of the validator himself, talking with our technician as if to learn rather than talking as if teaching."

Paley wasn't alone in his assessment.

"The validator was punctual, thorough and very personable," agrees Cooper. "Immediately upon meeting the gentleman, my staff and I felt that instead of having to deal with an unpleasant, hard-nosed auditor type, we were going to be interacting with someone who knew what the technicians were expected to know and do, and would simply record what they observed."

Cooper also points out that the way the validation worked was a bit more informal than he would have expected, though in a positive way.

*continued on page 34*



## Fear Factor continued from page 33

Freedom Glass in Richmond, Va., was the validator's first stop last November—and the first company ever to be validated in the history of the program.

Scheduling has been a challenge. Because the validator has to observe and interview the work of every single technician, this can change the way a company is used to working.

For example, Paley's company is all-mobile, and he had to contend with rain on the day the validation review was scheduled.

"Fortunately we were able to coordinate with one of the companies we work with and perform our replacement indoors."

Hardy had a similar problem; the validator visited his Michigan-based company on a cold January day.

"Everything we do—or probably 90 percent of it—is mobile," he says. "We're all over the place, so the hardest part was coordinating, and I'm not sure the validators were entirely comfortable standing outside [during the entire process]."

### The Results are In ...

Once a validation review is complete, the validator holds a closing meeting with the owner of the business and goes over the results of the validation.

If any items of non-compliance are found, a formal process occurs to give the business a chance to resolve these.

"I had a couple of instances, one where the technician forgot to mark his tube of urethane with the time and date and I had to send back a letter saying what happened, why it happened and how we would prevent it in the future," says Hardy.

This was the difficult part, he says—the validator required the letter to be written in a certain format of which Hardy was unaware.

"[My first letter] wasn't [written] to their qualifications," says Hardy, so he had to re-submit it in the validator's numbered format.

However, once he submitted it in the required format, nothing further was required.

Groves dealt with a different issue.

"In addition to checking items off their list, the validator also would lightheartedly quiz us from time to time during an installation process, to which, I'm proud to say, we gave a correct response," he says.

### Meet the Validators

Cox says the validator that visited his shop also showed a strong sense of professionalism and confidentiality.

"[He was] there to do a job and [he] did the job professionally, the way you would expect them to do it," Cox says. "They don't want to talk about or will not talk about any competitors, or validations done elsewhere. What they do is strictly one-on-one and confidential and they keep it to that."

One criticism of the program, before it began, was that the validators employed by Orion do not have a detailed background in auto glass, though they have undergone basic, classroom training with industry expert Bob Beranek. Hardy says this paid off.

"If you were to ask me if they could do a replacement, I'd say 'no,' but if [you asked if] they know the fundamentals of the process we use, I would say 'yes,'" he says. "They didn't have any hands-on experience, but the questions they asked were pertinent to what we do."

The validations varied in time, depending on the number of technicians a shop has, as each one must be observed during a company's validation. Both Hardy's and Groves' company reviews took the better portion of a day.

### After the Validation

Once a validation is complete, if all goes well, a business is left with something exciting to consider: how to promote their success in the validation review to customers. Though most of the validations have occurred too recently for major marketing changes to be implemented, some who've passed with flying colors have taken steps to promote this positive to customers.

"It's something to differentiate yourself from non-compliant shops," says John Cox, director of Glass Operations for Belle Tire Auto Glass in Royal Oak, Mich.

Cox says the company started promoting its recent validation review and the success it had in its television and radio advertising almost immediately.

"We've done press releases, independent letters to insurance companies, and we also have some hand-carry pieces we take to insurance agents," he says. "... Most of our clientele are informed, so it was just a good chance to go out there and jump up and down and say 'we did it!'"

For David Cooper, president of Auto Glass Plus in Richmond, Va., he considers the positive validation the Auto Glass Replacement Safety Standards Council Inc.'s "stamp of approval," and plans to use this in the future, though he hasn't implemented this yet.

"We proudly display our AGRSS approval and will be certain to note our perfect score, as well as our other certifications, in our marketing material," he says.



"[The validator's] report showed about five issues on it, and it turned out three of them were things he shouldn't have cited us on," he says.

He explains, "One of the things they cited me on was that I didn't track DOT numbers, but we're not required to do that ... I explained that we don't record that, and [the] AGRSS [Council] said 'you're right.'"

Groves' technicians also received some negative feedback on items that were designed to be a part of the validation review.

"One of [the citations] was that our installer didn't know the amount of time for a pinchweld primer, and he said another guy touched the glass on the frit band," Groves recalls.

## Tips for the Future

Though Groves says he disagrees with the validator's assessment of what he saw, as far as the frit band his concerned, the primer issue offered a learning experience.

"[The technician] knows [primer times] now," he says.

Groves says after the validation, he received a letter detailing the items for which the company was non-compliant, explaining what section of the AGRSS Standard was violated (*see related sidebar on page 33*).

For the other items, those which the company didn't feel should have been evaluated, official correspondence was exchanged.

"We had to reply with a letter after they told us we weren't deficient in those three things, [and] we had to answer them and agree we're not deficient," Groves says.

