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## Advanced Auto Body Opens in Anthem



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Advanced Auto Body, Inc., owned by Shawn and Kimberly Young, have opened their third state-of-the-art collision center in Arizona. The 28,000 sq. ft. facility, located at Anthem Way and the I-17 Freeway in north Phoenix, is equipped with Celette dedicated fixture benches, Brewco Legend and Executive frame racks, two Spraybake (GenIV) heated downdraft spray booths and prep stations, a laser measuring system, wheel alignment service, inversion welding equipment and features BASF paint in the paint department. The shop offers expansive customer parking and vehicle storage, a spacious customer waiting area, and insurance adjustor offices with Internet access. This shop has everything to make the customer feel comfortable about the repair process.

"The past year has been very hard for Shawn and our family" says Kimberly. "Losing both parents in the same year is not easy. Fortunately, Shawn purchased the business from his father three years ago so there has been no business interruption. Opening Anthem has been bittersweet in ways, but Shawn has positioned the business for this type of expansion and growth."

"We've invested more than a million dollars to equip our three collision centers. Because we have state-of-the-art equipment, we attract the best technicians to our shops. Everyone is watching the new car manufacturers' certification programs and sees the new technology being designed into the vehicles, so our technicians need the latest equipment to restore vehicles to the car manufacturers' repair specifications. All three of our shops deliver a consistent quality repair," said Shawn.

According to Matt Johnson, Operations Manager at Leading Edge, "Our whole focus is centered on helping our shops grow and expand their businesses, while working towards lowering their costs. If our customers don't grow, neither do we. It's what makes our relationship a true partnership. Advanced Auto Body has been a great partner for many years, and we look forward to the continued growth in years to come. When a shop joins our family, we direct our resources into making that shop prepared to meet the challenges facing our industry."

Advanced Auto Body has been using BASF products since 1997. According to Wayne Gum, shop manager at Anthem, "We use BASF products for four reasons: superior technology, the lowest sprayable costs, unbelievable color matching tools and the added value offered by Leading Edge. I don't look at them as another paint distributor; they reinvest their dollars to offer all the other benefits which are not available elsewhere. Leading Edge is interested in our success. How can you beat that? Doing business with Leading Edge is a win/win for everyone."

"This new shop is one of the most impressive facilities in Arizona," states Steve Balsley of Leading Edge. "There is no doubt this facility will continue to attract a lot of attention. Advanced has become one of the most respected collision centers in Arizona."

"The reception we've had at Anthem has been great," says Shawn. "Offering a quality repair quickly has been the staple of Advanced Auto Body for years, and is obtained by having a team of quality trained technicians and professional office personnel."

# Chaney's Collision Strong Since 1977

In 1977 Chaney's Collision Repair opened its doors for business and has served the needs of the growing Glendale area ever since. Even though the original, humble, one-bay facility has been replaced by a new state-of-the-art, 10,000 square foot building, Chaney's remains at the same location.

Walt Chaney has built an incredible reputation over the years for doing top-quality work. As Walt puts it, "We pride ourselves in making every job perfect. After 27 years in business, we still have



Chaney's Collision Repair - 7161 61st Ave, Glendale, AZ

the drive, the desire and the determination to keep pushing the business. We are hands-on."

Work ethic is part of the reason Chaney's has established solid DRP relationships and attained I-CAR gold certification. By supplying their technicians with top-of-the-line tools like Hunter alignment equipment, Pro Spot welders, and a Celette bench, they maintain the highest standard for reproducing factory standards.

Chaney's Collision Repair has partnered with Leading Edge for more than eleven years. Walt understands the importance of a successful partnership. "The one thing I personally appreciate about working with Leading Edge is their employees. Not only are they dedicated to their company; they are dedicated to the collision shops they service. Leading Edge has been there for us - when we need support, they do whatever it takes. For instance, we don't have time to take inventory. I appreciate the fact our service rep, Steve Balsley, takes inventory twice a week. He doesn't overload us because he manages the inventory. He gives us exactly what we need. Other paint vendors just deliver paint. It's the relationship that makes the difference."

As for Steve, the appreciation is mutual. "We enjoy being a partner with Walt Chaney and his organization," said Steve. "He knows every facet of the business."

Walt Chaney also appreciates the support of Leading Edge's master technician, Bob Kennedy. He provides technical service and support for the painters and body men. "Even after all these years," concluded Walt, "no one does what Leading Edge does."

