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2011 SUMMER CONFERENCE WRAP-UP

ASCCA
Automotive Service Councils of California
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2011 Summer Conference
June 15-17, 2011
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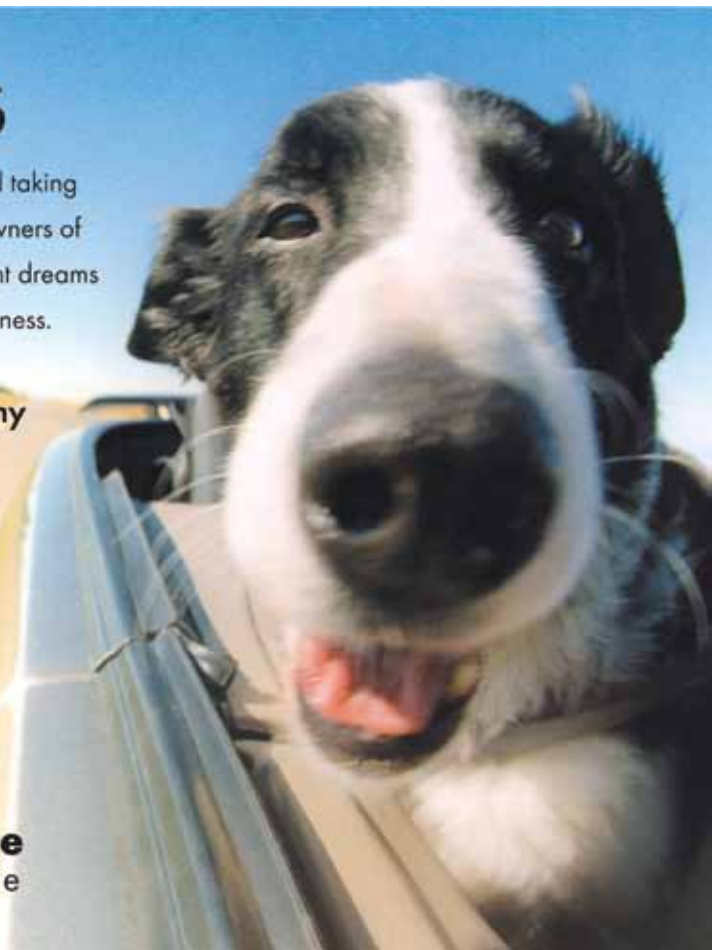
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Dennis Montalbano
ASCCA President 2011



President's Message

As I get ready to visit Chapter 99 in Redding, I am encouraged by the revitalization of our chapters. I am seeing monumental efforts by Chapter Reps and Chapter leadership. We all know that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Our "Chain" is membership. By strengthening our membership, we have more clout with our beloved politicians in Sacramento and Washington DC. We can afford to involve the general motoring public in their quest for quality auto repair. We want the motoring public to know that if there is an ASCCA sign on the front of the building, they will be treated fairly and the treatment they receive will exceed their expectations. We are the best kept secret but it is time to let the word be known. Strength in numbers. We need membership to generate enough attention with consumer groups. Consumer groups are always looking for fair, honest value. What better match than ASCCA?

On a different note, the joint meeting in San Diego with ASCCA and CAWA was a huge success! We filled the room with members from both organizations and the two hour session went by like a flash. Thanks to Rodney Pierini and Tim Gerrity for their efforts. It was an obvious concept of putting the auto repair dealer in the room with the suppliers whether they be manufacturers, wholesalers or auto parts stores. It was a meeting that let all sides express their concerns, frustrations and suggestions that would make our industry greater than it is now. I hope to continue this dialogue.

And finally, the Summer Conference in Santa Rosa this June was an event that the likes of us have not seen for many years. We wanted to give the members something fun, informative and cultural, (wine tasting, follow me here). We offered some of the best speakers and classes that our industry has to offer. If you only spend one weekend with the ASCCA team, I hope it was this one! ■



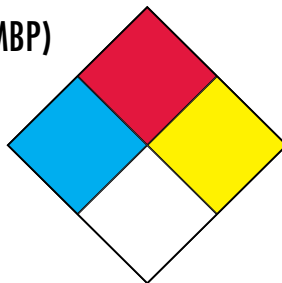
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Dennis Montalbano
ASCCA President 2011

Executive Director's Report

Several other potential topic areas were not discussed due to time limitations. But everyone agreed with the takeaway: The meeting was too short and meetings need to take place more often!

The joint task force continues to meet to develop further meeting topics and dates. We'll keep you updated.

And as you know, we also continue our monthly executives'/lobbyists' meetings between ASCCA, CAWA, CAA and, at times, CalABC. They are always informative and productive ones.