As others prepare for future validations—or the possibility of one—Cooper says he encourages them to review as he did with his technicians.

"I would urge all glass shop managers to compare their technicians' installation practices to the guidelines set forth in their adhesive manufacturer's training manual," he says. "If



**Many who have undergone validation reviews have noted that the process is simple, as long as a company has been installing windshields in accordance with the AGRSS Standard in the past.**

they're not one in the same, I would suggest a refresher course be given immediately. Close attention should be paid to the curing times as it applies to temperature and humidity."

Preparing technicians for the types of questions validators might ask also is a must, Hardy says.

"When the validator is asking questions, make sure who ever being interviewed is actually listening to the questions," he says. "Sometimes they're asking for set times on urethanes and sometimes they might be asking hypotheticals. For example, they might ask, 'what if humidity was such and such?'"

Paley says what he has learned from attending past AGRSS Conferences also is invaluable. He suggests seeking advice from your adhesive manufacturer, too.

"With respect to the adhesive man-

ufacturers, I feel that their involvement in our (or any shop's) preparedness for the validation is instrumental," he says. "After all, the primary purpose of AGRSS is to ensure that the windshield is reinstalled so as to protect the occupants in that vehicle. The role of the adhesive manufacturers, and its representatives, in this process cannot be discounted."

And Cox stresses that all of this is much more important than just preparing for a validation.

"My biggest tip would be that it really should have nothing to do with the audit," he says. "It should be your way of doing business—your technicians, your way of doing installations, and then the audit is nothing but a blue ribbon that says you do what you say you do." ■

Penny Stacey is the editor of AGRR magazine.

## THURSDAY, MAY 20, 2010

1:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.

REGISTRATION OPEN

2:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.

LYNX SERVICES TOUR

(included but must register in advance)

6:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.

COCKTAIL PARTY/DINNER CRUISE\*

\*Additional fee applies and pre-registration is required. Ship port is on-premises. Please arrive by 5:45 p.m. to ensure proper boarding.

## FRIDAY, MAY 21, 2010

7:30 A.M. - 7:00 P.M.

REGISTRATION OPEN

8:30 A.M. - 8:45 A.M.

OPENING & WELCOME BY MEMBERS OF  
THE NWRA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

9:00 A.M. - 10:00 A.M.

LEGISLATIVE & STANDARDS UPDATE

10:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.

AUTO INSURANCE COMPANY  
PANEL DISCUSSION

11:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

TEN SUREFIRE WEB STRATEGIES

12:00 P.M. - 1:00 P.M.

LUNCH ON YOUR OWN

1:00 P.M. - 2:00 P.M.

STEERING & GRASS ROOTS INITIATIVES

2:00 P.M. - 3:00 P.M.

INTERNET MARKETING: WEBSITES THAT  
PRODUCE RESULTS FOR REPAIR COMPANIES

3:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.

SPRING AUTO GLASS SHOW™

5:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.

COCKTAIL PARTY ON SHOW FLOOR

## SATURDAY, MAY 22, 2010

7:30 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.

REGISTRATION OPEN

8:00 A.M. - 9:00 A.M.

JOINT NWRA/IGA BREAKFAST/ROUNDTABLES

9:00 A.M. - 10:15 A.M.

WINDSHIELD REPAIR MARKETING TIPS

10:30 A.M. - 11:45 A.M.

WINDSHIELD REPAIR TECHNICAL TIPS

2:00 P.M. - 2:30 P.M.

NWRA CERTIFICATION TRAINING

2:30 P.M. - 3:00 P.M.

NWRA REPAIR OF LAMINATED GLASS  
CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION

10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.

SPRING AUTO GLASS SHOW™

NWRA Conference Schedule at a Glance





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May 22 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

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for the IGA and NWRA  
Annual Conferences.

### THURSDAY, MAY 20, 2010

**1:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.** REGISTRATION  
OPEN

**2:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.** LYNX SERVICES TOUR  
(included but must register in advance)

**6:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.** COCKTAIL PARTY/  
DINNER CRUISE\*

\*Additional fee applies and pre-registration is required. Ship  
port is on-premises. Please arrive by 5:45 p.m. to ensure proper  
boarding.

### FRIDAY, MAY 21, 2010

**7:30 A.M. - 7:00 P.M.** REGISTRATION OPEN

**9:00 A.M. - 10:00 A.M.** LEGISLATIVE & STANDARDS UPDATE

**10:00 A.M. - 10:45 A.M.** "FREEDOM OF CHOICE":  
THE AUTO BODY PERSPECTIVE

**11:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.** TEN GREAT MARKETING IDEAS

**12:00 P.M. - 1:00 P.M.** LUNCH ON YOUR OWN

**1:00 P.M. - 2:00 P.M.** ANTI-STEERING & GRASS ROOTS INITIATIVES

**2:00 P.M. - 3:00 P.M.** INTERNET MARKETING: WEBSITES  
THAT PRODUCE RESULTS

**3:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.** SPRING AUTO GLASS SHOW™

**5:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.** COCKTAIL PARTY ON SHOW FLOOR

### SATURDAY, MAY 22, 2010

**7:30 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.** REGISTRATION OPEN

**8:00 A.M. - 9:00 A.M.** JOINT NWRA/IGA BREAKFAST/ROUND TABLES

**9:00 A.M. - 10:30 A.M.** LEGAL STRATEGY UPDATE

**10:30 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.** NEW CARS & ADHESIVE UPDATE

**10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.** SPRING AUTO GLASS SHOW™

**1:00 P.M. - 2:00 P.M.** CERTIFICATION TRAINING

**2:00 P.M. - 3:00 P.M.** CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION

Visit <http://www.iga.org/springautoglassshow.php> for more information.