## 2003 4th Quarter Graduates

### *Vision Plus Advanced Production Management*

- Advanced Auto Body, Inc.**  
Vince Castorena, Wayne Gum
- Baker's Auto Body, Inc.**  
Brandon D. Baker
- BASF Corporation**  
David W. Ball
- Chaney's Collision Repair**  
Walter Chaney
- Dan's Paint & Body, Inc.**  
Brett Churley, Rob Martin
- Hollywood's Body & Paint, Inc.**  
Mason A. Rush
- Impact Auto Body, Inc.**  
Bob Schubert
- Invision Auto Body, LLC**  
Chuck Danielson, Rich Mann
- Kingswood Collision Center**  
David Baum, Brett Cagle
- Koppy's Body Shop**  
Paul Koppy
- Larry Miller Toyota Body Shop**  
Byron Campbell, Rudy Romero
- Mainstreet Collision Center**  
Cindy Backes, Bob Solomonson
- Orangewood RV**  
Mark Treacy
- Raintree Auto Body, Inc.**  
Dale R. Gottsacker
- Rapid Collision Center**  
Tim Mecl
- Renew Paint & Body Services**  
Sonny New
- Scott Toyota Collision Center**  
Ken Sumner
- Tom's Auto Body, Inc.**  
Art Ocano
- Tri-Coat, Inc.**  
Javier T. Avalos
- Kachina Automotive Equipment**  
John Hildesheim
- Leading Edge Auto Refinishes, Inc.**  
Frank Astrain, Stephen Balsley,  
David Brannon, Brenda Wilkins

### **RM Certification**

- |                    |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Allen, Eric        | Olguin, Jesse   |
| Corella, Francisco | Rodriguez, Greg |
| Gomez, Aurelio     | Sease, Antonio  |
| Helsel, Andrew     | Snyder, John    |
| Koppy, Shannon     | Stice, Corey    |
| Mayo, Dave         | Suzrez, Hector  |

### **ColorMatch Certification**

- |                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Breidenbach, Matt | Hughes, Nathan   |
| Cardenas, Martin  | LaClair, Jeffrey |
| Coffman, Willie   | McAninch, Carl   |
| Delgado, Jose     | Ostrom, Lars     |
| Dziubinski, Marek | Rascon, Benjamin |

# Baker's Auto Body: It's about People

Baker's Auto Body was founded in 1975. Originally located along the river bottom in Mesa, Patsy Baker recalls the early days when they would receive evacuation warnings from the police because Salt River Project let water out of the dam and the river was going to flood. Nineteen years ago Baker's Auto Body moved to their current, drier location on the south side of McKellips Road, just off the 202 freeway. They completed a remodel in May of 2003, which added an additional 1,100 sq. ft. bringing their total under roof area to more than 12,000 sq. ft. Also, they expanded their property by five acres for additional storage and future growth.

Patsy exudes great pride when speaking of her family-operated business. "We have multiple DRP relationships with insurance companies and we do the majority of our own mechanical work. Our industry has many non-negotiable standards for collision repair and we meet these standards and exceed expectations. We are committed



Baker's Auto Body - 445 West McKellips, Mesa, Az

to repairing vehicles to factory standards. To do this, our shop is complete with a Celette dedicated fixture bench, a Pro Spot welder, a Brewco Legend drive on frame rack and two downdraft paint booths. We are preparing to install our 3<sup>rd</sup> paint booth to assist our painter who has been with us for more than nineteen years."

Patsy also realizes the importance of strategic relationships with industry experts. She has worked with Leading Edge for seven years. However, it is about more than just expertise; it is about service and being part of a team. "The number one reason we do business with Leading Edge is the service. We were with our previous vendor for fifteen years and we spoke to the owners only three times in those fifteen years. I know at Leading Edge I can pick up the phone and talk to the owners. From paint questions to business processes, I know I can count on the people at Leading Edge to help. They care about me as a person, and they care about the overall success of my business."



Hollywood's Body & Paint - 11645 N. Desert Vista, Fountain Hills AZ

# Hollywood's New Fountain Hills Shop

Hollywood Leary came to Arizona more than twenty-seven years ago. After working in various body shops in the valley, he opened his first shop on Bell Road. Hollywood's Body & Paint has grown over the past ten years and has become very successful. Hollywood knows how important a capable body shop manager is in the strength of his business. Co-owner Mike Manns has played an integral role at Hollywood's at Bell Road and is excited about the opportunity at the new Fountain Hills location.

The 4,000 sq. ft. Fountain Hills collision center, located at 11645 N. Desert Vista, became available in 2002. Hollywood and Mike purchased it and leased it out until December 2002 when the shop owner decided to close his shop. It was the perfect time for the dynamic duo to form a partnership and open Hollywood's Body and Paint, Fountain Hills. They remodeled inside and out in six weeks, which included stuccoing the original metal structure. After a tremendous amount of time and effort, the new facility officially opened on January 6, 2003.