CAT—As a result of the invitation for ASCCA to attend the December meeting of the Board of Directors of the California Automotive Teachers (CAT), President Montalbano and I attended the April 29-30 CAT conference which took place in Monterey. We attended both their board meeting and the general conference and were introduced during the luncheon, during which President Montalbano addressed the attendees. Current Board Members Tracy Renee (First Vice President) and Ann Melton also work on this effort.

I've spent much of my time during the first half of 2011 meeting with our various aftermarket partners and others on behalf of ASCCA, ensuring that we continue our collaborative efforts. Much time has also been spent on the activities of the Executive Committee, Insurance Task Force, Government Affairs Committee and ASCEF.

ASCCA/CAWA—The two organizations held a very successful joint meeting in February in San Diego. In a room full of aftermarket leaders and led by facilitators Dennis Montalbano, ASCCA President, and Tim Gerrity, Past CAWA Board Chair, two hours went by much too quickly. Industry form topics discussed included:

1. Who buys your product and why?
2. Which box should I purchase for the consumer to repair their vehicle?
3. What do my suppliers and customers expect from my business?
4. Why doesn't the public know the aftermarket is a green industry?
5. Warranties and returns are an industry problem so what are my expectations? What are my suppliers' expectations?

Insurance Task Force—The Task Force ironed out the final details of the contract, which was signed by President Dennis Montalbano of ASCCA and Martin Armstrong, President of Armstrong & Associates, during the February Team Weekend and joint meeting. This has been a collaborative effort, and I'm excited about the future of our joint endeavor – both for member insurance enhancements and increased Association revenue. The Task Force continues to meet quarterly via conference call, and Mr. Davis provides in-person updates to the board.

ASCEF—ASCEF members reviewed the scholarship applications for 2011 and selected 11 recipients to receive scholarship. Trustees of the Board were able to make the presentations personally for the majority of the recipients. The Board continues to review the bylaws and other documents and examining its procedures and operations. The Board has secured a website platform, which is currently under development. As always, its goal is to provide scholarships and educational opportunities in the automotive aftermarket industry.



Membership—The Membership Committee, under the able leadership of Mary Kemnitz, continues its dual focus – bringing in new members and retaining current members through their value-added efforts. President Montalbano and Heather Vigil, ASCCA's membership director, have traveled to several chapters since February, and all these efforts are contributing to growth and excitement about ASCCA and its activities.

Chapters reporting increased growth in 2011 include:

- Foothill Chapter 5
- South Los Angeles Chapter 10
- Mt. Diablo Chapter 20
- San Francisco Chapter 21
- San Diego Chapter 24
- San Jose Chapter 24
- Orange Coast Chapter 50
- Redding Chapter 99

The challenge is to see all chapters enjoying increased growth. As Ms. Vigil notes, if each chapter brings in three new members per month, in one short year, ASCCA would gain nearly 1,000 members! And we all know there's strength in numbers – so help our Membership Committee with its goal to triple ASCCA's membership and bring in a new member.

Skyline College/Career Ladders

Project—As you know, ASCCA has partnered with the Career Ladders Project (affiliated with the California Community Colleges) to develop hybrid and electric vehicle repair training programs in community colleges for jobs in hybrid/electric technology. In addition to ASCCA, which is providing support, leadership and guidance for the Collaborative, others involved in the process include Skyline, Contra Costa and Long Beach

City Colleges (Long Beach will focus on heavy duty electric and hybrid vehicles), local Workforce Investment Boards, and Perfect Sky (providing content expertise on the curriculum).

Theresa Rowland and Isabel Hildebrandt updated the Board at its February meeting. At that time, it was agreed that a focus group of ASCCA members would meet with the consultants to get feedback on the initiatives that will be provided for the training grant. That meeting took place in April in the Bay Area, with shop owners discussing the training program, challenges the industry faces, etc. A survey was also distributed to ASCCA members, a summary of which is being finalized and will be forwarded when it is complete.

Government Affairs—As always, the Government Affairs Committee is front and center on a variety of issues, both legislative and regulatory. The Committee holds monthly conference calls, and Craig Johnson, Chair, keeps everyone on task. Committee members attend many meetings on behalf of our members as does Jack Molodanof, our lobbyist. They keep the membership up to date – a valuable resource! ASCCA is constantly working with the Legislature, BAR, CARB, IMRC and other government agencies and associations to improve the automotive repair industry for both consumers and automotive repair shops.

In addition, we held a successful legislative day in Sacramento in April. As you know, ASCCA's presence in Sacramento is critical to ensure that our members - small business owners - have their voices heard and that legislators are educated about the automotive repair industry. Our priorities during that day included career tech-

nical education, employment issues, and monitoring regulatory activities of the Bureau of Automotive Repair and Air Resources Board, both of which have an impact on our industry, and legislation affecting the industry.