Visit <http://www.glassexpos.com/iga/> to register.



IGA Conference Schedule at a Glance

# Save the (Wind) Shields



**Florida-Based  
Repair Company  
Has Committed  
to Saving the  
Customer Money  
and Helping the  
Environment**

by Penny Stacey

**"**If we don't save the windshield, we don't make money." These are the words of SuperGlass Windshield Repair founder and president David Casey of Orlando, Fla. Though this is not an official company motto, the company instills the same concept within all of its franchisees. And the franchisees don't just learn how to repair the glass, but they actually are trained to serve as "repair specialists."

It is this focus on repair—with replacement not even available as an option from SuperGlass—that has helped the company serve its customers (and its customers' customers) over the years and has made SuperGlass into a multi-million dollar worldwide business.

"If you save a customer's windshield, you're going to make him/her

happy," says Casey. "It's our marketing point."

And Casey, a staunch environmentalist, takes issue with any company that might replace glass that could have been repaired.

"Any company that replaces glass that doesn't need to be replaced has a moral issue with safety and with the environment," he says.

To make sure all franchisees remain committed to the environment as well—and are aware of the positive impact their work can have—Casey continually provides them with reports on cost savings and how much they have saved customers by repairing their windshields.

"We're in business against a concept," he says. "This gives us a mission."

## The Mission's Origins

Together with his business partner, Bill Costello, vice president of marketing, Casey got into the windshield repair business in 1981—almost 30 years ago.

"It was before networks and insurance came into play," recalls Casey, who has long served on the Board of Directors for the National Windshield Repair Association and is a founding board member of the Global Glass Conservation Alliance.

When Casey got his start, repair was hardly known as a service. "There weren't many people doing it at all," he says.

The two used the Kier System, and eventually founded a company called Star Technology Windshield Repair,





**SuperGlass Windshield Repair president David Casey got into the windshield repair business in the early 1980s.**

which they operated until 1991. They founded SuperGlass Windshield Repair in 1992.

Their initial goal was to open two stores. Franchising wasn't originally part of the plan. "It was my lawyer who at one point told me to start franchising," says Casey. "It was an evolution. It wasn't something we planned."

The fact that repair was so unknown also helped this progression. "It was literally like magic," he says. "People would get excited quickly."

Though the two got their start in Boulder, Colo., where Casey had gone because of the music and rock scene there, they eventually moved to Grand Junction, Colo., and then later, in the early 1990s, transferred the

company to Atlanta.

"We were in a small town and we wanted to move to a metro center," he says.

Just a few years later, in 1996, SuperGlass moved its headquarters to its current location in Orlando, Fla.

The mild climate there has been a boon for the franchise part of the business, Casey says. "People really have enjoyed coming here for the training," he says, and notes that Orlando also is a good international hub, and this definitely has come in handy. Today, the company has 220 franchise owners, spread across the world. Though the majority of these are in the United States, SuperGlass also has franchises in South Africa, Spain, France and Germany.

## Working for the Man

One of SuperGlass's claims to fame is the attention that it pays to its franchisees. As you walk through the halls of SuperGlass's main office, Casey points out several people along the way—Costello, his business partner; his daughters, Fawn Moore and Meghan Casey, both of whom have been working with him for the last several years—and he'll tell you that, though they each have a different specific duty, they all have one common goal: "getting business for franchisees."

"We just try to help our people make money," says Casey.

Once a franchisee joins the company, he/she travels to Orlando for a five-day training course. "We use every single minute of it," he says.

Training includes not only technical repair skills, but also marketing and business skills.

"Any aspect of running a business—that's what we want to give to them," Casey says.

While the training is occurring, Costello is working to set up appointments with local companies for the following week for the franchisee, and a SuperGlass official will then travel with the franchisee to his/her location during the following week to accompany him/her on the first of their appointments.

"The most important reason we do this is we're showing them how to get business," he says.

Fleet work—rental car companies specifically—has become a niche for the company at large, so most of these appointments are of this sort.

"With the independent motorist it is hard to make an impact," Casey says. "Fleet work is like a friendship or marriage—you can prove yourself over time."

Casey says there are two major reasons the company spends so much time on helping franchisees get started in the business.

- 1 – "It's the right thing to do."
- 2 – "It's good for business."

*continued on page 40*

## Save the (Wind) Shields continued from page 39

focus on REPAIR

Lastly, once SuperGlass signs a new franchisee up, Casey feels a responsibility to them. "I have to make money for my people, because they're family now," he says.

