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AMERICAN AFTERMARKET SUCCESS STORIES

(On cover Henthorn Family-Bendpak)

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COVID SAFETY MEASURES AT THE SHOP AND RETAIL LEVEL

INSIDE:

COUNTERMAN

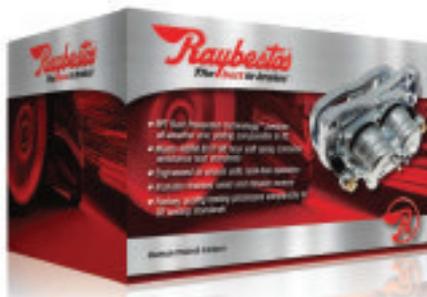
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COUNTERMAN



EDITORIAL

Group Publisher, Frank Bird
fbird@babcox.com, ext. 209

Executive Director, Content, Scott Shriber
sshriber@babcox.com, ext. 229

Editor, Amy Antenora
aantenora@babcox.com, ext. 220

Managing Editor, Josh Cable
jcable@babcox.com, ext. 254

Technical Editor, Brendan Baker
bbaker@babcox.com, ext. 228

Contributing Editor, Andrew Markel
amarkel@babcox.com, ext. 296

Contributing Editor, Tim Fritz
tfritz@babcox.com, ext. 218

Contributing Editor, Madeleine Winer
mwiner@babcox.com

CREATIVE

Director of Corporate Design, Nichole Anderson
nanderson@babcox.com, ext. 232

Art Director, John Hirnikl
jhirnikl@babcox.com, ext. 257

DIGITAL

Executive Director of Digital Development & Sales, Michael Madej
mmadej@babcox.com, ext. 251

Executive Director, Video & Content Services, Randy Loeser
rloeser@babcox.com, ext. 285

Digital Ad Services Coordinator, Amanda Wingerter
awingerter@babcox.com, ext. 223

Video Production, Jon Nelson
jnelson@babcox.com, ext. 258

AUDIENCE DATA SERVICES

Vice President of Audience Data & Marketing, Brandi Gangel
bgangel@babcox.com, ext. 239

Audience Insights Manager, Bruce Kratofil
bkratofil@babcox.com, ext. 275

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

Audience Development and Production Manager, Pat Robinson
probinson@babcox.com, ext. 276

ADVERTISING SERVICES

Ad Services Director, Kelly McAleese
kmcaleese@babcox.com, ext. 284

Ad Services Coordinator, Christine Perry
cperry@babcox.com, ext. 245

BUSINESS LEADERSHIP

CEO, Bill Babcox

President, Greg Cira

Executive Vice President, Mike Maleski

Vice President of Sales, Sean Donohue

Vice President of Audience Data & Marketing, Brandi Gangel

Vice President/Group Publisher, Jim Merle

Vice President/Group Publisher, Dean Martin

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TOP 5

MOST VIEWED

BELOW ARE THE MOST POPULAR STORIES FROM AFTERMARKETNEWS.COM IN JULY:

01 GENUINE PARTS COMPANY ANNOUNCES SALE OF S.P. RICHARDS (JULY 1)

02 APH ANNOUNCES NEW LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE (JULY 13)

03 POWER TEST AND TAYLOR DYNAMOMETER JOIN FORCES (JULY 2)

04 TENNECO APPOINTS NEW COO AND CFO (JULY 10)

05 ANGO RELEASES 2020 WIPER BLADE APPLICATION GUIDE (JULY 10)

BE SURE TO VISIT WWW.AFTERMARKETNEWS.COM TO CHECK OUT ALL THE DAILY HEADLINES AND SUBSCRIBE TO OUR E-NEWSLETTERS!

VIDEO OF THE MONTH



NEXT-LEVEL CUSTOMER SERVICE (PART 2)

IN THIS VIDEO, 2019 COUNTER PRO OF THE YEAR PETE CHAPMAN OFFERS SOME TIPS FOR OUTSTANDING CUSTOMER SERVICE. "FOR ME, GOING THE EXTRA MILE MEANS ASKING ENOUGH QUESTIONS THAT I FULLY UNDERSTAND WHAT THE CUSTOMER IS LOOKING FOR, AND GIVING THE KIND OF EFFORT THAT I HOPE SOMEONE WOULD GIVE TO ME," SAYS CHAPMAN. "IF I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER TO A QUESTION, THAT USUALLY MEANS I NEED TO ASK MORE QUESTIONS, BECAUSE SOMETIMES NOT KNOWING THE ANSWER MEANS YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND THE QUESTION. BUT IF ALL ELSE FAILS, IT'S ALWAYS OK TO ASK ONE OF YOUR COLLEAGUES FOR HELP."

VIEW THE VIDEO AT:

COUNTERMAN.COM/VIDEO-NEXT-LEVEL-CUSTOMER-SERVICE-PART-2

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AMY ANTENORA, EDITOR
AANTENORA@BABCOX.COM

Amy Antenora has served as editor of aftermarketNews since 2002, and has worked in the field of journalism for two decades. A graduate of Kent State University, Amy also earned her AAP designation from Northwood University's University of the Aftermarket in 2009.

GIMME SOMETHIN' GOOD

In last month's issue we shared insights from leadership at today's top program groups for our Midyear Distribution Update.

We asked the program group leaders what they and their program partners did during the COVID crisis to help front-line workers or the communities they do business in. These are just a few of the remarkable stories of kindness and generosity that were unearthed:

J.C. WASHBISH, AFTERMARKET AUTO PARTS ALLIANCE:

"Rain, shine or COVID-19, our motto is 'Service is the Difference,' and our shops and stores did an extraordinary job exemplifying that motto in a variety of ways throughout the pandemic. One group of Bumper to Bumper shops and parts stores in Wisconsin partnered together to offer health care workers and first responders free oil changes for a week. A Certified Service Center in Ohio held a food drive to provide 500 lunches to children. Another shop participated in a community art contest to spark creativity in children, and an auto supply store within our network repurposed an automotive gravity-fed spray gun and coiled air hose to better enable local police and fire departments to quickly and easily disinfect surfaces after responding to calls."

DAVID PRATER, AUTOMOTIVE DISTRIBUTION NETWORK:

"We've been very aggressive in procuring all the possible PPE we could get our hands on, from masks to gloves to hand sanitizer, and making those available to our members and their employees. We've also gotten much more into vehicle protection for our Car Care Centers and ASE customers with seat and steering-wheel covers and vehicle foggers. We feel some of these protections will most likely stay in place for the foreseeable future, and we plan on helping meet those criteria for protecting employees and customers going forward."

ROBERT ROOS, NATIONAL PRONTO ASSOCIATION:

"First, let me say how grateful we are to have received such outstanding support from our members, professional service centers and supplier partners throughout this situation. We have teamed up to initiate local programs to help front-line workers all over the country, and have offered other support like free oil changes and discounted vehicle repair services. Members have delivered meals to hospitals, care centers, donated time and money to charities like the Automotive Aftermarket Charitable Foundation (AACF), and generally supported community events nationwide."

SUE GODSCHALK, FEDERATED AUTO PARTS:

"At the onset of the pandemic, we started working immediately with many different suppliers to get adequate quantities of masks, gloves and hand sanitizer for our employees and our members, many of which were donating these items to first responders and front-line workers in their areas."

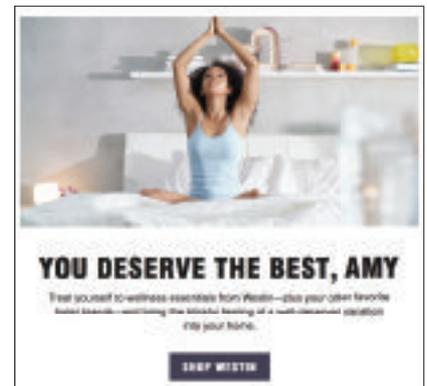
It struck me that we don't hear these kinds of "feel-good" stories enough. We talk until we are blue in the face about how this industry is so special because of its people. Yet, when was the last time you publicly acknowledged an industry colleague's hard

work, creativity or extra effort?

So this is my humble request: Next time you see something, say something. And then, tell me about it (my contact info is at the end of this column). I want to flood the pages of this magazine with the untold stories of generosity and action that we know are going on in the aftermarket day after day. AMN wants to get the good word out there. We want to shout it from the rooftops. Email me some info about the positive, generous and inspiring acts of others in this industry and both of you might just see your smiling faces in an upcoming issue.

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

And speaking of good ideas ... Earlier this week I got an email from Marriott that really caught my eye. The subject line read: "Shop



Wellness Essentials from Your Favorite Hotel Brands." And this is the opening graphic that led me to click.

With travel restrictions and social distancing guidelines in place across the country, hotel companies are among the biggest businesses taking a major hit right now. However, rather than sitting on the sidelines, Marriott decided to get creative and tapped into a valuable branding opportunity for themselves.

As American families stick close to home this summer, many are outfitting their homes with items to bring wellness, relaxation and summer fun right to their backyards. (As an example, have you tried finding an inflatable pool to buy anywhere right now? Good luck with that.)

So, tapping into consumers' desire to make their home a haven this summer, Marriott is allowing consumers who can't enjoy all the amenities of a stay at one of their hotel brands to bring a little piece of that luxury home – by way of plush bathrobes, comfy bedding and high-end toiletries for sale. Brilliant, isn't it?

Surely there are opportunities like this in the aftermarket as well. How is your business thinking outside the box to serve customers during this challenging moment in time? Let us know. Email me at aantenora@babcox.com. **AMN**

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@Alex Parker

CMO + Executive Vice President at Redline Detection

SUPERCAR maker Lamborghini has partnered with Italian Sea Group to create a 4,000-horsepower superboat powered by not one but TWO V12 engines

Each of the twin 24.2-liter MAN V-12 diesels makes 2000 horsepower and 4794 lb-ft of torque.

When available later this year the boat will set you back \$3.4 million and production is limited to just 63 of these beauties so get your order in early, kids.

Did you know that Redline technology is used on marine engines to diagnose dangerous leaks without having to pull the engine?

#lamborghini #seagroup #supercars #yachts #boats #cars #newcar Redline Detection Michael Hosch Zachary Parker David Merendino Steve Marek Julia Morris Eric Bingle #motorsports #racing

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- "Safety Award" in 2008
- "Excellence Award" in 2009
- "Best Value Award" in 2009
- "Certificate of Achievement in Value Improvement" in 2019

FORD

- "Gold World Excellence Award" & "Silver World Excellence Award" in 2003, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2015
- "Q1" in 2009, 2010, 2016

GENERAL MOTORS

- "Supplier Quality Excellence" in 2012, 2013, 2015, 2017
- "BIQS" in 2016
- "Platinum Certificate of Excellence" in 2016
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- "Excellence Supplier Award" in 2009

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WVE VEHICLE ELECTRONICS



WVE Vehicle Electronics introduced 203 new part numbers in June for a variety of emissions and fuel injection products, sensors and switches now available for a range of light- and heavy-duty vehicle applications. In all, WVE announced two new emissions products, one fuel injection product, 153 new sensors and 47 new switches – covering more than 63.6 million vehicles.

For more information, as well as the complete parts list, go to wvebrand.com/parts.

AUTEL



Autel's MA600 Mounting Plate Package (MA600RAP) consists of a Mounting Bracket, Mounting Plate, Mounting Adapter and Laser Adapter Plate. Once installed, the Mounting Plate enables the MA600 to use the Radar Calibration Box, the Calibration Plate, the Adaptive

Cruise Control (ACC) Reflector and the Night Vision Calibration Box to perform radar and night vision calibrations on vehicles equipped with ACC, Blind Spot Monitoring (BSM), Front Collision Warning (FCC) and NV systems. The Mounting Plate Package and the calibration devices listed above are components of the newly released MA600CAL3 package.

Watch the new Mounting Plate Assembly Instruction video on the company's YouTube channel @AutelTools.

PHILIPS



Lumileds has launched a new innovative line of Philips MasterDuty headlight bulbs made especially for medium- and heavy-duty Class 2-8 truck applications. Specially designed to handle rough terrain and damaged roadways while providing the ultimate protection against mechanical shock, Philips MasterDuty bulbs also deliver a long-lasting runtime of up to 550 hours. The key benefit of the Philips MasterDuty headlight bulbs is their exceptional vibration resistance. MasterDuty headlights have been designed to withstand a wide range of vibration frequencies and are built with a high-performance glass that withstands temperature and pressure changes. The Philips MasterDuty headlight program features eight SKUs offering coverage for H1, H7, H11, 9003, 9005, 9006, H13 9008 and HIR2 9012 forward lighting applications.

For more information, email philipsautoorders@lumileds.com or call 1-866-254-6989.

ELECTRONIC SPECIALTIES INC.

Electronic Specialties has introduced the model DT-8806H Forehead IR Thermometer. DT-8806H is an FDA-approved device and is capable of safely measuring forehead temperatures. It can be used on customers, employees, patients or family members in today's COVID situations. DT-8806H also features an audible alarm mode, an essential function for high-volume screening. In this mode, rapid forehead temps may be taken without looking at the LCD display. You only need to stop when the alarm sounds. DT-8806H features memory of the last 32 measurements taken. There are two temperature modes: forehead and surface. In the traditional surface mode, temp range is wider (32 F to 140 F / 0 C to 60 C). Typical measuring distance is 2-5 inches from forehead. Temperature readings are displayed with resolution of 0.1 F/C. Unit comes with a one-year warranty.



More complete information can be accessed at www.esitest.com.

AISIN

AISIN World Corp. of America has announced the launch of two new Automatic Transmission Fluids, the ATF-MFZ and the ATF-SHP. ATF-MFZ is formulated for all Mazda vehicles that require Mazda FZ Type Automatic Transmission Fluid. ATF-SHP is formulated for all Subaru vehicles that require Subaru Type HP Automatic Transmission Fluid. This expands AISIN's Automatic Transmission Fluid offering to a total of 13 application-specific, Fully Synthetic Automatic Transmission Fluids.