In addition to 70 meetings with individual legislators and staff, attendees heard from Senator Mark DeSaulnier, Assembly Member Mike Eng, Sherry Mehl, Chief, Bureau of Automotive Repair, and Marty Keller, Director, Office of Small Business Advocate, Governor's Office of Planning & Research. During the event, ASCCA presented Assembly Member Eng with its Legislator of the Year Award for authoring AB 2289 in 2010. The legislation makes substantial changes to California's Smog Check Program, and Mr. Eng worked with the industry to improve the final product.

ASCCA's excellent staff also continues their efforts on behalf of the ASCCA membership – I know that they are heavily invested in the organization, as am I. But we couldn't do it without the support of our Board of Directors, Chapter Representatives, Chapter leaders and others. We truly appreciate our volunteer leadership. ■

Find us on



Legislative Update

The 2011 Legislative Session has been very busy for ASCCA and the Government Affairs Committee, as we weigh in on both regulatory issues and legislative measures which affect the auto repair industry. Ably assisted by Jack Molodanof, our legislative advocate and Jackie Miller, executive director, the following outlines ASCCA's legislative and administrative priorities so far this year.

State Budget

ASCCA is monitoring budget trailer bills that would extend sales taxes to automotive services and require businesses to withhold 3% from independent contractors. ASCCA raised concerns regarding SB 94, which requires the Department of Motor Vehicles to reduce the time between mailing a car registration bill and due dates.

STAR Regulations

ASCCA had provided written comments and concerns to BAR regarding STAR smog check program implementation and is working with BAR staff to address concerns.

Unlicensed Cite and Fine Regulations

ASCCA is working with BAR on implementing unlicensed cite and fine regulations that impact only illegal and unlicensed repair shops. BAR recently conducted sting operations based on information from Craigslist.

Brake Service Standards

ASCCA worked with BAR to approve the final draft of regulations. ASCCA is working with the Department of Consumer Affairs for approval.

Smog Check Licensing Restructuring Regulations

BAR has drafted regulations to allow for a separate repair only smog license. ASCCA had provided BAR with feedback and is monitoring this closely.

AB 2289 Smog Check Penalties

BAR is updating the smog check penalties under AB 2289. ASCCA has provided comments and is monitoring this closely.

IMRC Sunset

The IMRC is sunseting at the end of this year. ASCCA has spoken to Assembly member Eng regarding extending IMRC with focus on AB 2289 implementation.

Right to Repair

ASCCA is supporting national Right to Repair legislation.



Legislative Bills

AB 135 (Hagman) Support

This bill requires one appointed member of the State Air Resources Board to be a current owner of a small business.

AB 400 (Ma) Oppose

This bill provides that an employee who works in California for seven or more days in a calendar year is entitled to paid sick days.

AB 1330 (Furutani) Support

This bill provides students the option to take career technical courses for the purpose of fulfilling high school graduation requirements.

SB 211 (Emerson) Support

This bill authorizes the tire pressure gauges used to meet the Under Inflated Vehicle Tires regulation be accurate within a range of plus or minus two pounds per square inch.

SB 367 (Dutton) Support

This bill provides employees and employers flexibility to institute a 10-hour per day schedule within a 40-hour workweek.

SB 519 (LaMalfa) Concerns

This bill prohibits a smog check technician from conducting an under-the-hood visual inspection as part of a smog check.

SB 750 (Hernandez) Oppose

This bill makes indefinite an exemption from a certain requirement for a motor vehicle manufacturer that does not provide for the production of a replacement key but operates a certain telephone or electronic request line.

ASCCA 2011 Summer Conference Recap

The 2011 ASCCA Summer Conference was a hit! ASCCA experienced great attendance, inspiring presentations, informative and supportive vendors, and a band that had everyone dancing.

The first day of the Summer Conference, Friday June 10th, began with an inspirational speech by Maylan Newton, CEO, Educational Seminars Institute, on positive attitude and the difference that attitude can have on consumers, employees and overall business.

Attendees began Saturday June 11th with breakfast and an opening State of the Association address by 2011 ASCCA President Dennis Montalbano, owner German Auto Repair, Inc. in Fresno, CA. Dennis asked attendees to consider technology. Members of ASCCA, can stay on top of changing technology by understanding the need to communicate with fellow shop owners, attending ASCCA educational seminars and conferences and by ensuring all employees are well versed in changing technology.

Saturday's conference schedule proved to be packed with information. Tim Gerrity presented *How to Adjust and Profit from the Fundamental Changes occurring in the Auto Repair Business*, where he discussed the need to be able to go with the flow of current trends and changes in the industry. In addition, Tim reminded us how green the automotive industry is and that your industry has been the largest recycler for 8 decades; "there is no other industry that recycles like we do in the world".