### Saving the Airways

Though SuperGlass Windshield Repair puts a large emphasis on saving windshields, for both environmental and economical reasons, there's an even pricier type of glass out there it's now looking to save. Just last year, the company launched an additional business, Aerospace Transparencies Repair & Restoration Inc., to focus on restoring jet windows. SuperGlass became a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)-certified repair location in April 2009.

"It would cost \$115,000 to replace the windshields on a Lear jet," says Casey, offering some insight into the service it provides.

The business requires extreme precision, and, because you must become an FAA-certified repair location to work on jet windows, the service isn't one usually offered by SuperGlass franchisees. Becoming an FAA repair station required the SuperGlass staff to conduct a specific anti-drug and alcohol program and more. It has 22 technicians available to complete the aircraft polishing.

"When you work in the aircraft industry, you are never allowed to guess," says Casey. "If you don't understand the job 100 percent, you're not touching the glass."

And "little mistakes" aren't an option.

"With the airlines, they replace everything two years before it's going to break—if only everyone would do business that way," he says.

The company has done a number of notable jobs already, including the jets of both the Miami Dolphins and Orlando Magic, Professional Golf Association chairperson Timothy Finchem's jet and even Donald Rumsfeld's Gulfstream jet.

### Making the Cut

But not everyone is qualified to be part of that family, according to Casey. "You're going to find that just because someone wants to [run a franchise] doesn't mean they should be doing it," he said.

SuperGlass looks for a few simple requirements from its franchisees. One is communication. "We fix glass, but we also deal with people," Casey says. "You can't fix the glass if you can't talk to people."

But the quality of the repair also is, of course, important, and an enjoyment of working outdoors also is a plus. The company also looks at the town where a franchise is located and what potential there is there.

For locating new franchisees, though, Casey points out that the company's work mostly markets itself. Many SuperGlass franchisees started out as customers of other franchisees.

"If we do 15 to 16 [franchises] a year, that's fine with us," he says. "We're happy; they're successful."

### More to Discover

When Casey and Costello aren't training a new recruit, they're looking for the latest products and services to offer their franchisees as add-ons.

Among these are headlight restoration and scratch removal for both architectural and automotive glass.

Its latest addition is called Super Virus Shield, and it's a coating designed to kill germs mechanically. Franchisees can sell it to dealerships for used vehicles, but it also works for hotels, gyms, radio stations and office buildings, and can not only kill germs—but also can prevent the spread of the germ for up to six to nine months.

In addition, SuperGlass also has launched an addition business in recent years, Aerospace Transparencies Repair and Restoration Inc., to restore windows for the airline industry (*see sidebar at left*).

### Looking Ahead

Though the SuperGlass franchise agreement is a ten-year one (and can be renewed for 10 years at a time), most stay for longer.

"No one has ever walked away," Casey says.

And its commitment hasn't gone unnoticed, even outside the auto glass industry. *Entrepreneur*® magazine ranked SuperGlass No. 47 on the 2009 low-cost franchise list, No. 55 on the list of top home-based franchises, and No. 149 on the list of America's Top



SuperGlass conducts training for new franchisees at its headquarters in Orlando, Fla.



## Global Franchises.

The company has 22 franchises that have exceeded sales of \$1 million with their franchise, and two franchises that have exceeded \$2 million in sales—all doing repair only. As a chain, Super-Glass has surpassed \$92 million in repair sales since its inception and expects to exceed \$100 million (since their founding) this year.

And, despite a continuing down side in the economy, Casey says the future looks bright.

"I feel good about where repair is in this economy," he says.

He adds, "A lot of companies have moved backwards this year, and we've had some decent growth and remain stable."



Bill Costello (left), vice president of marketing, and David Casey (right), president, work closely to generate business for franchisees across the world.

Penny Stacey is the editor of AGRR magazine.

focus on REPAIR

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## Ask the Doctor

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rich@ultrabond.com

# Curing Under Pressure

by Richard Campfield

focus on REPAIR

**O**NE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL rules to achieving a structurally sound, long-lasting and visually superior windshield repair comes at the very end of the process. This also is when you can ruin what would have been a perfect repair.

Windshield repair is a chemical process—period. The only thing you leave the customer with is the resin/adhesive. A properly designed windshield repair tool and curing light should assist in maximizing your adhesive properties to the substrate(s). Knowing the adhesive's properties and the stresses of the substrate is the first fundamental rule of any adhesive application; match the adhesive to the substrate(s) and its stresses.

We have both glass and polyvinyl butyral (PVB) as substrates and both aesthetics and structural restoration are important. Stone breaks/chips will be subject to thermal stress caused by expansion and contraction of the glass from heat and cold. The most extreme stress condition is the defroster on a cold, un-garaged vehicle—more so than the shock of a car wash on a hot day, because resin is brittle when cold and elastic when hot. The PVB also turns soft, almost liquid, in the summer heat, to hard in the winter cold. If either of these bonds gives way, the repair will become visible or fail.