For more information and complete application coverage on AISIN's Automatic Transmission Fluids and other AISIN product lines, visit www.aisinaftermarket.com and/or e-mail: NA_Sales@aisinworld.com.

CONTINENTAL

Continental ClearContact new floor display delivers maximum application coverage with minimal inventory. Comes with five each of 14 SKUs for a total of 70 blades that can fit over 94% of applications on passenger cars and light trucks on the road today. Includes a printed application guide and a colorful counter mat. Ideal for automotive service shops, tire stores, and quick lubes. Very compact 18" L X 18" W X 63.5" H design is free with program and requires a minimal footprint on the shop floor, showroom or customer lounge.



For more information, visit: Continental-ClearContact.com.

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ALL IN THE FAMILY





According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, about 90% of American businesses are family-owned or -controlled, and responsible for half of the country's employment numbers, AND half of its GDP.

Most people who have worked at a job for any significant amount of time will tell you their co-workers are like family to them. But what if your co-workers actually ARE family? What are some of the trials and tribulations (and maybe a funny story or two) that come with keeping the family name up in lights?

For this month's cover story, we reached out to industry leaders currently running multi-generation family businesses. In this feature, we hear from top brass at Bendpak, Cook Brothers Truck Parts, Jasper Engines & Transmissions and Standard Motor Products, who give us an inside look at this powerful part of our nation's economy.

BENDPAK

GARY HENTHORN, BRAND AMBASSADOR



Gary Henthorn

The BendPak story began in 1965 with the opening of Don Henthorn's first business, Quality Machine & Associates, or QMA for short. It was a small shop in Simi Valley, California, a bedroom community just outside of Los Angeles. QMA was a premier job shop that specialized in precision machine work for the likes of Rocketdyne, Rockwell and Hughes Aircraft – all aerospace and defense giants at the time.

Henthorn's wife, Virginia, helped with the day-by-day operations. Everyone knew her as "Ginger." She took care of the books while Don managed the shop and his growing staff of a dozen or so machine operators, welders and painters. He was fresh out of the military with a lot of bills to pay, so failure was not an option. His machine shop and customer list expanded rapidly.

Although QMA was mainly a job shop that did machining work and welding for others, Henthorn continued to look for additional ways to grow revenue.

"He really wanted to invent something that

he could market on his own," recalls Gary Henthorn, Don and Ginger's son. "Building prototypes of specialty tools was something that he focused on after everyone else went home."

One of the first things he made was something called the "5ive-Pak." It was a portable tool combining a coil-spring compressor, a U-joint press and a gear puller all in one. Not long after that, he came up with a Macpherson-strut spring compressor and a hand-held portable hydraulic tailpipe expander. The Macpherson-strut spring compressor was later private-labeled for Moog suspension parts.

With a growing list of customer orders and an expanding product line, Don and Ginger Henthorn made the decision to grow their operations. In 1977, they hired a contractor and began constructing a new 20,000-square-foot manufacturing building. It was a concrete "tilt-up" located in Ventura County's Moorpark, about eight miles from the Simi Valley shop.

In 1979, Don introduced a hydraulic tubing bender designed for muffler shops. It not only bent tubing up to 3 inches in diameter, but it also had built-in end-forming functions that are needed for exhaust connections and gaskets.

"I remember as a kid how amazed I was watching it bend steel tubing like it was nothing," Gary says. "And it would squish and form the end of the tubing like it was made out of rubber. It was fun to watch."

At that time, the bender was painted burgundy and marketed as the "Burgundy Bullet." It was introduced to the muffler-shop industry at a trade show in 1979. At that point, the Henthorns saw the need for a more focused brand strategy, and they

decided that the QMA name had run its course.

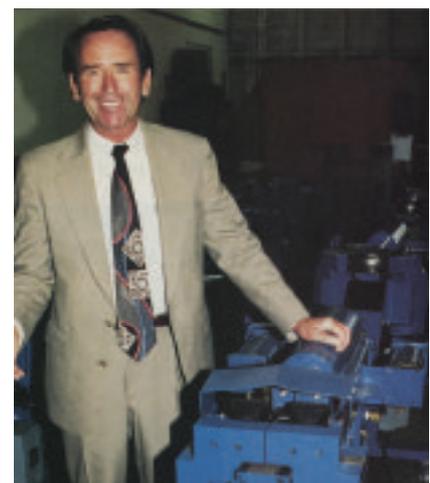
Don wanted to convey strength while simultaneously providing a general idea about the muffler-shop equipment that he was now making. Following on the tails of the 5ivePak, the Henthorns chose the name "Bend-Pak" – a hybrid of QMA's two flagship products (pipe benders + 5ivePak). In 2005, they ditched the hyphen as part of a brand refresh, but the BendPak name lives on.

As youngsters, Gary and his sister, Suzie, would hang around their dad's shop every now and then. In the early 1980s, as they progressed through their teenage years, their parents encouraged them to get a job – or come to work at BendPak.

"We both had been immersed in the BendPak culture since early childhood, so of course working with the folks sounded less intimidating as making a way for yourself in the big scary real world," Gary says.

That doesn't mean it was an easy job. Gary describes the BendPak culture as "work, work, then work some more."

"I spent most of my time in the shop while my sister crafted her business skills shadowing my mom," he recalls. "Suzie spent most of her day dealing with vendors, ordering supplies and keeping inventory levels up."



Don Henthorn

Gary, who has served in multiple roles with the company through the years, says working with family has pros and cons.

"I guess we were lucky because for the most part, we all got along," he explains. "I think a lot had to do with playing together and staying together. There is some truth to that. The bad thing was that you could rarely ever escape talking business. Sometimes at the end of the day, all you wanted to do was retreat into your own thoughts, but often dinner-table discussion was about making pipe benders and dealing with customers and vendors."

One of the biggest challenges: taking personal time off.

"Because we often traveled together as the Henthorn clan, it resulted in a key piece of management removed from everyday operations," Gary says. "To this day, I can't remember a catastrophic event that happened while we were globetrotting, but it did always make us nervous. I guess these periodic absences made the other management staff step up and craft their own style and solutions."

At BendPak, the family culture extends beyond the Henthorn family. For many BendPak employees – some of whom have been with the company for more than three decades – working in a family-business dynamic is the only culture they've ever known.

"While many family-owned and -run businesses are challenged with power struggles, shifting management philosophies and succession conspiracies, the BendPak dynamic stayed singularly focused on growth," Gary says. "With all staff and family sharing a single vision, most family disputes were never business-related."

Founder Don Henthorn continues to lead the company, now headquartered in Santa Paula, California, as president. Never content to rest on their laurels, the Henthorns introduced the Ranger Products division in 1997, adding tire- and wheel-service equipment, hydraulic floor jacks, parts-washer systems and a variety of

specialty service tools to the product portfolio of automotive lifts.

What makes the automotive aftermarket so conducive to family businesses such as BendPak? A big part of it, Gary says, is his observation that the families involved in this sector "don't seem to get caught up in struggles that plague other industries."

"Most everyone that you deal with day to day are down-to-earth people with humble personalities. Even those with true wealth don't go around trying to impress everyone with their greatness.

"... I've said it before and continue to say it: If you want to earn an honest wage and carve yourself a career path with a variety of business routes to take, you can't go wrong with the automotive aftermarket. I have many memories and surely more to come that could not have been possible in other industries." **AMN**



From left: Jeff Kritzer, Gary Henthorn and Don Henthorn



Don and Ginger Henthorn



The Henthorn family, from left to right: Reagan Henthorn, Kennedy Henthorn, Gary Henthorn, Carson Henthorn, Don Henthorn, Ginger Henthorn, Susan Henthorn and Annika Henthorn.

COOK BROTHERS TRUCK PARTS

HENRY COOK III, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR



Henry Cook III

Cook Brothers Truck Parts is a 102-year-old family owned business, which for a time, wasn't ...

As Henry Cook III, business development director at Cook Brothers Companies, tells it, his great-grandfather, Everett D. Cook, started the business in 1918 in Binghamton, New York. A mechanic with the local fire department, he became friendly with the owner of a truck manufacturing plant in nearby Cortland, New York, named George Brockway and decided to set up the first dealership in the area selling Brockway Trucks. Eventually, Cook III's grandfather, Henry Sr., took over in the late 1930s and brought his own two sons into the business: Henry Jr. and Charles.

Then, World War II happened. Charles was drafted but was not able to join the war effort for medical reasons. Henry, however, felt that one of them had a duty to serve their country, so he enlisted while convincing Charles to become his partner in the trucking business, establishing Cook Brothers Truck Parts, and firmly entrenching the family name in the marketplace.

By the time the 1970s rolled around, Mack Trucks had acquired Brockway and the brand was phased out. Bob Seyerlein, former leader of the

Brockway plant, joined the company as vice president of Cook Brothers, taking on part ownership of the business.

A few years later in the 1980s, a local attorney by the name of Michael Venuti joined the company leadership team. In the late 1990s, the company took a chance on an investment strategy by becoming part of a "roll-up" merger by an investment firm and became part of a larger conglomerate called Transcom USA. In short, Cook III says that strategy did not end well. After the dot-com bubble burst in the late 1990s, the firm began burning through cash as the stock price plummeted.

"Eventually, at least for me at the time, the writing was on the wall: This is no longer family business at this point. It's being run out of Houston, Texas, and we were not really autonomous in any way," says Cook III. By this time, Cook decided to get a master's degree and established a career in the promotional products field, where he spent 16 years. Meanwhile, his father, Bob Seyerlein, and Michael Venuti bought back the business and now, Cook Brothers is once again a family-owned and -operated business.

"I came back in 2000 after being gone for 16 years, and despite all of the craziness of today's world, things are really going pretty well," he says. The Cook Brothers business has grown from a single truck dealership started in 1918 into a diverse empire that includes eight truck parts locations, one industrial supply division, two Mack dealerships, a leasing company and a promotional products division. "That's what we're hoping we're going to do here, diversify a little bit and try to modernize the old truck parts way of doing things – modern-day ways of selling to our customers," Cook III says.

Today, when Cook III's own sons, ages 15 and 17, work at the family business during the summers, they are the fifth generation of Cooks to support



Henry Cook Jr. (center), Bob Seyerlein (right) with County Executive Jason Garnar at the company's 100th-anniversary event in August 2018.

the operation. However, whether your last name is Cook or not, there is a unique sense of family at the company that is truly special, he says.

"There's a real sense of community here," Cook III says. "It's been that way for a very long time. We call it a family business because the Cook name has been around for so long and there's always been Cooks here, though we have Seyerleins here too. Bob's son has worked for the business for over 20 years, and we have several other families that have multi-generational employees here. It's pretty neat."

When it comes to any challenges that come part and parcel with a family-run operation Cook III says good communication is critical.

"This isn't really unique to a family business, I guess, but, making sure that everybody is kind of rowing the boat in the same direction is important. There's already an inherent level of trust with you when you have family that you're working with but that doesn't always mean that you're all on the same page. So, making sure that the lines of communication remain open, even if you think that they are, seems to be a big thing. It's very easy to fall into a trap where you just don't focus on those things because everybody is so busy trying to get done what they need to get done. The communication winds up being a little bit of an afterthought." [AMN](#)

JASPER ENGINES & TRANSMISSIONS

DOUG BAWEL, CHAIRMAN & CEO

Jasper Engines & Transmissions, as the name implies, is based in Jasper, Indiana. The company was founded in 1942 by a gentleman named Alvin Ruxer, along with the Schwenk and Bawel families. In 1987, the Schwenks and Bawels purchased the business from Mr. Ruxer and continued to maintain ownership until 2010 when they transferred ownership to employees as an ESOP – Employee Stock Ownership Plan – where succession takes place by vote of the board. The Schwenks and Bawels are still very much involved and control a portion of ownership.

“We really have two families in the business,” says Doug Bawel, chairman and CEO. “We all decided a long, long time ago we weren’t going to let our personal friendship get in the way of making business decisions. In my case, I’ve got three brothers who were with me in the company and the Schwenks had four family members in the company. Our dads of course now have all retired.”

Jasper is one of the nation’s largest remanufacturers of gas and diesel engines, transmissions, differentials, rear axle assemblies, air and fuel components, marine engines, sterndrives, performance engines and electric motors. The company employs more than 2,300 associates and has a footprint that includes 48 branch and distributor locations. The company prides itself on its quality standards, and this is something that is instilled in the family culture, according to Bawel.

“We expect more out of family members,” he says. “I’ve got two sons and a son-in-law involved in the business today and the Schwenks have a couple sons involved and a daughter involved in the business. We expect more out of them than we expect out of our people. We tell family members that going in, ‘You know, just because your name is Schwenk or Bawel, it doesn’t make it any easier for you.’”

Doug Bawel became president in 1987 and held that role until 2012, when he was elevated to his current position and his brother stepped in to the president title.

Having been in the family business for nearly 44 years, Bawel has truly worked his way up, starting his career at Jasper on the shop floor as a sales trainee. From the sound of it, he’s enjoyed every moment being part of a family-run business.

“It’s a true joy,” Bawel says. “I’ve worked with and for my father for a number of years and then, we worked side-by-side and now I have two sons and a son-in-law involved in the business. The automotive aftermarket has just been awesome to both the Schwenks and the Bawels. When we took the company over, I remember talking to Mr. Ruxer and at that time we were doing maybe 25 transmissions a day. It’s about 125 a week today, week in and week out. We’re remanufacturing over 1,700 transmissions plus engines plus differentials, and that’s on the light-duty side. For heavy-duty, through our Weller brand, you can throw another 800 units a week on top of that.”

With roughly \$700 million in annual sales and 78 years in business, Jasper Engines & Transmissions is no flash in the pan. However, Bawel remains humble about the business.