Sponsored by WORLDPAAC, ASCCA was able to bring renowned speaker Kelly Bennett to the conference. Kelly spoke on *Increasing Car Count & Making Every Car Count*. One of the main points Kelly discussed is E&A. Every day, educate your customers, they make the decisions and you advise them. Kelly remarked further on the importance of staff and ensuring their needs are being addressed, from training, to staff appreciation and support, and marketing.

Saturday's schedule progressed as ASCCA members joined Legislative Advocate, Jack Molodanof during a lunch hour discussion on current legislative issues. The lunch discussion included tax on labor issues, tire pressure regulations, the revamped Smog Check programs and the current industry opposition of SB750. The Saturday afternoon program consisted of two back to back panel discussions, *Tool Up or Tool Out* and *The Internet Will Never Call You to Get Your Side of the Story*, which was led by ASCCA benefit providers.

On Sunday June 12th, the ASCCA Board of Director's meeting concluded the weekend's events. ASCCA leaders, Executive Director Jackie Miller and staff reported on the affairs of all things ASCCA.

The ASCCA Summer Conference served ASCCA members, supporters and sponsors by bringing everyone together for one weekend to meet casually and attend educational seminars and panel discussions. Keep your eyes open for upcoming information on the 2012 ASCCA Annual Conference in Southern California. ■

After a very full schedule, conference registrants were able to unwind with a Fun Night Reception.

Saturday evening welcomed Exhibitors ALLDATA, Armstrong & Associates, Authshop Solutions, BG Products, Customer Link Systems, Delphi Product & Service Solutions, Demandforce, Educational Seminars Institute, EVT Transmission Parts, G&K Services, RepairPal, Standard Motors Products & Zenergy Works who all came together to discuss their respective products and services up close and personal with all those in attendance.



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Autoshop Solutions is located at 114 Salem Towne Court, Apex, North Carolina. Their staff has top notch service and responds to ASCCA members right away with offices also located in Dallas, Texas and San Jose, CA. Give them a call at (888) 847-7036 or visit their website at www.autoshopsolutions.com.

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Anniversary Milestones

ASCCA would like to recognize members who celebrate a milestone anniversary between the months of May and August of this year. Congratulations and thank you for your support! Our association has grown strong and is effective because of members like you!



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So bring those non-member shop owners to your next meeting and show them what they are missing by not being an ASCCA Member! ■



Legislation Passes Senate B&P Committee to Increase the Penalties for Airbag Fraud

By Craig Johnson, Chair, ASCCA Government Affairs Committee

Following a public hearing, the California Senate committee on Business, Professions and Economic Development voted unanimously to pass a bill upping the penalties for airbag fraud.

Introduced by Senator Leland Yee and sponsored by the Center for Auto Safety, California Senate Bill 869 would add a new section to the state's Business and Professions Code providing that an automotive repair dealer who "fails to repair and fully restore the airbag to its original operating condition," where the customer has paid for the airbag as provided in the estimate, is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of \$5,000 or by one year in prison, or both.

The Center for Auto Safety believes that the "current penalty provision is not strong enough to deter an automotive repair dealer for failing to bring the airbag back to its pre-loss condition."

Current law already considers it fraud and a violation of the Automotive Repair Act to state on an invoice that an auto repair shop will repair or replace a part and fail to do so. This bill strengthens the existing penalties on that violation specifically for airbags which are being replaced.

The Senate analysis of the measure suggests that possibly in the future some consideration should be given to strengthening the law even further. The analysis asks, "Should there be a requirement to repair or replace a deployed airbag?" Currently, there are no statutes requiring that an auto repair shop replace a deployed air bag, but

the analysis suggests a law requiring that any vehicle entering an auto repair shop which has a deployed airbag must leave that repair shop in good working order.

In 2009, SB 427 would have established the same misdemeanor with the same penalties for a violation as this bill and would have additionally required the parts invoice for any replacement airbag installed to be attached to the final repair invoice. That bill was vetoed by the Governor, citing that it was duplicative of existing law and, therefore, added very little additional benefit to consumers.

The California Autobody Association (CAA) and the California New Car Dealers Association (CNCDA) opposed the 2009 measure citing the same administrative issues acknowledged by the Governor.

The CAA and the CNCDA support this new measure. The CNCDA states that it has had an interest in curbing the nefarious practice of parts switching and, therefore, support this bill since it narrowly targets the most egregious example of such conduct.

Other supporters include the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, Consumers Union, Personal Insurance Federation of California (PIFC) and the Trauma Foundation.

The bill had no groups registered in opposition and was approved by a 9-0 vote. ■

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**Precision Auto Repair, Laguna Hills, CA
ASCCA Chapter 50 (Orange Coast)**

It was back in 1984 when I first heard of ASCCA, I was invited to a meeting and because I liked what I saw I decided to join. Little did I know what ASCCA could do for me as a new shop owner.