Windshield repair resins are acrylic—ultraviolet (UV) radical curing acrylics, to be exact. Low-viscosity acrylic resins, with which stone breaks are repaired, wet the glass and NOT the PVB. This creates surface tension. There is no chemical bond between the PVB and the resin. Acrylic resin pulls back and off of the PVB upon

**“Not curing under pressure compromises both the mechanical and chemical bond to the glass and leaves no bond to the PVB.”**

curing, and this can create an unsightly repair because the void between the resin and the PVB will be black and/or refracting and will increase as the PVB turns from hard (from cold winter weather) to soft (from hot weather). Even if you do not see this immediately after the repair, the separation is there and it will be visible afterwards from weathering. How do you easily avoid this? By proper curing.

Not curing under pressure compromises both the mechanical and chemical bond to the glass and leaves no bond to the PVB.

## Curing Under Pressure

Curing under pressure has several benefits, as follows:

- It creates a mechanical bond to the PVB, so it does not separate upon curing or over time, creating an unsightly repair.
- Curing under pressure increases both the mechanical and chemical bond to the glass because the pressure keeps the resin in place while it cures.
- It compensates for shrinkage. The rule of thumb to address adhesive shrinkage is to overfill, and the only way to overfill a stone break is to cure under pressure. Shrinkage is caused by the tight-knit structure of the free-

radical double-bonding; the UV cure being exothermic, a chemical reaction that releases heat; and surface tension caused by the wetting of the glass and not the PVB. Shrinkage causes the cross linkage to be stressed instead of relaxed, creating residual stress within the structure. Relaxed cross linkage gives the repair more elasticity to expand and contract without crosslinks snapping/breaking, creating a better bond and preventing deterioration. Slow cure also controls shrinkage, as too fast of a cure increases shrinkage and stress.

- Curing under pressure improves the cohesive strength, which is the internal bond of the resin, to itself by allowing more monomers to join with other molecules to form polymers. This is needed to bridge and fill any void/gap in the break, legs and bullseye.

In summary, do not remove your tool before you cure. Curing with your repair tool in the pressure mode forces the resin to stay put while curing, instead of shrinking and pulling off of the PVB. ■

**Richard Campfield is the founder and president of Ultra Bond Inc. in Grand Junction, Colo. Mr. Campfield's opinions are solely his own and not necessarily those of this magazine.**





mike@nwrrasn.org

## Repair Round Up

nwra reports

# New Time, New Location

by Mike Boyle

**A**S YOU MAY HAVE ALREADY heard, the National Windshield Repair Association's (NWRA) 2010 Annual Conference will be held May 20-22, 2010, and will provide the perfect venue for windshield repair technicians to obtain the information and education necessary for a strong business—especially in these tough economic times. Moreover, the NWRA is joining forces with the Independent Glass Association (IGA) and the National Glass Association (NGA) for one co-located spring event. Both the IGA and NWRA will host their annual conferences there—two educational conferences with an expansive exposition—while the NGA will host its auto glass-related committee meetings there as well. These will be the only auto glass events for all three groups in 2010.

## A Hot Spot

Also, this year, the NWRA 2010 conference moves to a new, lush (though reasonably priced) location: the Sanibel Harbour Marriott Resort and Spa in Fort Myers, Fla. This new destination provides a world-class backdrop with all of the accommodations you've come to expect for a comfortable stay, allowing you to focus on your windshield repair education, while also basking in the warm Florida sun.

At this year's meeting, the NWRA will expand our auto glass industry green commitment and present tried and true marketing and repair tips.

The annual conference will also once again involve major industry players—both industry supplier and retailers will be present—so come prepared to learn how to not only help further your business, but also to make

## Schedule at a Glance

Show schedule is subject to change. Please visit our website, [www.nwrrasn.org](http://www.nwrrasn.org), for show updates.

### Thursday, May 20, 2010

Registration Open .....1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Conference Opening Cocktail Party/Dinner Cruise\* .....6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

### Friday, May 21, 2010

Registration Open .....7:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.  
Educational Seminar Program .....9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
Spring Auto Glass Show™ .....3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.  
Cocktail Party on Show Floor .....5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

### Saturday, May 22, 2010

Registration Open .....7:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
Joint NWRA/IGA Breakfast.....8 a.m. - 9 a.m.  
Educational Seminar Program .....9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
Spring Auto Glass Show™ .....10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

*\*Additional fee applies and pre-registration is required. For more information, please call 540/720-7484 or visit us online at [www.nwrrasn.org](http://www.nwrrasn.org).*

important industry contacts.

The NWRA also will be presenting an hour-long certification training course. Following the training course, attendees may elect to take the written certification examination (additional fee applies), as well have the ability to satisfy the practical portion of the program, by performing an on-site repair before an NWRA practical assessment administrator.

## After Hours

Optional events include a dinner cruise aboard a regal 100-foot private luxury yacht, as well a tour of LYNX Services' main call center (pre-registration required for both). Tour participants will have the opportunity to see the inner workings of one of this industry's claims administrators.

(As a bonus, those who attend the 2010 NWRA Conference also can register for the IGA Conference at a discounted rate.)

The 2010 conference is all about the windshield repair technician, and what the NWRA—and its parent organization, the Global Glass Conservation Alliance (GGCA)—can do to assist technicians, by advising them on how to increase their business profitability, as well how to further the message of repair as the first (and most environmentally friendly) option.