“I think we still consider ourselves a relatively small company,” he says. “We’ll do \$700 million in sales this year and we have 7,300 people scattered around the country. But we’re still very close to our people and it’s just been a blessing.” **AMN**



Doug Bawel



Zach Bawel



Luke Bawel

STANDARD MOTOR PRODUCTS

ERIC SILLS, DIRECTOR, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER & PRESIDENT



Eric Sills

For Eric Sills, president and CEO of Standard Motor Products, there was never any pressure to join the family business, he says.

As the fourth generation at the helm of the 101-year-old aftermarket parts manufacturer, Sills says he puts no pressure on his own sons to join the business either.

“I have a 19-year-old and a 22-year-old, two boys. Both have done some summer internships but there is zero pressure for them to join,” says Sills. “There was never any pressure for me to join at all. I worked at Standard as a kid, much more than my kids have. I worked there after school, all through high school and I put in a couple summers. They’ve had some exposure, but not as much, and zero pressure. They’ll make up their own minds and we’ll see.”

Given the stats about family-owned businesses (see page 17), SMP’s run as a family operation is remarkable. SMP was founded in 1919 in New York City by Sills’ great grandfather, Elias Fife, and Ralph Van Allen, specializing in ignition and electrical

products. Today, the company is a leading independent manufacturer, distributor and marketer of replacement parts for motor vehicles in the automotive aftermarket industry, offering high-quality replacement parts for engine management and temperature control products for domestic and import vehicles.

While Eric and his father, Larry Sills, executive chairman of the board, have worked closely together for a number of years now, it didn’t start out that way, given what a large company it is. Eric considers himself a “hands-on factory guy,” having grown up on the operations side of the business, while he says his father has always been a consummate salesman. Proving that he was more than just “Larry’s son” was a challenge for a long time, says Sills.

“People fell into three camps: those who were rooting for me to succeed, those who were rooting for me to fail and those who were just viewing me as me and not always looking at me as Larry’s son. So, my mission for many years was to win those first two groups over to the third group. That required me to demonstrate my capabilities, but I also needed to work a little harder and show a strong work ethic to demonstrate that while my last name got me the job, my last name has not kept me the job.”

As the top leadership team at Standard, Eric Sills says he and his father have very different skill sets that complement one another, and also has created a natural balance to the way they run the business together.

“I’ve been working at Standard since a year out of college. I’ve been through many, many different roles over the decades and it was really only maybe 15 years ago that I started to work more closely with him. What is great is that we’re very like-minded, but we definitely bring different styles



Elias and Bernard Fife



and different skillsets. We were very like-minded on the basic foundational ways we want to run our company, and as a result, while we argue over the small stuff, we never argue over the big stuff.”

When talking about leadership succession within a family-run business, Sills says while there may have been one Friday where his father was CEO and the following Monday he himself held the title, it’s still very much a collaborative partnership.

“There was never a cutover taking the reins. That’s how, given the opportunity, we do all of our transitions, which is slowly, methodically, with a significant amount of overlap. If we don’t have to do something jarring, we won’t. So, while there was a specific Friday that he was the CEO and the following Monday, I was the CEO, nothing changed over that weekend. There was a slow buildup of the handover. He and I are partners. We make all major decisions together and we talk constantly.” **AMN**

Photo source SMP: <https://www.smpcorp.com/en/about/history>

FAMILY BUSINESS FAST FACTS



ROUGHLY **35%**
OF FORTUNE 500
COMPANIES ARE
FAMILY-CONTROLLED.

(SOURCE: CONWAY CENTER FOR FAMILY BUSINESS)

FAMILY BUSINESSES ACCOUNT FOR
78% OF ALL NEW JOB CREATION.

(SOURCE: ASTRACHAN, J.H. AND SHANKER, M.C. (2003), FAMILY BUSINESSES CONTRIBUTION TO THE U.S. ECONOMY: A CLOSER LOOK.)

FAMILY BUSINESSES ACCOUNT
FOR **64%** OF U.S. GROSS
DOMESTIC PRODUCT.

(SOURCE: ASTRACHAN, J.H. AND SHANKER, M.C. (2003), FAMILY BUSINESSES CONTRIBUTION TO THE U.S. ECONOMY: A CLOSER LOOK.)

FAMILY BUSINESSES
GENERATE **62%** OF
THE COUNTRY'S
EMPLOYMENT.

(SOURCE: ASTRACHAN, J.H. AND SHANKER, M.C. (2003), FAMILY BUSINESSES CONTRIBUTION TO THE U.S. ECONOMY: A CLOSER LOOK.)

MORE THAN 30% OF ALL
FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESSES MAKE
THE TRANSITION INTO THE SECOND
GENERATION; **12%** WILL STILL BE
VIABLE INTO THE THIRD GENERATION.

(SOURCE: PWC)



FAMILY FIRMS
COMPRISE **90%** OF ALL
BUSINESS ENTERPRISES IN
NORTH AMERICA.

(SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU)

CLEAN DATA

WE'VE BEEN CHECKING ON THE ECONOMIC HEALTH OF MANY OF OUR MARKETS DURING THE PANDEMIC. IN OUR SURVEYS, WE HAVE BEEN ASKING COLLISION REPAIR FACILITIES, TIRE DEALERS, PARTS DISTRIBUTORS AND IRFS WHAT TYPES OF EXTRA HYGIENE MEASURES HAVE BEEN ADOPTED IN THEIR WORKPLACES.

RESULTS FROM THE COLLISION MARKET



We looked at the collision market in early May. Ninety-six percent of the respondents said they had instituted new measures for combating the virus. These included:

79% INCREASED CLEANING IN THE CUSTOMER WAITING AREA

75% INCREASED CLEANING OF THE CUSTOMERS' VEHICLES

70% INCREASED CLEANING IN THE SHOP

64% INCREASED SOCIAL DISTANCING AMONGST THEIR STAFF

60% INCREASED THE WEARING OF PPE

9% OTHER - INCLUDED INSTALLING SHIELDS IN THE OFFICE; OTHERS REPORTED THAT INSTEAD OF CUSTOMERS COMING IN, THEY WOULD GO OUT TO MEET THEM OUTSIDE OR BY PHONE.

RESULTS FROM TIRE DEALERS



Another market that we surveyed was tire dealers, from May 6 through June 20. Ninety-seven percent of them had increased their sanitation measures. The most popular ones were:

89% INCREASED THE CLEANING OF COUNTERS AND HIGH-TOUCHPOINTS

87% INCREASED CLEANING IN THE CUSTOMER WAITING AREAS

71% INCREASED CLEANING IN THE SHOP

66% INCREASED CLEANING AND PROTECTION OF THE CUSTOMERS' VEHICLES

66% INCREASED SOCIAL DISTANCING AMONGST THEIR STAFF

57% HAVE SHOP OR COUNTER STAFF WEARING PPE

RESULTS FROM PARTS DISTRIBUTORS



We looked at auto parts stores and auto parts manufacturers in late May. Among the parts manufacturers and distributors, 95% reported that they had adopted new procedures.

These included:

- 84% ARE DOING INCREASED CLEANING AND SANITIZING IN THE WORKPLACE**
- 75% HAVE INSTITUTED SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES AMONGST THEIR STAFF**
- 69% HAVE REDUCED BUSINESS TRAVEL IN FAVOR OF TELECONFERENCES**
- 55% MANDATED MASKS**
- 51% ARE ALLOWING WORK-FROM-HOME FOR RELEVANT POSITIONS**
- 49% ARE DOING TEMPERATURE CHECKS OF EMPLOYEES**

Those respondents typically don't meet with the public/customers regularly. However, the second group of respondents, those who work or manage auto parts stores, do see the public. 94% report changes that include:

- 83% INCREASED SANITATION IN CUSTOMER AREAS**
- 65% INCREASED SANITATION IN EMPLOYEE-ONLY AREAS**
- 40% LIMIT THE NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS IN THE STORES AT ANY ONE TIME**
- 37% MANDATED THE WEARING OF FACEMASKS BY STAFF**
- 35% INSTALLED SHIELDS TO SEPARATE CUSTOMERS FROM STAFF**
- 21% REQUIRE CUSTOMERS TO WEAR MASKS**
- 14% ASK CUSTOMERS TO WEAR MASKS**

RESULTS FROM INDEPENDENT REPAIR FACILITIES



We looked at the auto service sector in late May/early June. Ninety percent of the respondents reported that they had implemented changes in hygiene. These include:

- 72% INCREASED CLEANING IN THE CUSTOMER WAITING AREA**
- 69% INCREASED CLEANING IN THE SHOP**
- 61% INCREASED CLEANING OF CUSTOMERS' VEHICLES**
- 47% INSTITUTED SOCIAL DISTANCING AMONGST THE STAFF MEMBERS**
- 30% MANDATED MASKS FOR STAFF MEMBERS**
- 20% ADDED SHIELDS AT THE COUNTERS**

POWERTRAIN TECHNOLOGIES & TRENDS AROUND THE GLOBE

Frost & Sullivan recently shared insights from its new report, "Global Powertrain Outlook, 2020," which revealed a slew of different factors impacting powertrain choices around the globe.

Though electric and hybrid vehicles have gained traction in developed nations, they have yet to do so in niche markets like India, Eastern Europe and Asia-Pacific. In addition, Frost & Sullivan finds that global automotive sales are expected to decline by more than 14.2% as a result of slowdowns within manufacturing facilities and supply chains due to COVID-19. This slowdown is not expected to have an impact on consumer purchase trends, however.

The research firm finds that demand for diesel engines is expected to decline in Europe by 30% by the end of 2020 as Worldwide Harmonised Light Vehicles Test Procedure (WLPT) commences. In addition, global electric vehicle (EV) sales are forecast to increase by about 3.4%, spurring demand for gasoline-hybrid and fully electric powertrains. Mild-hybrid powertrains and the standardization of exhaust after-treatment technologies, such as selective catalytic reduction (SCR) and coated GPF, are major technology trends that could impact the powertrain industry in 2020 as well.

The growth opportunities in the key regional markets will vary considerably, according to Frost & Sullivan. The main trends and growth opportunities in each key region are presented below:

THE UNITED STATES

The U.S. is expected to register about 1.13 million electric and hybrid vehicle sales in 2020, an increase of about 4.7%, with a majority of the growth coming from battery electric vehicles and mild and full hybrids.



EUROPE

European electric vehicles of all types (xEV) sales are expected to grow by 5.3%, assuming a moderate COVID-19 impact, and EVs alone will have a positive growth of about 27.5%.



LATAM

EV sales increased in all LATAM countries, driven by hybrid models, thus EVs and hybrids are expected to hold a 1.2% market share in 2020.



CHINA

Vehicle sales are projected to decrease in 2020 due to the unpredictable impact of COVID-19, but EV share is expected to increase from 4.9% of the sales in 2019 to 5.6% in 2020.



INDIA

Hybrid vehicle sales increased by 75% from 2018, which poses opportunities for OEMs to explore the market. Diesel vehicles will witness an increase in prices compared to gasoline due to the stringent norms of Bharath Stage - 6 (BS-VI).



SOUTH KOREA

Despite a decline of 1.6% in recorded sales nationwide and the end of the temporary tax cut in August, the mild hybrid electric vehicle (MHEV) 48V segment enjoyed 283% growth, as sales quadrupled in 2019.



INDONESIA

Car sales improved toward the end of 2019, but due to the sudden and massive impact of COVID-19 on the global supply chain, overall sales are expected to decline by about 17.3% in 2020.



JAPAN

Although the sales of new passenger cars in the country in 2019 declined by 2.1% from 2018, Japanese brands' sales have increased by 1.9%; sales of foreign brands declined by 3.3%. Vehicle sharing and the fading appeal of cars among the younger population are trends expected to affect the domestic market in 2020.



*"Global Powertrain Outlook, 2020" is part of Frost & Sullivan's global Automotive and Transportation Growth Partnership Service program. Go to www.frost.com to learn more. **AMN***

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- 8-inch IPS screen

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- ADAS Calibration
- VW & AUDI Guided Functions
- ECU Coding & Reprogramming
- Open Android 7.1
- 10.1-inch IPS screen
- OBD I Adaptor kits
- IP65 Waterproof & Dustproof
- Quick Charge technology with Charging Stand
- Support Battery Test, Sensor Simulator, Videoscope

X-431 Torque

- Auto Detect VIN
- VW & AUDI Guided Functions
- ECU Coding & Reprogramming
- Open Android 7.1
- 10.1-inch IPS screen
- OBD I Adaptor kits

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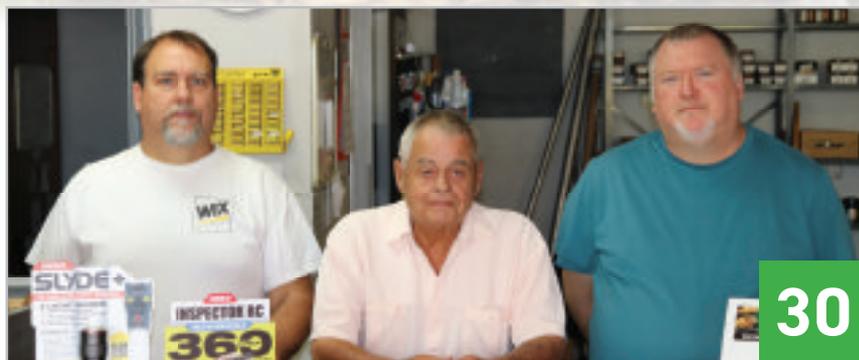
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JOSH CABLE, EDITOR
 JCABLE@BABCOX.COM

Josh Cable is the editor of Counterman and Shop Owner. He joined Babcox Media in January 2017, and has been working in the field of journalism since 1999.

NO ASTERISK WITH THIS AWARD

In professional sports, some fans and pundits believe that certain achievements should come with an asterisk. Specifically, I'm thinking of Barry Bonds' all-time home run record, which some people view as tainted because of his suspected steroid use. But the notion of the asterisk goes back many years in sports.