My membership in ASCCA gives me the opportunity to insure the auto repair industry will only get better for the next generation of shop owners.

Ken Breshears

**Keith's Auto Repair, Redding, CA
ASCCA Chapter 99 (Redding)**

Being informed is very important in the automotive industry, which the ASCCA helps to do with monthly meetings, newsletters and even free monthly consultation with an attorney.

We personally have benefitted from the years of experience within our local chapter. We've made new friends that share the same code of ethics and integrity of work. We have been able to aid one another with customers, repair decisions, specialty tools and just having a group to bounce ideas off of.

At the local level (Chapter 99) our board has been able to facilitate us with training, product awareness Questions & Answer sessions with government agencies like BAR, Waste Water, Environmental Health, OSHA and the Labor Board to name a few. These face-to-face meetings with the actual people that come out and inspect our facilities are priceless.

All professionals should belong to an association that promotes their common interests, goals, integrity of work and that will also be the voice of the "little guy".



John Camara

**Camara Auto Services, Inc., Tulare, CA
ASCCA Chapter 26 (Tulare/Visalia)**


ASCCA is conscious, dedicated, passionate, knowledgeable people that I have met and become friends with over the years, an association that, with its members, is always looking out for the survival of the industry, regulations, legislation, all on our behalf.

Business decisions, put it on TeamTalk, always gets a lot of answers to your questions, if it's personal you can call an individual and ask for help.

We do not always agree, but the CAMARADERIE in this association is equal to none.




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19% Admit Web Use While Driving

About one in five drivers admitted in an informal online survey to surfing the Internet while behind the wheel despite a national campaign to curb distracted driving, according to insurance giant State Farm.

State Farm, which found the dangerous behavior in the unscientific survey of 912 licensed drivers in November, says it will conduct a detailed study this year.

In the November survey, more than 19% reported accessing the Internet on a cell phone at least once a week while driving. That compares with 74% who reported making or receiving calls at least once weekly while driving and 35% who reported sending or receiving text messages at least that frequently.

That 19% might be underestimating the actual use of Smartphones to access the Internet while driving, because the majority of the respondents were in the age range of the 30s," says Cindy Garretson, director of auto technology research

at State Farm. "The largest users of cell phones tend to be the younger-age population. We would be very interested to know what that number would be if the focus was on the young adult market."

Most surfing drivers say they do so while stopped at a traffic light or stopped in traffic.

ROAD DISTRACTIONS: Most teens texting, talking Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood has made distracted driving a major focus. Last year, 11 states enacted bans on texting while driving; 30 states prohibit it for all drivers, and eight more have banned it for novice drivers.

In 2009, 5,474 people were killed and 448,000 injured in distracted driving crashes; 18% of the fatalities involved cell phones as a distraction, and the under-20 age group was the most heavily involved, federal data show. ■

Ford Cancels Minivan Plan for Hybrids and Plug-Ins

The Ford Motor Company has canceled plans to re-enter the minivan market in the U.S. Instead, it will introduce a smaller, five-passenger hatchback version of its minivan and offer it only as either a hybrid or plug-in hybrid.

The car, called the C-Max, will be Ford's first hybrid-only model in North America. In addition, Ford said it intends to triple its production capacity for hybrid and electric cars in North America so that it can build more than 100,000 annually by 2013. Ford said the C-Max hatchback presented a stronger business case than the gasoline-powered, seven-passenger Grand C-Max that it had planned to import from Europe. Ford now sells C-Max hatchbacks and minivans in Europe, in gasoline and diesel varieties, and said demand for the five-passenger version had doubled this year.

According to Ford, the carmaker is planning for a future in which fuel efficiency remains a high priority for consumers.

The C-Max now scheduled to go on sale in the United States will be built in suburban Detroit, alongside the similarly sized Focus compact car, which is available now with a traditional engine and will be sold as a battery-powered car starting later this year. According to Ford, the plug-in version, called the Energi, will compare favorably to the Chevy Volt. The Energi will operate in a similar fashion as the Volt by allowing users to connect it to an electrical outlet or high-voltage charging station. It will run first solely on battery power before using any gasoline and, according to Ford, will travel 500 miles on a full charge and tank of gas.

According to research firm IHS Automotive, automakers are being forced to put more emphasis on hybrids by stricter federal mileage requirements, known as Corporate Average Fuel Economy, or CAFE. ■

Calendar of Events



October 22-23

ASCCA Team Weekend
3rd Quarter Board of Directors/
Committee Meetings

*Embassy Suites Riverfront,
Sacramento, CA*

December 10-11

ASCCA Team Weekend
4th Quarter Board of Directors/
Committee Meetings
Board and Chapter Reps
Orientation/Adopt 2012 Budget

*Embassy Suites Riverfront,
Sacramento, CA*

Calling for Member Submissions

Submit your own personal video to be featured in the 2011 ASCCA Member DVD for distribution and to release on ASCCA's You-Tube Channel! The top 3 videos will receive prizes and recognition in ASCCA's Independent Magazine.