As you can see, this year's conference continues the NWRA's mission: to change the world one repair at a time.

To read more about the NWRA 2010 Annual Conference, as well to register online, please visit [www.nwrrasn.org](http://www.nwrrasn.org).

I hope to see you in Florida. ■

**Mike Boyle is the president of the National Windshield Repair Association (NWRA). He also serves as president of Glass Mechanix in Bend, Ore. Mr. Boyle's opinions are solely his own and not necessarily those of this magazine.**

## WGR Reports

repair news



### PRODUCT NEWS

#### Get Cool

The HX1000 Heat X-Changer from Delta Kits Inc. works as a heat sink, removing heat from the glass and transferring it into the tool. The heater is equipped with specially designed radial cooling fins that allow the heat to dissipate rapidly so the tool heats slowly and cools quickly after use.



The HX1000 has a 2-inch surface diameter, is made from anodized 7075 T6 aircraft aluminum alloy, and is only 6.3 ounces, making it ergonomically friendly at well.

► [www.deltakits.com](http://www.deltakits.com)

#### GlasWeld Introduces ecoVac™

The new ecoVac Mini windshield repair system from GlasWeld is designed to be efficient, economical

and ecological. Its design is based on the company's ProVac™ technology, with several advancements. According to the company, the new mini system is easy to use, has an efficient design, creates high-quality repairs and is ecological, in that it uses only four drops of resin per repair. Likewise, it has few moving parts, providing for ease of use and longevity of life, according to GlasWeld.

The system comes with a lifetime warranty and is available in a silver or graphite anodized aluminum finish, or a completely stainless steel version.

► [www.glasweld.com](http://www.glasweld.com)

#### Repairin' in the Rain

Ultra Bond's new Rain Resin is designed to allow technicians to repair windshields even in the rain, as the resin can be mixed with water without affecting repairs, according to the company. In addition, the company offers a Rain Proof Additive that it says can be added to any acrylic resin to "rain-proof" it.

► [www.ultrabond.com](http://www.ultrabond.com)

#### Annihilate Breaks

The Annihilator from Glass Pro Systems allows a technician to perform a high-quality repair quickly, according to its manufacturer. Glass Pro Systems



officials say the dry-vacuum system is extremely fast to use and works on vertical glass as well as cracks and normal damage.

► [www.glassprosyste.ms.com](http://www.glassprosyste.ms.com)

#### Speed Up with QuikSilver

The new QuikSilver Technology™ from AEGIS Tools International is designed so that technicians can complete windshield repairs in as little as five minutes, according to its manufacturer. The system uses a dry vacuum to remove moisture and debris from a break, along with a gauged pump so that the technician can verify when an adequate vacuum is achieved. When the injector is lowered into position, air is unable to re-enter the break, so it fills quickly and completely with repair resin.

► [www.aegistools.com](http://www.aegistools.com)



#### C.R. Laurence Introduces Windshield Saver

C.R. Laurence Co. Inc. has a new windshield repair kit available. The Windshield Saver uses a two-party epoxy compound available in single- or five application fleet packs.

"The compound hardens and bonds to fill chip crevices, preventing radial cracks," says product manager Gary Byrum. "There is no drilling required, so application is easy and effective on a wide range of pit types. The clear epoxy will not affect visibility, and restores the windshield to nearly new condition."

► [www.crlaurence.com](http://www.crlaurence.com)



### BRIEFLY...

The National Windshield Repair Association (NWRA) will take over as secretariat of the ANSI/NGA/NWRA Repair of Laminated Auto Glass Standard (ROLAGS) in the coming months, pending ANSI approval ... **Glass Mechanix** has launched a new division, **Surface Mechanix**, to provide residential restoration services for glass, metal, stone and other surfaces. ■



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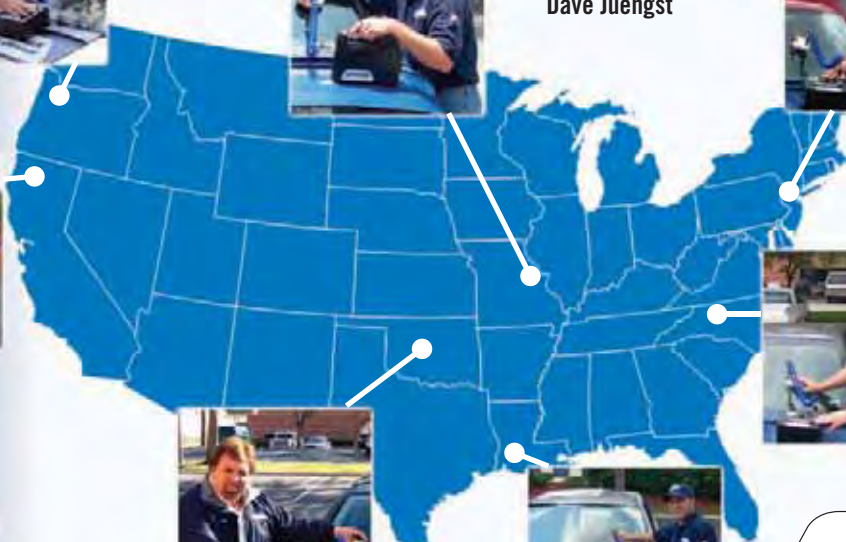
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#### RV GLASS