When Roger Maris broke Babe Ruth's single-season record by belting 61 homers in 1961, some people asserted that the record should be qualified with an asterisk, because Maris set the record during Major League Baseball's then newly expanded 162-game season, while Ruth had set the previous record in a 154-game season. (I've never hit a home run, so I think both records are incredible achievements.)

I bring this up because I hope the crazy events of this year don't deter you from nominating yourself (or a colleague) for the 2020 Counter Professional of the Year award. The pandemic hasn't stopped counter pros from plying their trade, and it's not stopping us from continuing our tradition of recognizing the Counter Professional of the Year.

If anything, the pandemic has only magnified the importance of the automotive aftermarket, and the people who work in it. We already knew it was an essential industry. It took a public health crisis for the federal government to make it official.

As we point out every year in our calls for nominations, the Counter Professional of the Year award acknowledges the vital role counter pros play in the automotive aftermarket, honoring those whose passion, expertise and dedication have elevated their businesses and the profession. These are the quintessential "go-to" parts professionals – the ones who go the extra mile when their customers need a quality replacement part or trusted advice ... day in and day out. Does that sound like you?

Our tradition is to honor the Counter Pro of the Year at a reception in Las Vegas, as part of AAPEX in late October/early November. At press time, AAPEX was still scheduled as planned. If that changes between now and the time you read this, we still intend to honor the 2020 Counter Professional of the Year – just as we've done every year since 1986. Maybe we'll have a virtual ceremony. Or maybe we'll just shout it from the rooftops. Regardless, there's no need for an asterisk. As an essential worker in an essential industry, what you bring to the table is more important than ever.

To nominate yourself or a colleague for the 2020 Counter Professional of the Year, visit www.counterman.com/epoty/. **CM**



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CURRENT CONTEST

#148



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June/July Puzzle

#147



Current champion: [Tristen Gade](#)

Correct answer for
June/July contest: [Buick Encore](#)

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THE GREAT OUTDOORS



ADDRESSING THESE MAINTENANCE ITEMS CAN HELP ENSURE LAST-MINUTE CAMPING TRIPS GO OFF WITHOUT A HITCH.

There's still plenty of time for your customers to squeeze in a camping, boating or fishing trip. Before they load up their trailer with camping gear and kids, there are some important safety checks and maintenance items that should be addressed.

Important areas that need a qualified inspection are brakes, tires and wheel bearings. Just because last year's trip went off without a hitch doesn't mean this year's trip will turn out the same.

The brakes and wheel bearing must be inspected by a qualified RV technician. Over the years, I've worked as an automotive technician and an actual RV technician. Although RV and automotive brakes share a number of common components – such as drums and shoes – they're engaged and act quite differently. All automotive brake systems are engaged by hydraulic pressure, and camper brakes, for the most part, are engaged magnetically. That's why it's better to have the trailer inspected by an actual RV technician.

Something that travel-trailer owners rarely realize is that when trailers or any kind of vehicle sit for long periods, the bearing grease dries out and hardens. Also, tires dry out and harden from just sitting over the winter.

To ensure safe operation, trailer owners should have a technician remove the wheels and brake drums to inspect the tires and brakes, pack the bearings and replace the seals – every year. That simple inspection will go a long way toward preventing your customers from sitting alongside an interstate for hours in the heat of a summer day.

The other basic safety items to be inspected are all the lights on both the tow vehicle and trailer. When the trailer is hooked up to the tow vehicle, your customer should turn on and operate all the different lighting systems such as running lights, turn signals, brake lights and headlights. All of the lights should operate and be as bright as all the others in that system.

One great little item to have along on the trip is a trailer-light tester. With this handy item, when there's a light not working, the owner can determine if the problem lies in the tow vehicle or the trailer. All they have to do is plug one of them into the tow vehicle's trailer plug and operate the tow vehicle's lights. The LED lights on the tester will indicate if the lighting systems are getting the signal back to the trailer plug.

An area that most trailer owners can inspect just fine themselves are the utilities in the trailer, such as freshwater tanks, holding tanks, all the interior lights and appliances.

Your customers will be far ahead of the game if they follow these recommendations before kicking off the summer camping season – ideally a few months before the first trip. That's because if they find a problem a week before the trip, there may not be parts or a good technician available.

This holds true for the tow vehicle also. I had one experience years ago in which a day before the planned vacation, the tow-vehicle owner brought the vehicle to my shop to have the transmission serviced because of a little problem. Well, you can guess what happened next: Two days into the trip with the trailer towing along behind it, the transmission failed completely. The customer blamed us because we were the last ones to work on it.

Now with all that said, let's hit the open road! One thing that I've learned from my wonderful wife is that you should bring actual maps with you to find different points of interest along the way. Plus, if you're in an area where there's no GPS connectivity, the maps will come in quite handy.

Thanks for reading. **CM**

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BY JOSH CABLE

FALLS CITY AUTO SUPPLY

97 YEARS AND STILL GOING STRONG

In February 1923, Norman Heinzelman opened Falls City Auto Supply in Falls City, Nebraska, a small community located halfway between Omaha and Kansas City. The Falls City website describes the city of 4,325 people as “strategically located at the center of America’s heartland,” two hours away from Omaha and Lincoln as well as Kansas City and Topeka.

In the early years, the store did a brisk business selling spare parts for the Ford Model T.

“He started out buying direct from all the manufacturers that were available at the time,” says current owner Denny Heinzelman, Norman’s grandson. “I’ve got some check stubs from 1937. Our first DuPont paint stock order was \$46.77. Can you imagine that? That would barely buy a quart of paint now.”

Norman passed away “at a fairly young age,” according to Denny. In the late 1940s, after going to college and serving in World War II, Denny’s father, Don, and uncle, Bob, took over the business.

The next milestone came in 1953, when Falls City Auto Supply and a group of other jobbers in the Midwest formed a co-op buying group called Cornbelt Automotive Warehouse. In 1997, a similar buying group – Automotive Warehouse Distributors Inc. (AWDI) – acquired Cornbelt Automotive Warehouse, “and we still belong to that group,” notes Denny.

The 1997 acquisition of Cornbelt “was a natural fit and beneficial to the member of both groups,” AWDI states in its profile on the Council Bluffs (Iowa) Chamber of Commerce website.

According to the website, AWDI – a member of National Pronto Association – currently has 68 shareholders, who own 80 stores in Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota.

“It’s quite a deal,” Denny says of AWDI. “It enables us to compete with the big chains. It’s been very beneficial for all of us to be a part of that.”

Denny got involved with the family business in 1972. Prior to that, he served in the U.S. Army and then lived in the San Francisco Bay Area with family for several years. His time in the Bay Area made him yearn for the simpler lifestyle of the nation’s heartland.

“Too many people for me,” he says of the Bay Area. “I’d rather be here where I can walk down the street and know everybody I see.”

Falls City is the type of place where you can park your car uptown, leave it running “and it’s still there when you come back,” Denny says. And that’s the backdrop for Falls City Auto Supply’s 97 years in business. Denny estimates that 70% of the store’s business comes from repair shops, while the rest comes from farms and walk-in customers. The two car dealerships in Falls City are among the store’s biggest customers.

Relationships are the backbone of Falls City Auto Supply’s business. That’s why the store has been able to stay busy even as a national chain recently opened up in town. When one longtime customer found out that a big-box auto parts store was coming to town, he reminded Denny that Falls City Auto Supply has been providing him a line of credit for years.

“He said, ‘Throughout the years, your dad has carried me when we needed help,’” Denny says. “And we’re doing that same thing. I carry some people for two or three months at a time if I have to, and they remember that kind of thing. They always come in and pay up.”

Denny’s store also has a good relationship with the other independent auto parts store in town.

“They belong to the same buying group that we do, and we trade parts back and forth,” Denny explains. “We get along just fine.”

Denny doesn’t spend as much time in the store as he used to. His son, Bryan, is the general manager, and



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: BRYAN HEINZELMAN, DENNY HEINZELMAN AND BRUCE STEVICKS. PHOTO BY BRIAN MCKIM, FALLS CITY JOURNAL.

Bruce Stevicks is the sales manager. “They pretty much run this place for me,” Denny adds. The store also has a part-time secretary who handles the books.

Stevicks spends a couple days a week on the road making sales calls. However, the store doesn’t deliver parts. About 50 years ago, Don Heinzelman made a deal with the other store in town that neither store would deliver.

“We’ll deliver if somebody is in a bind, but for the most part, we don’t deliver,” Denny explains. “That saves us a body and a truck.”

Falls City Auto Supply held an all-day barbecue to celebrate its 75th anniversary. With its centennial right around the corner, the Heinzelmans haven’t decided exactly how they’ll celebrate, but Denny emphasizes, “We’ll do something big.” **CM**



BY THE NUMBERS

PANDEMIC RESHAPING TRAVEL HABITS

IT'S GOING TO TAKE A LOT MORE THAN A PANDEMIC TO STOP AMERICANS FROM TAKING A SUMMER TRIP. BUT A SURVEY COMMISSIONED BY GENERALI GLOBAL ASSISTANCE SUGGESTS THAT COVID-19 HAS CHANGED THE WAY PEOPLE ARE DOING IT. SOME OF THE FINDINGS ARE BELOW.

72% PERCENTAGE OF U.S. TRAVELERS WHO INDICATED THEY'LL BE GETTING TO THEIR VACATION DESTINATION BY CAR THIS SUMMER

47% PERCENTAGE OF U.S. TRAVELERS WHO INDICATED THEY'LL BE TRAVELING DOMESTICALLY THIS SUMMER

5% PERCENTAGE OF U.S. TRAVELERS WHO INDICATED THEY'LL BE TRAVELING INTERNATIONALLY THIS SUMMER

23% PERCENTAGE OF U.S. TRAVELERS WHO INDICATED THEY'LL BE TRAVELING BY PLANE THIS SUMMER



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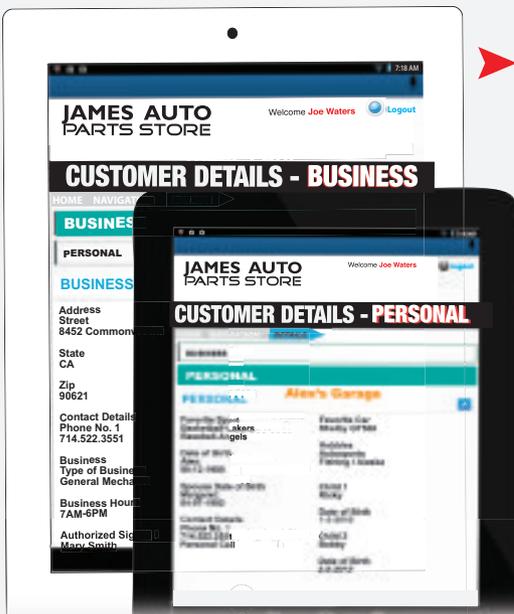
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STINK, STANK, STUNK!

THAT FOUL SMELL INSIDE YOUR CUSTOMER'S VEHICLE MIGHT BE THE GRINCH – OR (MORE LIKELY) A DIRTY CABIN AIR FILTER.



If your customer is complaining about a foul smell emanating from the interior of their car, it could be time for a “fresh” cabin air filter. But foul odors aren't the only reason to change this filter. Cabin air filters also can prevent allergy-producing pollens and dust from entering the car.

The two common types of cabin air filters on the market are particle filters, which catch airborne particles, and activated carbon filters, which capture particles but have the added benefit of converting unpleasant or hazardous gases into breathable air. For owners or passengers suffering from allergies, a carbon filter is essential for their health and may require more frequent changes than the recommended maintenance intervals.

The cabin air filter should be replaced if there's a noticeable reduction in airflow when using the heat or A/C, or if there's a bad odor when using

these systems. But it may be difficult to discern a foul odor from normal odors generated by kids or animals. When in doubt, it's better to replace it more often than less. Looking at the filter itself can help determine if it needs changed, and they're usually not difficult to replace. If dirt, dust, leaves or bugs have built up and you can't see the light through the media, it's time to replace the filter.

A dirty cabin air filter can become a source of bad odors by trapping moisture and outside contaminants that promote bacterial growth. Musty odors from the A/C evaporator are a common issue in humid climates and may require spraying a biocide or air freshener into the HVAC housing to get rid of the smell. But that won't help if the odor is coming from a filthy, soiled cabin air filter.

Some filter manufacturers have employed an antimicrobial technology that attaches to the cell wall,

disrupting normal cellular function and reducing microbe growth. The cells then begin to break down and reduce the bacteria on the surface of the media. The benefit is that the filters and the air inside the vehicle remain cleaner longer.

While cabin air filters trap particles and dust, their ability to filter ultrafine particles (UFP) is not very good. Setting the ventilation system to recirculation can reduce in-cabin UFPs by as much as 90%, but the exhaled carbon dioxide can quickly build up inside the cabin. Setting the HVAC to outdoor air (OA) mode instead can provide sufficient air exchange to prevent CO2 buildup; however, this allows in-cabin UFPs to increase. To overcome this dilemma, two researchers at UCLA have developed a simultaneous mitigation method for UFP and CO2 using high-efficiency cabin air (HECA) filtration in OA mode.

According to the report in Environmental

Science & Technology, concentrations of UFP and other air pollutants were monitored in 12 different vehicles under three driving conditions: stationary, on local roads and on freeways. Data was collected with no filter, OEM filter and two types of HECA filters. The HECA filters offered an average in-cabin UFP reduction of 93%, much higher than the OEM filters (50% on average). Throughout the measurements, the in-cabin CO2 concentration remained around 620 to 930 parts per million (ppm), significantly lower than the average 2,500 to 4,000 ppm observed in the recirculation mode.

Replacing a cabin air filter is relatively simple on most vehicles. Still, it may require some disassembly on others to access the filter, such as removing the glove

box or cowl cover. The filters are usually flat, and some are designed to fold over or come in two pieces to make installation easier.