Video submission details:

- Must have ASCCA sign in the video
- Your video should be fun and spontaneous
- Please do not spend an excess of \$50 on video production and be less than 10 minutes
- By your submission you agree to ASCCA using all or a portion of your video
- The benefits of belonging to ASCCA as you have experienced.
- What year did you join or how long have you been an ASCCA member?
- How has being an ASCCA member benefitted your business?
- How has being an ASCCA member benefitted you as a business owner?

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BAR Addresses ASCCA Member's Concern

"Max Readiness Monitors" Test Deviation Performance Standard Proposed for the STAR Program

Following is a post on iATN from Garrett Torgerson, Engineer/Government Representative State of CA Bureau of Automotive Repair:

First, the Bureau of Automotive Repair (BAR) would like to thank Craig Johnson of Automotive Services Councils of California for forwarding Mr. Trujillo's note to our attention. While BAR does not typically engage in discussions on iATN, nor do we necessarily intend to in the future, we thought we would make an exception in this case as Mr. Trujillo's concerns differ somewhat from the issue presented in Question #5 of the STAR Program Q&A, which is currently posted on the BAR Web site.

It appears that Mr. Trujillo is concerned that the "Max Readiness Monitors" test deviation performance standard proposed for the STAR Program will inadvertently be exceeded every calendar quarter by his station. He indicates that the reason for his concern is that some vehicles coming to his station have unset readiness monitors and he cannot control the rate at which this occurs. His concern is heightened because, as he states, there are several reputable dealerships that funnel their vehicles through his shop and they often deliver their vehicles to him with only the exact number of readiness monitors required. Presumably, the monitors for the dealership vehicles are unset more often than usual due largely to dead or disconnected batteries on dealership lots. He is worried that the frequency of vehicles coming to his station with the maximum number of readiness monitors unset will keep him out of the STAR Program and, in turn, prevent him from inspecting directed and gross-polluting vehicles.

Mr. Trujillo's concerns will probably resonate with many stations. A technician performing proper inspections on

the vehicles "as received" does not control the unset readiness monitor rate on those vehicles. This may surprise some people, but the rate of unset monitors for similar vehicles inspected by all stations performing proper inspections throughout the state will tend to be similar.

At the same time, there likely will be a secondary distribution of results, in which the unset monitor rates for certain stations are substantially above what is expected based upon similar vehicles inspected elsewhere. This would most definitely surface in situations where a Smog Check station and/or technician habitually resets OBD II systems, or advises the customer to do so, in order to get vehicles with OBD II-related faults to pass their Smog Check inspection without performing necessary and appropriate repairs. It is for this reason that the Max Readiness Monitors test deviation measure was included in the proposed STAR Program. While some unwarranted computer resets will occur when motorists reset their computers without any help or direction from technicians, this behavior will tend to be evenly distributed throughout the industry for similar vehicles. This performance measure was created to pick out the shops that dramatically exceed the average rate occurring at all stations statewide for similar vehicles.

As Mr. Trujillo was apparently informed when he contacted his local BAR field office, allowances have been made for some variations between stations to account for some clientele differences, such as the ones Mr. Trujillo says occur with his station. For this reason, the standard for this STAR Program perfor-

mance measure has been set such that a station's average unset rate must be at least 125% of average before a test deviation occurs in a calendar quarter. This means that the rate for unset readiness monitors at a station can be somewhat above average for similar vehicles without exceeding the test deviation standard. In addition, stations are allowed one deviation per calendar quarter without jeopardizing their certification in the STAR Program based on data from the seven test deviation categories. Therefore, even if a station such as Mr. Trujillo's exceeds the unset readiness monitor rate due to the reasons he's presented, this alone would not cause the station to fail the STAR Program performance measures, provided the station didn't have any other test deviations occurring in the same calendar quarter.

It would be nice if we could publish actual scores at this point so this discussion could move beyond the "what if" scenarios. Unfortunately, BAR does not have the authority to do so until the regulations for the STAR Program have been adopted. We anticipate this occurring later this year.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue. We, at BAR, trust this alleviates any concerns about anomalous vehicle producing results that will prevent quality shops from participating in the STAR Program. That is not our goal. We have made every effort to ensure that the STAR Program is fair and equitable to all stations across the state. We appreciate your support of this effort and look forward to continue working with the Smog Check industry on ways to improve the Smog Check Program. ■

TecHelp Adds Knowledge to Technicians' Collection of Tools

by Steve Sharp, Parts and People

Concord, Calif.—Doug Mueller's TecHelp offers long-term training that provides technicians a broad understanding of electronics, engine management, diagnostics, and smog.