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888/714-7171 (fax)  
rv@coachglass.com

### Information Sources

#### ASSOCIATIONS

**NATIONAL WINDSHIELD  
REPAIR ASSOCIATION**  
P.O. Box 569  
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540/720-7484 (phone)  
540/720-3470 (fax)  
www.nwrassn.org

### INDEPENDENT GLASS ASSOCIATION

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www.iga.org

#### PUBLICATIONS

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1, 41	Gold Glass Group	800/448-5188	631/981-4299	www.gggcorp.com
37	Independent Glass Association	540/720-7484	540/720-3470	www.iga.org
11	Mainstreet Computers	800/698-6248	734/698-8228	www.mainstreetcomp.com
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5, 12	Shat R Proof Corp.	800/728-1817	952/946-0461	www.shatproof.com
24-25	SIKA Corp.	800/688-7452	248/577-0810	www.sikaindustry.com
12	Sunroof Express/Night Watchman Co.	800/322-8867	586/498-2301	www.nightwatchman.net
19, 45	SuperGlass Windshield Repair	866/557-7497	407/240-3266	www.sgwr.com
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3. Number of employees:

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4. Please check all organizations you are a part of:

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## Avocations

life beyond the auto glass business

# Defensive Maneuvers

Brian Fenner, Owner, Safe Glass Technologies

**A**NYONE WHO'S BEEN IN THE auto glass business for any amount of time would probably agree that some afterhours stress relief is needed. It was this need, along with a desire to get into shape, that initially drove Brian Fenner, owner of Safe Glass Technologies in Easton, Pa., to become involved in the Gracie style of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu.

"I was looking for a physical activity to release stress ... and lose weight," he says. "I have always been intrigued by the martial arts and I am a big fan of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA). One of the staple disciplines in most fighters is Jiu Jitsu and I thought this was a good fit for me."

Since Fenner discovered the sport, approximately 18 months ago, he has been attending a local class at least twice a week, for two to three hours at a time. He recently earned his blue belt—the second of five achievable belts in the sport.

"In my opinion, out of all the different styles of martial arts, Jiu Jitsu is the most technical style, so it takes a long time to gain rank, and it means a lot when you do achieve different ranks, because of what all is involved



### FAST FACTS

**Name:** Brian Fenner  
**Day Job:** Owner, Safe Glass Technologies  
**Location:** Easton, Pa.  
**Alter Ego:** Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Participant

**Brazilian Jiu Jitsu instructor John Terry applies a choke hold to Safe Glass Technologies owner Brian Fenner.**

and how hard it is to do it," he says.

To work through the ranks, the class participates in drilling and sparring activities with a partner. Fenner's instructor, John Terry, who once trained under Ultimate Fighting Champion (UFC) Royce Gracie, observes Fenner and his fellow classmates and their developing skills.

"At the academy I go to, part of every class is live rolling or sparring," Fenner says, "and that's basically where, the style is so interactive it re-

quires another individual to work with you to be able to do what you want to do and vice versa."

At this point, he participates in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu mainly for fun and relaxation, but Fenner, who took home first place in the 2009 Walt Gorman Memorial Windshield Repair Olympics, says competition could be in his future.

"I have a competitive nature, so it's certainly not something I'm ruling out," he says.

Though Fenner thinks he may someday compete, he stresses that Jiu Jitsu actually means "gentle art," and it's a bit more subdued than what most people associate with MMA.

"Brazilian Jiu Jitsu is one of the staple disciplines of MMA fighters, but there's no intentional striking or kicking involved in this style while training," he says.

Fenner and his wife, Kelly, have a two-year-old son, Noah. He founded his business in 2001, and also works as an aircraft maintenance supervisor for Continental Airlines. ■

### Interested in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu?

For those interested in joining in the growing sport of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, Brian Fenner, owner of Safe Glass Technologies in Easton, Pa., says getting started can be a simple process.

"You basically learn as you go and you become conditioned as well," he says. "If you're not in great shape starting out, as far as cardiovascular fitness, endurance, etc., it comes with time."

The first step, Fenner says, is finding an academy.

"I would certainly suggest that you do some research online for who's in the general area you're looking for as far as the Gracie discipline of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu," he says.

Once you find an academy, he says one of the most important aspects is remembering to relax.