Not all interior odors can be addressed by replacing the cabin air filter. If the odor is from the A/C system, your customer may need to get the evaporator core cleaned. But your customers can reduce many odors can by installing a new cabin air filter. **CM**

A DIRTY CABIN AIR FILTER CAN BECOME A SOURCE OF BAD ODORS BY TRAPPING MOISTURE AND OUTSIDE CONTAMINANTS THAT PROMOTE BACTERIAL GROWTH.



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IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS

CLEANING A CAR INVOLVES A LOT MORE THAN SOAP AND WATER.

If you want to learn how to detail a vehicle like a pro, just go to YouTube. You'll find thousands of videos ranging from wannabe social media celebrities to real pros who do it for a living and are willing to impart their knowledge to the "great unwashed." Jason Otterness from Chicago Auto Pros has a great channel dedicated to detailing. What's nice about his videos is he doesn't promote any particular brand, and he lists all the products that he uses in his videos.

From a counter professional's perspective, cleaning and detailing products likely represent a sizeable chunk of your chemical sales. And with more people staying at home during the pandemic, that could create more opportunities to sell these products to the DIY crowd. I'm sure most of you have been asked dozens of times, "What should I use to clean my car?" Beware, though, because you may find yourself going down a rabbit hole of cleaning solutions, recommending everything from tire shine to pine-tree air fresheners!

If you look at the products that the pros use, they emphasize quality and not quantity. And they know how to use them. The pros also buy expensive polishers, brushes and towels because they work with these tools and products all day long.

According to an article by Chad Zani of Detail Garage in our sister publication Professional Carwashing & Detailing, teaching customers how to care for their vehicles will make them last longer. And cars are lasting longer these days with an average age of around 11.8 years old. Cars that old might be driven thousands of miles without being cleaned. "And it shows," says Zani. "Cleaning a car involves a lot more than soap and water, of course. It is actually less about the washing than about keeping the car free of large dirt particles, bug guts and more that can do quite a bit of damage – both by letting them sit on the finish too long and in the process of removing them."

Most pros use a dirt trap in the bottom of a 5-gallon wash bucket to filter out the debris. That way, they don't pick up dirt with the mitt and scratch the vehicle. Jason at Chicago Auto Pros recommends using two buckets for washing: one for the chemical and the other to rinse the wash mitt, which helps keep the soap bucket clean and free of debris.

The ideal detailing job includes washing, claying, sealing and polishing, followed by waxing. Using a clay bar will remove contaminants from the paint that wasn't removed during the washing process. Zani notes that if the paint feels rough to your hand, "it's time to clay."

Ceramic sealants have become quite popular, and they do add an extra layer of protection between washing and waxing. Using a ceramic sealant or hybrid spray adds a thin, clear coat and fills in the paint's peaks and valleys. If you need to fix any minor flaws in the paint after that, you can use a compound cutting wax to remove; then follow with a final wax coat.

High-quality sealants and waxes can be expensive but will keep the vehicle cleaner and make it easier to wash when it comes time to do it again. Keeping a car clean is no easy task, no matter what part of the country you live in, and each region has its challenges.

Customers who take the time to clean and care for their vehicles regularly buy the lion's share of appearance products. Knowing the proper cleaning steps and some quality products to recommend can be money in the bank for both you and your customer. **CM**



THE IDEAL DETAILING JOB INCLUDES WASHING, CLAYING, SEALING AND POLISHING, FOLLOWED BY WAXING.





TROUBLE AHEAD

All vehicles, no matter what type of suspension system they use, are designed to navigate everything from potholes to railroad tracks with a compromise of comfort and handling. The suspension helps the driver maintain control over whatever situation they may face on the road. But suspension parts won't last forever and will wear out over time due to the many moving parts and road conditions.

Parts that wear the most are usually the shocks and struts as well as ball joints, strut mounts and other moving pieces. We'll save the story about shocks for another time, but ancillary suspension parts such as ball joints, strut mounts and sway-bar links shouldn't be neglected, as they also need to be replaced after heavy use. While some of these parts may last the life of the vehicle in optimum conditions, harsh road surfaces, dirt and debris may cause them to wear much sooner.

A common symptom of a failing ball joint is a clunking sound as the vehicle drives down the road. It can be especially noticeable over rough terrain or during cornering. The clunking will get louder as the ball joint wears, or until it eventually fails. Ball-joint boots can tear, allowing the grease to evacuate the socket, leaving a dry ball and socket to fight against salt, grime and bumpy road. Not good.

Ball joints aren't the only suspension parts that fail. Sway-bar links and control arms also can wear out and fail with similar results. As the ball joint and control arm are linked, when one component starts to fail, there's a fair chance

the others aren't far behind. When a ball joint or control arm has excessive movement, the driver can typically feel something is wrong if the vehicle wanders in lanes or the steering input feels slower than usual.

A strut mount acts as a sandwich – with one side bolted to the vehicle and the other side to the strut. In the middle, there's an insulating rubber material. As the car reacts to bumps, impact pushes and pulls on the mount. The mount cushions the impacts and reduces the jarring effect, noise and vibration from transmitting to the vehicle.



Most front struts include a bearing for the strut to attach. These bearings act as pivots and are critical components that affect steering movement, smoothness and response.

A couple of reasons strut mounts fail is because age changes the density of the insulating material, so more noise and vibration are transmitted into the vehicle. The bearing portion of the mount wears over time, especially when faced with hard driving conditions.

Control arms connect the suspension to the vehicle's body or frame through bushings. While they attach to the suspension through the ball joint, they allow the car to turn the wheels, connecting the tire to the suspension. Control-arm bushings can wear, or the arms may bend during an accident or a hard impact with a curb. Control arms should last the life of a vehicle in normal conditions, but the bushings may weaken in harsh climates after heavy use.

To inspect the lower control-arm bushings, look for signs of cracking, splitting or oil saturation. You can use a pry bar inserted between the frame and the lower control arm to see if there's any play in the bushings and the shaft that passes through the bushings.

A sway bar or "stabilizer bar" prevents the body of the vehicle from leaning too much and keeps it stable during cornering. The sway-bar link connects at outer ends of the sway bar to the suspension. In most cars, a sway-bar link has two small ball joints at each end. Signs of a failing sway-bar link may include clunking or rattling noises from the tire area. Poor handling or a "loose-feeling" steering wheel also can be symptoms. It would be best if you recommended that your customer check all of these suspension components during routine tire rotations or replacement. **CM**

A COMMON SYMPTOM OF A FAILING BALL JOINT IS A CLUNKING SOUND AS THE VEHICLE DRIVES DOWN THE ROAD.



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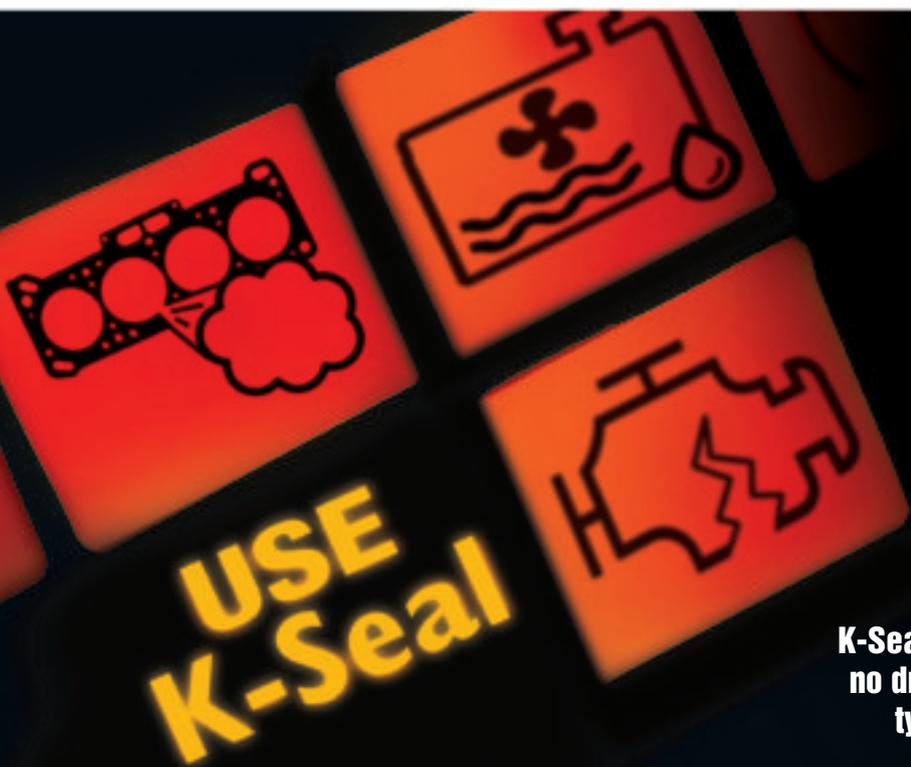
FUEL PUMPS

YOU MIGHT NEED MORE THAN ONE.



My brother has a 2011 BMW X5 with a turbocharged in-line six-cylinder engine. The other day, when we were on a road trip, he told me that he has run out of gas a few times recently, even though the fuel gauge said it had plenty of fuel.

On many BMWs, there are typically two in-tank fuel pumps. My brother believes that the feeder pump, which essentially sends fuel over the driveline hump to the main tank, isn't working. So, when you get to a half tank and the feeder pump is supposed to kick on to pump fuel over to the other tank, it doesn't work. The fuel gauge isn't registering low fuel either because there's still a half a tank in the feeder tank. My brother, who was a technician for a few years at a VW dealership, is going to replace the pump because the parts are quite expensive, as you can imagine coming from BMW. However, I suggested that he test it out with my scan tool first.



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Most late-model vehicles control the fuel pump with the PCM and can vary the speed depending on engine load and rpm. One of the most common types of fuel pumps today is the electric turbine-style pump. These pumps have an impeller with lots of small blades attached to the electric motor inside the pump. And on a tank-mounted pump, the fuel acts as a lubricant, so running out of gas can damage the internal parts. It's similar to coolant that runs low and cavitates in the water pump.

Today's vehicles, however, often have more than one pump, such as the BMW we discussed above, or gasoline direct injection (GDI) engines that use a high-pressure pump to deliver the fuel to the injectors inside the combustion chamber. These pumps work in conjunction with the electric tank-mounted pump that delivers the fuel to the fuel rail. The mechanically driven pump runs off of the camshaft to produce as much as 2,200 psi!

We spoke to the folks at Stanadyne, who are OE suppliers of high-pressure pumps for GM. Brent Dolan, product line manager, says that their high-pressure pumps are reasonably straightforward mechanical pumps that are driven off of the camshaft to vary the speed and, therefore, the pressure produced. These pumps have an electronic regulator run by the ECU to dump off fuel when the pressure is too high.

What's interesting about these pumps – even though they're not available in the aftermarket at this time – is that Stanadyne is working on even higher-pressure pumps for future applications that can reach 300 to 350 bar (about 5,000 psi!).

Dolan says that the only failures they see – and there aren't many – are due to lubrication issues if the wrong type of fuel is used or there's an oiling issue with the top of the engine. "Failure modes will usually be dependent on fuel contamination and condition of fuels, or improper lubrication in the engine," he adds. "So, anything that you would see a failure of in the engine, you may see the same type of failure modes in the pump. The biggest concern would be fuel contamination."

On tank-mounted pumps, they also can be sensitive to fuel contamination and debris that may plug up the filter or fuel sock. The fuel tank should be inspected/cleaned when replacing a tank-mounted pump, and you should install a new fuel filter. However, if your customer replaces the whole fuel-pump assembly, it will include a filter and inlet filter sock for most applications. **CM**

**ON A TANK-MOUNTED
PUMP, THE FUEL ACTS AS
A LUBRICANT, SO RUNNING
OUT OF GAS CAN DAMAGE
THE INTERNAL PARTS.**

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VACUUM PUMPS FOR BRAKES



Vacuum brake boosters probably will be with us for a long time. It's the most efficient and economical way to amplify the force exerted by the driver. But where the booster gets its vacuum is changing. Many import and domestic nameplates have been using vacuum pumps to power the brake booster on their gas-, diesel- and even electric-powered vehicles.

For a vacuum brake booster to work, it needs a source of vacuum. In the past, all that was needed was a port on the intake manifold. Now, vacuum pumps are the choice for negative pressure power.

WHY A VACUUM PUMP?

In every piston engine, vacuum is generated during the intake stroke as the piston goes down in the cylinder and the intake valves are open. But modern engines have changed. Increased efficiency has reduced the amount of vacuum available to the brake booster. Engines have been downsized to 2 and even 1.4 liters. This means that there's less displacement to generate the vacuum.

Variable valve timing has further diminished the vacuum generated because the timing of the opening might be timed to allow a scavenging effect so some of the in-

take air makes it past the exhaust valve. This air is intended for the catalyst so unburned hydrocarbons can be burned.

Turbocharging also has eliminated traditional vacuum in the intake manifold. The turbocharger produces positive pressure or boost in the intake manifold. The only time an engine might be under vacuum is when the engine is decelerating, and the throttle is closed.

WHAT TYPE OF PUMP?

Vacuum pumps have been used on diesel engines for more than 40 years, typically as a diaphragm pump. These pumps were neither efficient nor reliable.

Most modern VWs use either an electric vacuum pump or a pump driven by a sprocket connected to the timing chain. These pumps use vanes attached to an offset shaft. As the shaft rotates, the vanes create a sealed chamber with the walls of the housing. Since the shaft is offset, the chambers change in volume and produce a vacuum on the outlet side when turned. Electric pumps typically have multiple vanes; timing-chain-powered pumps use just one vane.

Electric-powered vacuum pumps are controlled by the engine control module. The system uses a pressure sensor mounted be-

tween the pump and the booster. The ECM will look at the vacuum, brake-pedal position and other engine parameters. The vacuum pump is controlled with a relay that is actuated by the engine control module. The pump is turned on for 2 to 3 seconds during startup.