Mueller grew up in Canon City, CO, and at 13, he said he took his first job at a local filling station.

"I really enjoyed working on cars," Mueller said. "We had the best car wash in the area so the guys brought their hot rods for us to wash them — I got to drive them all."

Mueller continued working at the gas station all through high school and, later, junior college. "I started buying tools and doing more gas station type work," he said.

But Mueller was still looking for his niche when he enrolled in the air frame and power plant school to receive FAA certification.

"DeAnza was one of the top automotive schools at the time," he said. "When I started I was amazed people knew all this stuff about cars, so I enrolled in every class. That is what took me from a gas station mechanic to a technician. Jerry Talbert was DeAnza's tune-up instructor and he ultimately became my guru."

Since that time Mueller has amassed more than 26,000 hours of instruction and teaching.

"You learn, you do, and then you teach others," he said. Mueller has been a certified master technician since 1975.

In 1972, Mueller opened his first shop, Central Tune Up, in Concord, CA, which still exists today. It was after the shop's sale that Mueller teamed up with Jim Hunt to form Effective Technical Automotive Consultants (ETAC), his first instruction business.

and Mueller continued their partnership in ETAC and later renamed it the Educational Seminars Institute (ESI).

In 1991, Mueller opened Auto Electric and Fuel on Monument Boulevard in Concord. The 7,200-square-foot facility houses both the Auto Electric and Fuel shop and the TecHelp classroom. All three members of the Auto Electric and Fuel staff are ASE Master Technicians, A1, A8, and L1, Mueller said. Hans Hiller is the service writer, and Chris Madere is the technician.

In 1992 Mueller added TecHelp, which offered extended classes designed to pick up where community and private institutions left off.

Mueller said that with the increased level of electronics and complexity there was a huge need for a technician to continue their education well beyond what was offered. To that end, Mueller launched TecHelp.

"The ability to fix a car depends on what you have in your tool box — the big red one, and the one in your head."

"At the time it was the best paid and most prestigious work for a mechanic," he said. After his training he was drafted into service, Mueller served in the Army Air Corps as a helicopter crew chief in Viet Nam.

The big change and career inspiration came after Mueller was discharged and he moved to Northern California. Mueller enrolled in DeAnza College's automotive program in 1971.

"Technicians thought the owners made all the money and generated all the revenue, this led to technicians opening their own businesses with little or no business background," Mueller said.

ETAC addressed the need for business training and developed a seminar series to teach technicians how to run a business. Due to the recession of the eighties cash flow slowed and Mueller moved back to working as a technician while Hunt continued ETAC. Hunt

"These days if you don't stay continuously educated you fall out of the loop," he said. "The new Prius platform is a classic example. It uses different motors and a dual planetary transaxle, it is radically different from earlier models and a much bigger car."

TecHelp classes are classified into three categories: electricity, drivability, and computer control. More than 10,000 students have used TecHelp to improve their automotive knowledge, Mueller said. Besides the main curriculum, TecHelp also offers California smog classes, as well as updates.

Continued on next page.

“No one class does it all,” he said. “The questions arise when the technicians are back in the field. TecHelp provides knowledge and experience, while making it fun. A lot of class material can be uninteresting. I try to keep it light so the students have a good time while learning.” Mueller said he also emphasizes practice so the students gain familiarity with each topic.

“We ask that each student practice what has been discussed four or five times between each class so they get the practical knowledge,” he said. “The ability to fix a car depends on what you have in your tool box — the big red one, and the one in your head. We need very sharp individuals in our trade.”

TecHelp spends between \$15,000 and \$20,000 a year on factory scopes, scan tools, and data for Auto Electric and Fuel. Mueller said that with shops making this kind of investment, technicians need continued training to get the most out of the tools in their box.

“You need these tools to access the vehicle’s information highway,” he said. “You need to know how to use the tool to get the best return on the investment.” Mueller said using factory tools is vital to proper and efficient diagnosis and repair.

“Without factory scan tools, you have limited access. Only factory tools allow you to access all of the information and systems,” he said. “Factory tools provides easier programming, where non-factory tools can be more difficult. If you have to stop and think how to use a tool after six months, you probably have the wrong tool.

“It does not matter who or where you get your tools, it just matters if it works. What it does, and what you can do with it is more important than the brand or what it may cost.”

Mueller’s Auto Repair and Fuel shop features a number of unique tools to make work more efficient. They employ an overhead system that dispenses oil, coolant, and other liquids from their containment tanks. Other unique items include flat screen monitors mounted to tool boxes to provide a more detailed view of scan and scope information.

Auto Electric and Fuel and TecHelp demand superior support from its suppliers, just as it does from their equipment. Superior Auto Parts, S.P. Automotive, and Pacific Auto Salvage are all key suppliers.