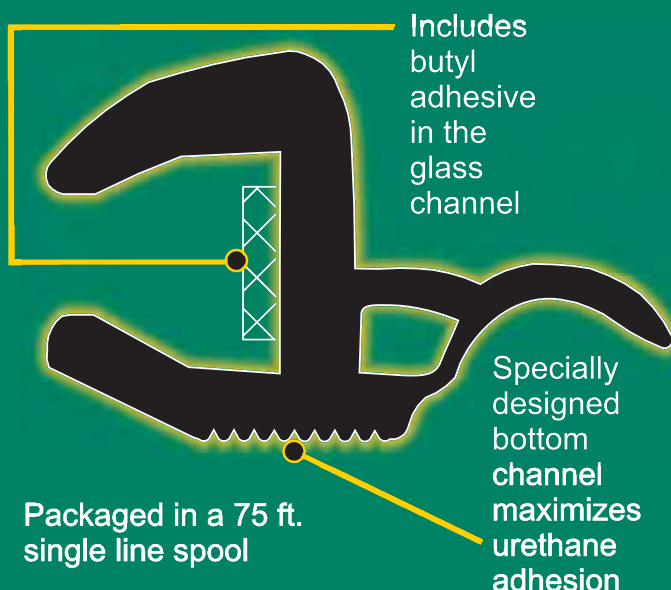
"You find yourself in positions that are uncomfortable," Fenner warns. "Trying to relax and breathe is critical. Try to have fun."





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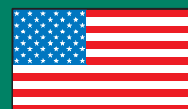


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## Driving Technology

understanding today's business practices

# Getting Expert Perspective

by Mike Jones

**YOU'RE ALREADY AN EXPERT** in your field. If a friend or family member needs to know anything about glass, it's a near guarantee you're the first person they'll look to for advice.

However, while you know everything about your own industry, you may not know nearly as much about creating a web presence—an entirely separate field of expertise. When you're trying to make your glass services shop a viable online presence, it helps to have a few experts available to ask the tough questions.

**"It depends on whether you want building your online presence to be cheap or easy. It won't be both."**

### The Experts

Experts come in two varieties: accountable and unaccountable. Accountable experts include anyone that you pay for advice and guidance. These are people you can call to task if their advice turns out to be inaccurate, misleading or just plain wrong.

Unaccountable experts, on the other hand, often offer advice for free. These can include online experts and experts who write books or other materials that claim to teach you smart techniques and tricks; they're also very hard to call to task if their advice is wrong.

The best experts you can find are accountable experts who also happen to be friends or family members willing to offer advice and guidance free of charge. If you happen to have someone with a solid knowledge of online marketing and web presence who also is willing to offer guidance for no payment (and

can help you fix problems if their advice doesn't work), hold onto that person with both hands. They will be invaluable to you as you work to establish an online presence for your glass services company.

As for the others, there are advantages and disadvantages to each.

**Accountable experts.** Accountable experts are usually professionals, either freelance individuals or companies, who can advise in the areas of building a solid online web presence, website development and design, and online marketing. These are the tools you need to make the online branch of your glass services company viable.

The plus side of accountable experts is, first and foremost, that they answer to you and you alone. Your service or shop is different from others. Your goals, ambitions and company presence are wholly unique. An accountable expert is responsible for making sure your online presence is a direct product of your individual needs. That means it should look the way you want it to, do what you want it to do, and get the results you're looking for.

If your online presence does not do those things, your expert is accountable to you, since you did not get the results you hired them to achieve on your behalf. This is a huge advantage if something goes awry. Accountable experts also usually do all or most of the work for you, which can be a huge stress reliever.

The down side of accountable ex-



perts is that they are often expensive. As the old adage goes, you get what you pay for, and while it's often wonderful to have an expert take all of the stress of developing a solid online presence out of your hands, it may not be worth the sticker price.

One way to reduce costs is to hire a consultant as opposed to a contractor; a consultant will simply advise you on what you should do and let you do the execution, whereas a contractor will both advise and execute. If you're willing to learn how to do the work but need someone to tell you what to do, a consultant may be the best kind of expert for you.

**Unaccountable Experts.** The foremost advantage of unaccountable experts is that their services are usually free or extremely cheap. The cost of getting expert advice online is nil, whereas the cost of a good do-it-yourself book will rarely top \$20.

You can often get very sound advice if you're careful about where you look for expertise. Read online reviews and get recommendations from other users, and those users can usually point you to the right resource for your question.

Blogs can often be a surprisingly good resource, since many blog owners use their blogs to enhance their credibility for their services. An expert in online marketing, for example, will usually write very helpful, well-researched posts on online marketing in the hopes that his/her expertise will entice clients who don't want to do the work themselves to hire her. For you, that means free advice from an expert;



for him/her, it means clients who know he/she is good at what he/she does.

These experts can be excellent resources, and they will often be willing to answer brief questions for clarification if necessary.

The disadvantage to unaccountable experts naturally is that you cannot accuse them of not delivering services for your money, since you haven't actually paid them for their advice. There's no contract and they can't renege on a promise. It's your job to figure out which experts are trustworthy and which are hacks—and if you really are entirely new to online tools, this can be difficult.

The other disadvantage is that you have to figure out where to begin your online strategies by yourself. In order to seek out an expert on “search engine optimization,” for example, you first

have to know that your business needs SEO. You also need to know what it is and how you want to use it. To find an expert on a task, you have to have a very clear idea of what the task is. This is often more challenging than it initially seems.

Some combination of these two can work very well. Ask a professional for a consult to understand what the smart strategies for your company are, and then turn to the web or books to find out how to execute those strategies.

As with most things, it depends on whether you want building your online presence to be cheap or easy. It won't be both. ■

**Mike Jones is the president of GTS Services in Portland, Ore. Mr. Jones's opinions are solely his own and not necessarily those of this magazine.**