Timing-chain-powered pumps are lubricated with engine oil. The oil inlet is next to the shaft and is fed from the oil slung off the timing chain and sucked into the pump through a valve that controls the level of oil.

While it's rare for the vanes to wear out, it's possible for carbon and debris to enter the pump and cause damage to the vanes and housing. If the vanes can't seal against the housing, a vacuum can't be generated. The most common symptom of a worn pump is a hard brake pedal.

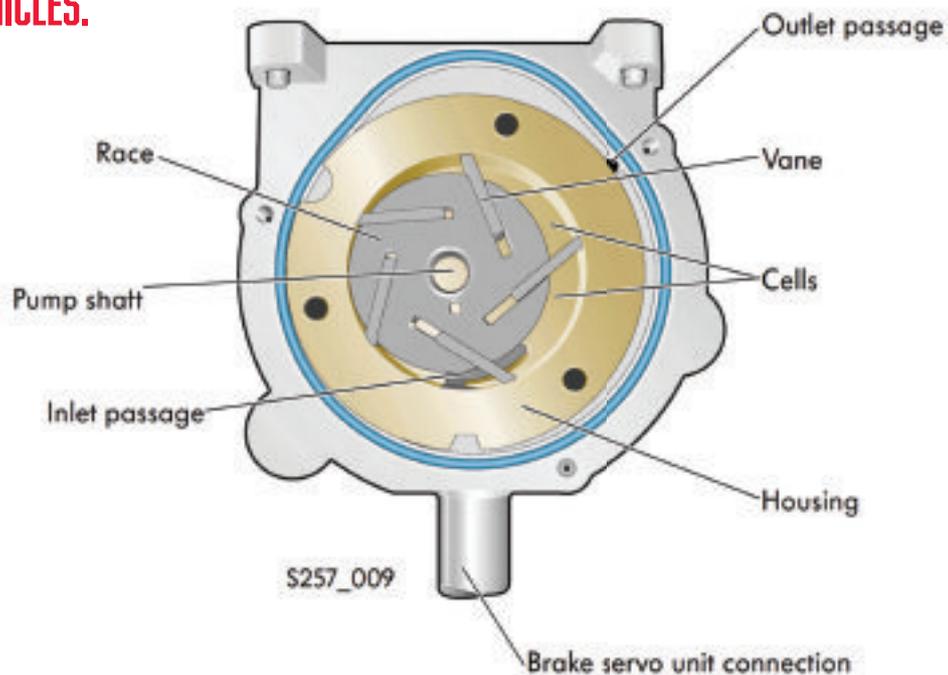
THE BOOSTER

No matter if the booster gets vacuum from the engine or a pump, if it is damaged, the brake-pedal performance will change. The condition of the diaphragm inside the booster is also important. If it's cracked, ruptured or leaking, it won't hold vacuum and can't provide much power assist. Leaks in the master cylinder can allow brake fluid to be siphoned into the booster, accelerating the demise of the diaphragm.

MANY IMPORT AND DOMESTIC NAMEPLATES HAVE BEEN USING VACUUM PUMPS TO POWER THE BRAKE BOOSTER ON THEIR GAS-, DIESEL- AND EVEN ELECTRIC-POWERED VEHICLES.

If there's brake fluid inside the vacuum hose, it's a good indication that the master cylinder is leaking and needs to be rebuilt or replaced. Wetness around the back of the master cylinder would be another clue for this kind of problem.

To check the vacuum booster, pump the brake pedal with the engine off until you've bled off all the vacuum from the unit. Then hold the pedal down and start the engine. You should feel the pedal depress slightly as engine vacuum enters the booster and pulls on the diaphragm. No change? Then check the vacuum-hose connection and engine vacuum. If it's OK, the problem is in the booster, which needs to be replaced. **CM**



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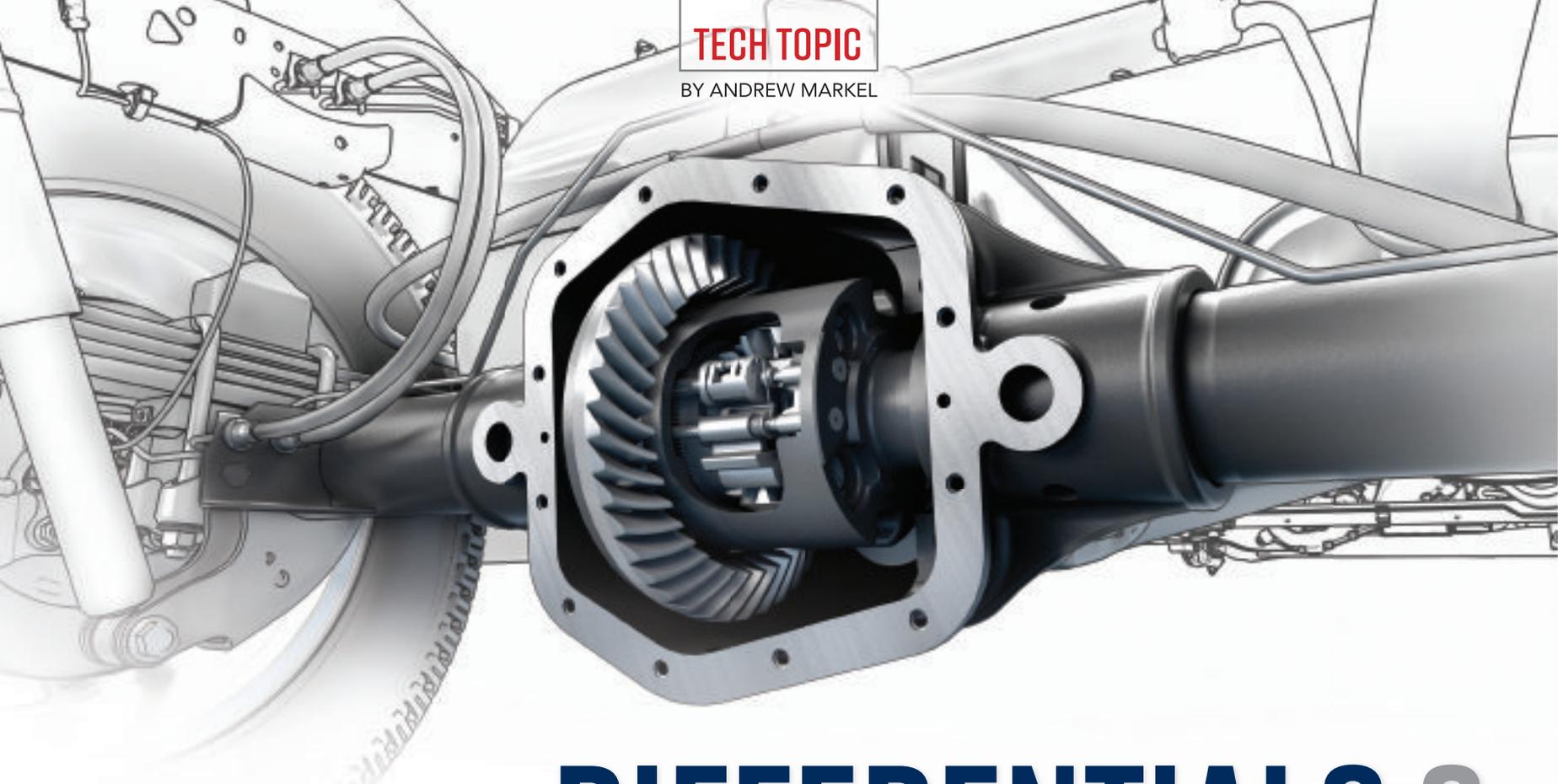
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DIFFERENTIALS & DIAGNOSTICS

If you've ever driven a car or truck with a fully locked differential around a tight corner or tried to get a car with an open differential out of a snowbank, you know about the benefits of a limited-slip differential.

A differential allows the two connected wheels to spin at different rates. The two wheels are connected using spider gears. If the spider gears do not spin on their axis, the two axle shafts spin at the same rate. If the spider gears start to spin, the axles spin at different speeds. How the direction of the rotation changes and which axle is spinning faster determines which one gets the most power.

The ring gear produces radial forces. The changing speeds of the axles produce tangential forces on the spider gears. A tangential force can be caused by different rates of the wheels going around a corner or when torque

is applied to the differential (the "one-wheel peel"). A limited-slip differential helps to control the tangential forces, so the radial forces produced by the pinion and ring gear are transferred to the wheel that needs the power. There are several differential designs you might see in the field.

OPEN DIFFERENTIALS

As the names imply, these differentials just have spider gears in the differential. These differentials let the wheels spin at different rates when going around a corner. These gears in the carrier need to be splash-lubricated by the ring gear. The level of the lubricant housing is critical.

CLUTCH PACK OR CONE DIFFERENTIALS

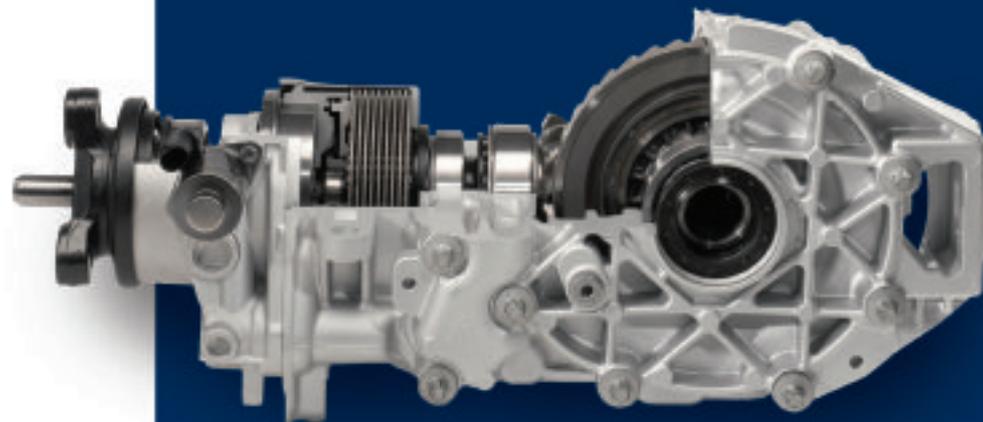
The most common style of limited-slip differential uses clutch packs on both sides of the carrier to limit the movement of the spider gears. If a wheel starts to spin and increase

torque-induced tangential forces, a ramp or cone applies pressure to the clutch pack to lock the carrier and axle.

For these differentials to work properly, the condition of the fluid and additive package is critical. Some of these differentials require special fluid or you have to add a small amount of friction modifier.

TORSEN DIFFERENTIALS

A Torsen differential is a geared differential that uses four to six or more worm gears attached to spur gears. As torque is applied to the gears, they are pushed against the walls of the differential housing, creating friction. The friction resists the relative movement of the axle shafts. This locks or distributes the torque to the wheels on an axle. These can be found on performance cars and off-road trucks.



ELECTRONIC DIFFERENTIALS

Some automakers are using the ABS system to control the differences in speed of the wheels on an axle. This can make an open differential act like a limited-slip differential under certain conditions. By pulsing or locking the brakes on one corner, it can send power to the opposite side of the differential. This works well at low speeds. With this system, the brakes can be used to free a wheel from a slippery ditch or eliminate torque steer.

Some SUVs and performance all-wheel-drive cars and trucks are utilizing what looks like a locked differential, but the system has clutch packs on the sides of the differential. The clutch packs can lock or completely disconnect a driveshaft. It can even do the “holy grail” of differentials, torque vectoring.

The torque-vectoring differentials can control the amount of power going to each wheel connected to the axle using hydraulics or electric solenoids. Some high-horsepower front-wheel-drive vehicles have a basic torque-vectoring differential (such as the Ford Fiesta RS) to control torque steer.

Torque-vectoring differentials can work together with the stability control system and PCM to maximize traction during acceleration. It can be used during off-road and on-road situations at a wide range of speeds. The main inputs are the steering-position sensor and yaw sensor. The differential control module makes corrections by determining where the driver wants to go and where the vehicle is going to make a correction.

This rear differential can control the power to the rear wheels. These differentials can act like a locking, limited-slip or open differential with only a change of the electronically controlled clutches.

Torque-vectoring differentials have another advantage – they can disconnect a drive axle better than any locking hub. Decoupling an axle with clutch packs reduces rotating mass in the driveline and increases fuel mileage. The system then will decouple the center differential. On some vehicles, the driveshaft can be uncoupled from both the transmission and rear/front differential. This decoupling of the driveline can reduce rotating mass and load on the engine. This is all performed in milliseconds, and the driver does not feel even the slightest vibration. **CM**

TORQUE-VECTORING DIFFERENTIAL



LOCKING DIFFERENTIAL



A DIFFERENTIAL ALLOWS THE TWO CONNECTED WHEELS TO SPIN AT DIFFERENT RATES.



'TIS THE SEASON FOR 'CONE ZONES'

THE FORECAST FOR THE REST OF THE SUMMER IS ORANGE.

Summer is the main season for “cone zones” – road-construction zones where motorists are likely to hit a bump or two, or come across loose stones and other hazards.

These rough road conditions can be tough on a vehicle’s steering and suspension system and can throw out the alignment. Meanwhile, loose stones have the potential to damage the vehicle’s exterior or windshield, according to the Car Care Council.

“Even the most careful motorist, who is driving slowly and carefully through road construction, is bound to hit an unexpected bump or other road hazards,” said Nathan Perrine, executive director of the nonprofit Car Care Council. “Be sure to pay attention to your car and if you think there’s a problem, have it taken care of as soon as possible.”

The main symptoms of steering and suspension or wheel-alignment problems are:

- UNEVEN TIRE WEAR
- PULLING TO ONE SIDE
- NOISE AND VIBRATION WHILE CORNERING
- LOSS OF CONTROL

The council recommends that motorists have their vehicles checked out immediately if any of these symptoms exist, as steering and suspension systems are key safety-related components and largely determine the car’s ride and handling. Regardless of road conditions, these systems should be checked annually and a wheel alignment should be performed at the same time.