“We also rely on dealerships for electronics, specialty parts, and computer engine controllers,” Mueller said. “Pacific Auto Supply in American Canyon is beautiful; it’s like a parts store. It is the most organized recycler I’ve seen, and they do an outstanding job.”

Mueller continues his education and the education of others every day. Besides his master technician status and a certified California smog instructor, Mueller belongs to many organizations. He is a member of the Automotive Service Association (ASA), Automotive Service Councils of California (ASCCA), Automotive Service Excellence (ASE), California Automotive Teachers (CAT), and the Council for the Advancement of Automotive Trainers (CAAT).

TecHelp’s class listings and schedule are available online at www.tec-help.com. Classes range in price from \$250 for the 16-hour 2009 smog update, to \$900 for the 68-hour “Basic Clean Air Course” that includes OBDII and the 2007 update. ■

CONFERENCE PHOTOS



ASCCA Chapter Network

The Automotive Service Councils of California is made up of local chapters for members to join and become actively involved in. Check them out!

Bakersfield (58)

Meetings held fourth Thursday, 6:30 p.m.
Call Bob Klingenberg: (661) 631-5765

East Bay (16)

Meetings held second Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.
Call Stephen Small: (510) 427-4345

Foothill (5)

Meetings held first Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.
Call Joseph Appler: (626) 296-6961

Fresno (25)

Meetings held second Thursday, 7 p.m.
Call Dennis Montalbo: (559) 438-6508

Hemet (32)

Meetings held second Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.
Call Phil Fournier: (909) 927-2101

Inland Empire (14)

Meetings held third Tuesday, 7 p.m.
Call Glenn Davis: (909) 946-2282

Long Beach (18)

Meetings held third Tuesday, 7 p.m.
Call Scott Parsons: (562) 434-4446

Mount Diablo (20)

Meetings held third Thursday, 7 p.m.
Call Celine Haugen: (707) 251-9838

Napa/Solano (9)

Meetings held second Tuesday, 7 p.m.
Call Angela Larson: (707) 644-5566

North Orange County (48)

Meetings held third Wednesday
Call Jo Ann Fischer: (714) 773-0949

Orange Coast (50)

Meetings held third Thursday, 7 p.m.
Call David Baerg: (949) 855-9981

West Los Angeles (12)

Meeting times vary
Call Jo Ann Fischer: (714) 773-0949

Ventura County (2)

Meetings held second Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.
Call Kathy Riggs: (805) 983-8100

Peninsula (23)

Meetings held last Tuesday of every other month, 7 p.m.
Call Angie Roberts: (408) 266-9658

Redding (99)

Meetings held last Wednesday, 7 p.m.
Call Roger Viens: (714) 773-0949

Sacramento (34)

Call for meeting dates and times
Call Carol Bartels: (916) 332-1883

San Diego (24)

Meetings held third Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.
Call Stuart Terry: (619) 287-4215

San Fernando Valley (11)

Meetings held third Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.
Call David Moloney: (310) 734-8531

San Francisco (21)

Meetings held last Wednesday, 6:30 p.m.
Call Paul Grech: (415) 474-7323

San Joaquin Valley (6)

Meetings held second Thursday, 6:30 p.m.
Call Andy Pollino: (209) 472-9866

San Jose (42)

Meetings held second Wednesday, 7 p.m.
Call Angie Roberts: (408) 266-9658

San Luis Obispo (17)

Meetings held third Wednesday, 7 p.m.
Call John Neiswenger: (805) 772-8448

Santa Clarita (3)

Meeting times vary
Call Kevin Browning: (661) 251-6736

Santa Rosa (28)

Meeting times vary
Call Robert Toepp: (707) 546-2851

South Bay (1940)

Meetings held quarterly, 6:30 p.m.
Call Peter Alper: (310) 328-1981

South Los Angeles (10)

Meetings held second Tuesday, 7 p.m.
Call Les Morris: (323) 750-0511

Tulare/Visalia (26)

Meetings held every other month, 6:30 p.m.
Contact Andy Daniels for information:
(559) 688-7384

ALLDATA

Debbie Murray
(800) 829-8727, ext. 3111

ASC Insurance Program

Chuck Coppage
(916) 679-2951

Automated Marketing Group

John Bamford
(303) 703-8000

AutoNet TV, LLC

Robert H. Cannon
(801) 642-3565

BAR, (Chief)

Sherry Mehl
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BAR, Industry Ombudsman

Rick Fong
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Now Available ASCCA Consumer Brochure

ASCCA has created a consumer brochure for members to use in their shops! It's a handy new tool which describes the value of choosing ASCCA member shops over others.

Download the free electronic template from the member's only section of the ASCCA website, www.ascca.com.

Note that you must login with your member ID to access the template. ■

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