Motorists also should conduct frequent visual checks of their vehicle’s exterior and windshield to identify any chips, dings or cracks. These are small problems that can become costly repairs and safety hazards if they aren’t taken care of immediately.

Motorists can find more information to help keep their vehicles running dependably at www.carcare.org. **CM**



BY ANDREW MARKEL

HEATED SEATS BY SUBSCRIPTION

AUTOMAKERS SELLING OPTIONS “OVER THE AIR.”



Imagine it is a cold winter's day, you try to turn on the heated seats and a message in the dashboard comes up saying your subscription has run out, asking if you would like to renew for \$15 a month. This is becoming a reality due to a convergence of telematics and e-commerce.

In July at an Apple developer's conference, BMW announced it will be selling subscriptions for optional equipment using over-the-air updates to customers starting with the new BMW 5 Series.

Owners can try a one-month trial or purchase subscription for period of time. Options that can be unlocked include adaptive cruise control, suspension settings and heated seats. The customer can access the options through the BMW app that is paired to their vehicle. This approach can save BMW from manufacturing vehicles with different option packages and simplifies dealer inventory.

This new after-sale revenue stream for BMW sparks the debate about vehicle ownership and if owning the vehicle grants the driver de facto ownership of the hardware and software. The other concern is how will these telematics systems and software work for the second owner when the vehicle has been on the roads for 10 or 12 years.

For technicians, the marriage of e-commerce and telematics could present a new wrinkle to vehicle diagnostics. Most technicians support the idea of connected vehicles that can update modules over the air. This can help resolve drivability issues faster. But, the e-commerce issues could cause automakers to enable a new level of security to lock out independent shops. **AMN**



LEVERAGE MARKET TURBULENCE IN 2020 TO ACCELERATE GROWTH

COMPANY FOUNDERS AND MANAGEMENT TEAMS THAT MAY BE EVALUATING OPTIONS TO EXPAND AND STRENGTHEN THEIR BUSINESSES DURING THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS HAVE OPTIONS WITH PRIVATE EQUITY PARTNERS.

DESPITE CHALLENGES WITH THE CURRENT ECONOMY, THERE MAY NEVER BE A BETTER TIME TO EXPLORE OPTIONS SINCE MOST INDICATORS POINT TO INDUSTRY GROWTH IN THE AFTERMARKET.

MAKING AN ACQUISITION OR OTHER STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS DURING VOLATILE MARKET CONDITIONS CAN YIELD SIGNIFICANT LONG-TERM BENEFITS.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to shape the dynamics of various sectors within the automotive aftermarket space, many companies are well-positioned to explore acquisition and expansion objectives. While leveraging the know-how of strategic partners such as investment bankers, management consultants or accounting firms is well-understood, perhaps less well-known are the options that private equity firms offer. Adding a partner that offers fresh capital and experience to structure acquisitions or other strategic transactions could be an attractive option – even for those owners who are not ready to fully exit their business. In partnership with private equity, a business can leverage its established infrastructure to build scale and establish competitive advantages during a period when its competitors are retrenching.

INVESTING IN R&D AND RETOOLING TO PREPARE FOR A BROAD INDUSTRY TRANSFORMATION COULD REQUIRE RE-THINKING YOUR CURRENT STRATEGY.

As the automotive market navigates its way through one of the most transformative technology evolutions in history, the timing for aftermarket suppliers to transition their businesses to fit the new realities is now. For instance, I was previously involved with a company that provided vehicle instrumentation to the automotive and motorcycle aftermarket. In partnership with that company, we expanded our R&D efforts significantly to develop new capabilities for our instrumentation during a period when many of our competitors had retrenched. Ultimately, this led to gaining significant market share as the industry recovered and a successful result for management and key stakeholders. Similarly, aftermarket suppliers need to get the strategic decisions right in the next two to four years and will require capital to make investments in those areas. Early movers with strong visions and flexible capital structures will have obvious advantages over those that wait. Despite challenges with the current economy, there may never be a better time to explore options since most indicators point to industry growth in the aftermarket due to rising vehicle ages and sustained shortages in new-car inventories. We would expect aftermarket demand in several end markets to expand once miles driven begins to return to historical levels.

Current economic conditions may not dictate what your company is worth. A slower-to-negative growth environment will produce lower valuations, not only because of financial performance but because the lending environment and debt multiples also impact valuations. While it is true that valuations may currently be lower than they were pre-COVID-19, business owners should

understand that there are ways to bridge the gap in a transaction to create the foundation for a favorable exit. These can include additional payments when certain financial milestones are hit and other transaction structures that provide additional upside for owners. Partnerships with private equity partners can be structured in creative ways to accommodate a less-than-ideal valuation scenario due to an economic downturn – and still yield strong returns for owners and their management teams.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO HELP POTENTIAL INVESTORS UNDERSTAND YOUR COMPANY'S POTENTIAL.

Automotive aftermarket businesses that have been negatively impacted by the current economic conditions need to accurately document affected performance variables. Identifying customer and revenue losses and one-time expenses due to COVID-19, and developing a strategic plan to recapture that business once the economy improves, are key. Potential private equity firm partners will want to see signs of stability/growth after the low point of the COVID crisis. They also will be comfortable giving you credit for declines in your business and excess costs due to COVID-19 as long as it is well-documented.

MYTHS ABOUT PRIVATE EQUITY KEEP SOME COMPANY OWNERS FROM UNDERSTANDING THE TRUE FINANCIAL POTENTIAL OF THEIR COMPANIES.

One of the biggest misconceptions about private equity is that it's a one-size-fits-all arrangement. Smaller, specialized private equity firms work best when they collaborate directly with business owners for long-term growth and maximum value. Often, businesses have specific needs that require customized solutions. For business owners who want to remain invested and steer their company toward future growth opportunities, the result is invariably better financial upside when compared with simply selling the business. Another advantage of working with a private equity partner and initially only selling partial interest is the ability to allow company management teams to establish or increase their ownership stake, which protects employee interests and rewards loyalty.

COMBINING YOUR INDUSTRY KNOW-HOW WITH PROFESSIONALS WHO SPECIALIZE IN SCALING BUSINESSES CAN YIELD OUTSIZED GROWTH.

Private equity firms work with business owners and management teams to support growth, diversify the company and reduce risk by focusing on alignment of interests for long-term value creation. Together, they focus on minimizing disruption while providing strategic guidance and operational support to help companies reach their full potential. With Global Parts Distributors, an air-conditioning automotive aftermarket distributor, we did this by acquiring a competitor with a complementary product line, investing in updated technology infrastructure that included a new ERP system, and consolidating three distribution centers into one larger and more efficient warehouse to optimize the layout and processes. In partnership with management, we were able to support tripling the size of their business in less than five years. [AMN](#)

About the Author

Jon Gormin is a managing director of Owner Resource Group. He co-heads the ORG Private Equity Group and serves on the Investment Committee. Over his 27 years in corporate finance and private equity, he has been involved with more than 50 businesses in a wide range of industries and has served as an officer (including both interim CEO and CFO) or board member for 26 companies including Maxima Technologies & Systems and Global Parts Distributors, both in the automotive aftermarket industry. ORG and Jon are based in Austin, Texas.



JON GORMIN,
MANAGING DIRECTOR OF OWNER RESOURCE GROUP

PRIVATE EQUITY FIRMS WORK WITH BUSINESS OWNERS AND MANAGEMENT TEAMS TO SUPPORT GROWTH, DIVERSIFY THE COMPANY AND REDUCE RISK BY FOCUSING ON ALIGNMENT OF INTERESTS FOR LONG-TERM VALUE CREATION.



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performance testing

BY AMY ANTENORA

ASSOCIATIONS SCORE VICTORY FOR AFTERMARKET WITH TRADE AGREEMENT LANGUAGE



In late June, the Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association (MEMA) and the Automotive Aftermarket Suppliers Association (AASA) scored what they dubbed a “major victory” for the automotive aftermarket when new terms were negotiated for the USMCA trade agreement that went into effect on July 1. The new terms will protect the automotive aftermarket from additional compliance requirements and complexities.

Largely based on the efforts of MEMA’s D.C.-based government affairs team, USMCA specifically defines an “aftermarket part” as “a good that is not for use as original equipment in the production of passenger vehicles, light trucks or heavy trucks.” MEMA interpreted this definition to also include “service part” as a term used in the industry. Therefore, the aftermarket must comply with USMCA requirements, but the provisions for aftermarket parts are less restrictive than for the parts used in the production of original equipment.

According to Ann Wilson, MEMA’s senior vice president of government affairs, ensuring the aftermarket was protected in this new trade agreement was well over a six-month process.

“We started working on it last November,” said Wilson. “It was raised to us that this was an issue because of the language in there that tied parts to original equipment. We had to make sure that the language was appropriate where they did the uniform regulations, and we had to make sure that when customs and border protection did their instructions, they didn’t change anything. We just had to pay attention to it every step of the way.”

Wilson noted that there are resources available on the MEMA website (mema.org) to assist aftermarket suppliers in educating and preparing themselves for the change from NAFTA certificates to the new USMCA agreement.

"We have material on our website that lays out the requirements," she said. "They just need to go in and look at their tariff codes, because everything is driven in this agreement by the tariff codes. I want them to look at the tariff codes to make sure there are no special rules for them. In most cases, there will not be, but we must all realize that NAFTA was an older agreement. Things have changed and just to be abundantly careful, they should make sure that they don't have a particular rule that they have to comply with that might not apply to everybody in general in the aftermarket."

Wilson added that the aftermarket doesn't have to worry about the new labor value content rules included in USMCA, and those in the aftermarket need not worry about steel and aluminum either, she said. "The aftermarket is not going to see an increase in their regional value content requirements for their parts for the compliance with the agreement," she stated.

Ultimately, this clarification for the aftermarket not only eliminates complexity but also reduces costs for aftermarket suppliers, and Wilson believes with this new language in place the aftermarket is "in pretty good shape," as she puts it. The next issue Wilson and her government relations team are keeping an eye on are our relationships with China, including not only tariff issues but also IP protection issues as well. Domestically, the focus will be on access to repair data and the overall economy as the country continues to work to recover from the pandemic, Wilson noted.

"As an industry, as a country, we are at a very delicate place. We have the continuation of a public health crisis. We have an economy that has been extraordinarily strong the last year, that is facing some real uphill challenges. We are in an atmosphere where we are looking at trade agreements in a very different light than we ever have before, when most of our manufacturers are global companies and depend on global business and all of those issues are colliding at the same time. We're looking at technology and how we can continue to thrive and with new technology on vehicles and how we can allow that consumer to continue to be able to service their vehicles in a way that makes the most sense for each individual. ... It's going to be an uphill climb that the entire aftermarket is going to have to work on together." **AMN**



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The Business of Selling Parts

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BY AMY ANTENORA

AVERAGE VEHICLE AGE CONTINUES TO RISE

Aftermarket parts and service sectors can enjoy a little more time in the 'sweet spot.'



New research from IHS Markit shows that the average age of light vehicles in operation (VIO) in the U.S. has risen to 11.9 years this year. Just about one month older than in 2019, this slight increase is still great news for the aftermarket and can generate new business opportunities for companies operating in the parts and services sectors.

Several factors have contributed to push U.S. average vehicle age higher, according to IHS Markit's analysis. While vehicle scrappage rates have increased and would be expected to cause average age to drop, growth in new-vehicle sales has plateaued. Having fewer new vehicles added to the U.S. vehicle population has offset the potential drop in average age, the firm states.

COVID-19 ACCELERATING AN ALREADY ESTABLISHED TREND ON VEHICLE AGE

Underlying weakness in several segments of the market, combined with increased vehicle prices, provided upward pressure on average age of vehicles, as consumers weigh their cyclical-goods expenditure, opt for longer-term financing options or hold on to their vehicles for a longer period of time.

"At the start of 2020, all signs were pointing to moderate growth of the average age of vehicles through the first half of the decade, and there was certainly growing pessimism about how long the strong economic fundamentals could last," said Todd Campau, associate director of Aftermarket Solutions at IHS Markit. "However, the COVID-19 pandemic has created the perfect storm to accelerate U.S. light-vehicle average age in coming years. This should be a positive side effect for the aftermarket, as the majority of repairs for older vehicles come through the aftermarket channel."

The automotive aftermarket has enjoyed a long run when it comes to being in this "sweet spot" for repairing and maintaining older vehicles out of warranty, but how long can a good thing last?

"I think that's a really interesting question," said Campau. "I do think it's going to hit a point where it's going to slow down again, but I don't think that is 2020. I think the pandemic is going to push us even a little further and we've seen globally countries that the average vehicle age is actually higher than the U.S. even, believe it or not. So, we might be getting to a point where we're starting to get close, but it's still going to be a few years off now because of everything that's going on."

The impact of COVID-19 on vehicle average age is not expected to be uniform across the country, as vehicle age in some states will rise more rapidly while other states will stay closer to pre-pandemic norms. For aftermarket companies to capitalize most effectively on the opportunities created by the pandemic, it will be beneficial to understand the nuances from one region to the next and be nimble enough to react accordingly at the local level.

There are some interesting variations in average vehicle age by region across the U.S., Campau noted. "This is obviously a little bit of a generality, but Western states have older vehicles," he said. "The Northeast has very young vehicles. I looked at three states: New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts. We focused on them because they were some of the earliest and hardest hit by the coronavirus pandemic. They have an average age of only 10.2 years of age compared to a national average of 11.9. If you go out West, there are some 13- to 14-range states. So, we still have some room. As you would expect, cooler climates in general tend to have younger vehicles, warmer climates tend to have older vehicles. What I think is interesting is the split we're seeing by vehicle type as well, cars versus light trucks. Light trucks are not growing at all and passenger cars are actually accelerating pretty fast."

New-vehicle sales provide the pipeline for young vehicles coming into the marketplace. Prior to the pandemic, sales in the U.S. were already trending downward, representing just 6.1% of vehicles in operation in 2019, compared to 6.7% in 2016 – the last record-setting sales year. Given the latest IHS Markit forecasts for the further slowdown in light of COVID-19, U.S. new-vehicle sales in 2020 are expected to account for 5% or less of all vehicles on the road in 2020. Declining new-vehicle share in the overall population means fewer younger vehicles to temper average age growth.

"We're expecting it to be down 20% or more this year," said Campau. "And then it'll come back by about 8% in 2021 and 2022 to get almost to back to 16 million by

2022. But, it's hard to separate out now what is caused by pandemic and what was just happening because of events prior to that as we've been hearing people say a recession is looming for probably a couple of years almost."

Still, 280 million vehicles on the road is good news for aftermarket sector, with a few caveats. Overall, a growing fleet with increasing vehicle age presents a larger addressable market and opportunity for the aftermarket sector. Based on the analysis, the volume of vehicles 6 to 11 years old is expected to expand, which presents major opportunities for the sector due to dealer service plans and warranties expiring, netting new business opportunities for independent service and repair shops. Volumes of vehicles 12 to 15 years old, which have been an increasing source of revenue for the aftermarket, are expected to contract as the aftermath of the lower volumes during the 2008-09 recession are still working their way through the vehicle population. **AMN**



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BY MADELEINE WINER

FINDING OPPORTUNITIES IN ALTERNATIVE POWERTRAIN TECHNOLOGIES

MAHLE PLEDGES LEADERSHIP TO SHOPS EMBRACING FUTURE TECHNOLOGY



Many shops may feel a sense of uncertainty servicing hybrids, electric vehicles and alternative powertrains being released on the market today. But MAHLE is urging shops to think of this new wave as an opportunity – one that will reap benefits for those who partner with a 100-year-old provider of automotive solutions in the industry.

“The work carried out in workshops will change dramatically in view of the increasing diversification of the vehicle fleet,” said Olaf Henning, corporate executive vice president and general manager, MAHLE Aftermarket. “If independent workshops decide to embrace this transformation, we’re the right partner to have by their side.”

With an eye on the aftermarket of the future, MAHLE showcased its efforts in providing shop solutions for these new technologies in a webinar the company hosted in late July. The German parts manufacturer is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, and while honoring its past, it outlined automotive trends on its radar for the future and how it plans to be a solutions provider for shops across the globe.

Henning said MAHLE has been able to develop solutions for shops by studying trends from its OEM business, expanding its distribution footprint and anticipating ongoing market trends to adapt its product portfolio.

“This path has taken us from being a pure spare parts supplier to a

solutions provider,” Henning said. “With these solutions, we enable our customers to tap into new business segments in the aftermarket of tomorrow.”

Key trends on MAHLE’s radar include the growth of thermal management due to the increasing number of electric and hybrid vehicles; the growth of spare parts that comes with various drivetrains on the market; and new hygiene practices for cleaning vehicle cabins. Henning also highlighted the increase in automatic transmissions, the integration of functions into one part and the complexity of filtration systems as new challenges that can be transformed into business opportunities for shops.

Jürgen Laucher, head of aftermarket thermal management, said due to the way hybrid, electric and fuel-cell powertrains are constructed, the vehicle’s power electronics will need to be cooled, leading the way for an increase in thermal management service needs.

While MAHLE already offers an array of air conditioning and engine cooling parts, he said with the acquisition of Behr Hella Services in 2018, MAHLE customers can now get their thermal management spare parts from a single source.

“Thermal management is the new service business for workshops in the diversified mobility of tomorrow,” he said. “We’re therefore strengthening this important future segment related to temperature

control. We're constantly developing our portfolio and incorporating our expertise in the areas of thermal management and filtration into new products. This provides our customers the tools and know-how they need to operate profitably in the aftermarket of tomorrow."



Service opportunities around filtration also will become more important as fuel-cell electric vehicles rise in popularity. Jens Knorn, director of global product management, said as more fuel-cell electric vehicles come to the market, there will be a greater demand for air management to prevent damage to the cell.

MAHLE has responded to this by developing high-performance filters specifically for vehicles with fuel-cell drive, Knorn said. It also has more than 300 filters dedicated to electric vehicles, and recently, it introduced its new CleanLine and CleanLine+ filters, which the company says are designed to increase fuel quality.

"In the medium term, we anticipate significant service volumes for workshops in this area [filtration]," Knorn said. "These activities will be based on our high-performance filters, which prevent degeneration of the fuel cell and minimize the number of expensive catalytic converters needed."

As the complexity of vehicles increases, so does the demand for intelligent shop equipment that performs diagnostics, updates automatically and has vehicle data from the manufacturer. Joachim Schneeweiss, head of service solutions, said the company has responded to this need with its ADAS, air conditioning and oil service units on the market. As an example, he touted MAHLE's TechPro diagnostic tool, which features a secure gateway into Fiat Chrysler data for shops to diagnose the company's vehicle's properly.

Other trends MAHLE highlighted were the growth of automatic transmissions and the integration of functions into one part. Knorn said the production of automatic transmissions has grown by 40% worldwide in the past five years, which will present money-making service opportunities for shops. To demonstrate the integration of functions into one part, he used MAHLE's oil management module as an example. This part combines a pump, cooler and filtration element all in one with a replaceable filter insert for ease of repair. However, the company is monitoring what shops may need to service these types of parts to respond to industry demand.

With the predicted growth of these technologies, training will be an essential for shops to keep up with the "aftermarket of the future," as MAHLE puts it. Henning said the company is constantly developing its training programs in these areas, whether it be through workshops or a video on a service unit. He said shops also can access training opportunities through MAHLE's Technical Messenger or Customer Care Portal.



OLAF HENNING, CORPORATE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER



JENS KNORN, HEAD OF PRODUCT MANAGEMENT



JOACHIM SCHNEEWEISS, MANAGING DIRECTOR MAHLE SERVICE SOLUTIONS



BUSINESS UPDATE

Employee and customer safety have been at the core of MAHLE's global response to COVID-19, said Henning.

Henning said MAHLE responded quickly to the pandemic to protect its workforce, and as a result, the company has been able to keep the infection rate low at MAHLE locations worldwide. He also said maintaining focus on supply chain has been paramount during this crisis.

"The pandemic has presented us with some enormous challenges as a company. In addition to protecting the health of our employees, we also focused on maintaining our supply capacity in every phase — with success," Henning said. "We were able to sustain our supply chains in the OEM segment, as well as ensuring full supply capacity in the aftermarket at all times."

With greater financial strain on shops worldwide due to the pandemic, Henning said many of MAHLE's customers have benefited from its "Startklar" campaign. Through this, shops can purchase service equipment through MAHLE Service Solutions and pay for it in installments starting the seventh month after purchase.

Looking back on 2019, Henning said the company was confronted with many challenges and uncertainties, including the slowdown in the automotive markets and the economy, Brexit, geopolitical unpredictability and the mobility transformation. Despite these challenges, MAHLE Aftermarket's sales increased from \$1.077 billion (EUR 928 million) in 2018 to around \$1.103 billion (EUR 950 million) in 2019.

Henning said the company also opened new locations. In June 2020, it opened a new production and development center in Parma, which will be the home of MAHLE Aftermarket's Italy team as well as the new worldwide headquarters for MAHLE Service Solutions. In addition, the company opened a new sales office in Panama City, Panama, to better serve customers in South America. **AMN**

AMN PEOPLE: SUMMER RIDES

1.) Jay Buckley's 1967 Mustang Supercharged 427. Buckley currently serves as director, Product Management/Training/Catalog for Dayco.

2.) Babcox Media Executive Director of Editorial Content Scott Shriber takes a beach buggy for a spin in St. Pete Beach, Florida, at last year's AASA Technology Conference.

3.) Chris Habel, vice president of Sales & Marketing for Platinum Driveline USA, worked on this 1932 Ford Roadster project car with his dad and brother: "We have entered it and won several prizes in various car shows. My dad would be proud to see it in print again."

4.) Babcox Media Controller Beth Scheetz said she and her boyfriend Darren have been enjoying summer drives in his 2014 Camaro SS. "Always a fun ride!" she shared.



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AMN PEOPLE: SUMMER RIDES

1.) "Great ride for the hot days of summer," says Bob Jaworski of Auto Electric Service Ltd. in Regina, Saskatchewan, of his Jaguar F-Type.

2.) MAM Software National Account Manager John Nehez in his 1979 Mustang.

3.) John Nehez (photo 2) made sure his daughter Julia got in on the Mustang fun as well.

4.) Nehez's other daughter Krista in her go-kart.

5.) While on a road trip to St. Louis over Fourth of July weekend, Debbie Hodson, strategic marketing director, ITW Global Brands, spotted these sleek wheels. She wrote: "I had never seen a Rolls Royce SUV before and there was one parked outside of the hotel. I Googled the price and it said they start at \$330k!"



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People

WHO WAS THAT MASKED AFTERMARKET PROFESSIONAL?

Call for photos: Has your company made great use of branding by putting its logo on PPE for staff? Know a co-worker who has gotten quite stylish coordinating masks with work outfits each day? Let us see how you and your coworkers are staying safe, stylish and on-brand these days.

Send your masked staff photos to AMN Editor Amy Antenora at aantenora@babcox.com to be featured in next month's AMN People section!

High-res photos are due by Monday, August 31.

PPE!

**SUBMIT YOUR
PHOTOS TODAY!**



AMN PEOPLE: SUMMER RIDES

1.) Ethan Bregger's (National Strategic Account Manager for DRIV), "Summertime Toy" as he called it: a 1968 Camaro RS/SS.

2.) Ed Robinson, manager, Customer Support & Implementations for Partswatch Solutions, part of Autologue, likes to hit the road in his 2019 Hyundai Kona Ironman edition.

3.) Steve Capoccia, president of Special Public Communications, shared his gorgeous collection of summer wheels that includes: a 1949 Pontiac Chieftan Deluxe Convertible and a 1967 122s Volvo Coupe.

4.) Ed Robinson's (photo 2) other summer ride: a 1966 Avanti.

5.) Ken Krankkala, VP, North America, Elanteam, sent in this pic of his family's four favorite summer rides: "'98 and '99 Rangers and '98 and '00 Yamaha YZ's (2 strokes – braaap!)."



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MODERN-DAY RENAISSANCE MAN

DR. JAMIE MEYER, NEW PRESIDENT OF PRI

It would be fair to describe Dr. Jamie Meyer as a bit of a Renaissance man. Dr. Meyer took over as president of the Performance Racing Industry (PRI) Trade Show and media company in mid-May after 15 years at General Motors, managing its Advanced Performance Parts Program, as well as roles in marketing and advertising for Chevrolet, Cadillac, GMC and Buick.

A longtime motorsports enthusiast, at GM Meyer led the revival of the COPO Camaro, E-ROD crate engine, LSX race block and engine family, and initiated such events as the Chevrolet Performance US Nationals, LSX Shootout and sponsorship of the NMCA series of drag races. Meyer also was instrumental in on-boarding the Force Family to Chevrolet. Most recently, he developed the performance parts and racing parts strategy for all General Motors vehicles, including their full-size truck lineup, C8 Corvette, current Camaro models and the coming portfolio of battery electric vehicles.

He got his start, however, in a far different place: the field of medicine. It was during medical school that Meyer seemed to have found his niche. Meyer began his racing career in upstate New York when he formed Mom's Racing, a nonprofit drag racing sanctioning body designed to give street racers a safe alternative at their local drag strips.

"I've always been a drag racer and have been known to street race in the past. I was in medical school in Syracuse and I had my Mustang and I used to come out of the gross anatomy lab and go street race on Pepsi Road," he said. "This was in the early '90s when you couldn't go to the drag strip. It was all bracket racing everywhere. So, I was out watching my friends street race in opposite directions on a four lane and they crossed in front of us at over a hundred miles an hour and I just realized how incredibly dangerous it was.

"I worked with some of my friends, and my mom, and we approached a local drag strip. It was New York International Raceway. Bob Metcalfe was manager and owner at the time. He allowed me to give it a try. This was pre-internet, 1994, when we had our first race. I had been handing flyers out at the drag strip like I was a nightclub promoter," Meyer joked.

"We had 25 cars show up and they loved it. It went on for 25 years, and when my career took me to Cincinnati away from the New York area, my mom, along with Bellamy Gallo, who took over the race director role, ran it for 25 years, five races a year. It brought a lot of people into the world of legal, controlled, safe drag racing and street racing," he said.

Meyer's drag racing efforts continued with Fun Ford Weekend, World Ford Challenge and support for the formation of the National Mustang Racers Association (NMRA). He served as the lead announcer, racer relations, as well as a freelance contributor with hundreds of published articles.

Now, Meyer takes on another challenge: a new position at the helm of one of the industry's most well-respected racing organizations, and during a pandemic no less, when everything has been turned upside down. However, Meyer is able to draw from his vast professional and



DR. JAMIE MEYER

personal experiences working with manufacturers as well as racers, both grassroots and professional, to tackle these challenges head on.

"Ultimately, I want PRI to push racing to where it's considered an activity for the casual person to take in a race, just like it is to go to the movies, where you think about going to the racetrack in the same light as just going out for dinner. And we'll get there. It's going to take an industry effort. It's going to take pulling in a whole network along with us. But I think we are in a position where we can help do that and lift up the entire industry if you will."

As for this year's PRI Trade Show, scheduled to take place Dec. 10-12 in Indianapolis, Meyer said it's all systems go at this time.

"The plan right now is the PRI Trade Show will go on, unless there's an outside entity that says we just can't do it. We're super cautious about what that means for the safety of our attendees, and that's the top priority of PRI right now. The vendors are already saying to us that they want the PRI show to go on. Booth space has been bought up and we're within 90% of what a 'normal' PRI looks like, which is phenomenal, given the environment we're in. It's a testament to the crowd that we serve." **AMN**



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