Now, one year later, Mike is more excited than ever. "We are improving every month. The shop is running about 85-90% capacity. We know the importance of quality work. In order to meet and exceed industry standards, we utilize our Celette bench. We are I-CAR Gold Certified and we do most of our mechanical work in house." Hollywood is pleased with his business partnerships with Mike and also with Leading Edge. "Along with our DRP relationships, we partner with Leading Edge for our paint products. We have enjoyed our family-style relationship with Leading Edge. I know Leading Edge will be there for us, no matter what time it is."

# AutoBody Solutions under New Ownership

AutoBody Solutions is a large collision center operating in the north-west valley. It was recently purchased by Dennis Lunde of Fargo, North Dakota. Along with AutoBody Solutions, Lunde has procured Saturn of Arrowhead, Saturn of Glendale and the future Saturn of Avondale (opening in fall 2004). AutoBody Solutions, in operation for three-and-a-half years, is located on 88th Avenue and Bell Road, directly behind the Saturn of Arrowhead dealership. AutoBody Solutions was the brainchild of Saturn Corporation, created to extend the customer-centered Saturn brand to non-Saturn owners, offering repair for all vehicle makes and models.

AutoBody Solutions elected to partner with Leading Edge and BASF from day one. "Needless to say, we are thrilled to be part of AutoBody Solutions," says Steve Balsley of Leading Edge, "While Saturn advertises they are a different type of car company, AutoBody Solutions is a different type of collision center." By using state-of-the-art equipment such as Pro-Spot welders and a Celette fixture bench, AutoBody Solutions remains a leader in the body shop industry.

AutoBody Solutions is I-Car Gold certified, and promotes ongoing training. "It is a must to be I-Car Gold certified to keep up with the ever-changing industry," says Bruce Dennis, Facility Manager and I-Car Chairman of Phoenix. AutoBody Solutions works with all insurance companies and enjoys numerous Direct Repair Program (DRP) relationships. They have become a full-service col-



lision center in order to keep maximum quality with minimum cycle-time. From collision and mechanical repairs to pinstripping and full detail, they do it all, including all reconditioning work for Saturn of West Phoenix, Inc. They are also certified by the National Glass Association to repair and replace glass.

"We strive for customer satisfaction and word of mouth is our greatest advertisement," says John May, Paint Department Manager. "Customer satisfaction is my number one goal," says Production Manager, Robert Mathis. AutoBody Solutions has earned a customer service average of 98.5% over the past year according to CSI Complete. "In the past 20 years I have been in the Valley, this collision center is what I have been looking for. From the employee input to the Saturn philoso-

phy of teamwork, it is great to be part of an exciting work environment, with Leading Edge playing an integral role," states John May.

Tom Stidd, a long-time Valley dealership body shop manager and now AutoBody Solutions consultant adds, "I have had the privilege of working with Leading Edge over the past few years, and when it comes to paint vendors, they really write their own rule book. The organization is first class in all that it does and strives not only to be the best in Arizona, but one of the best in the country." Stidd then added, "Even when we began this project, Leading Edge has been with us from the beginning providing products, technical support, and marketing. They always deliver what they promise!"

***"We are what we repeatedly do.  
Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit"***

- Greek Philosopher



## I-17 Collision Partners with Painter's Edge

Kevin Rowe knew he had to do something. Faced with impressive growth in his business over the past few years, he realized he needed to move more cars through his already busy facility. "Because we are essentially landlocked, we had to find a way to improve efficiency with the space we had." After looking at several options in his paint shop, Kevin made the decision to switch to The Painter's Edge and Diamont to improve productivity.

"The difference is remarkable," says Rowe. "Flow through in the paint department has increased dramatically. Cycle times have decreased in all departments due to smoother work flow from one department to the next."

According to I-17 painter, Bill Cressin, "The BASF ColorMax color match chip system is far superior to our old system. It saves me time. When I can save time, I can paint more cars, and everybody wins. With a choice of clearcoats for different jobs, it really is a system that provides the flexibility that a busy shop like ours needs."

I-17 Collision is looking toward the future and has plans for continued growth. "This market is changing quickly and we want to position ourselves to be able to handle the changing demands of our customers," says Rowe. "We are quite impressed with The Painter's Edge and the customer-centric



I-17 Collision - 6830 North Black Canyon Highway, Phoenix, AZ

organization they have built. They know the market, and have a handle on what is going on around town. Whether it is product support or marketing assistance, we can pick up the phone and they are always there to provide answers. They are a great partner for us."



3825 West Indian School Road - Phoenix, AZ

According to Tim Walsh, "Grand Prix is exactly what we are looking for in a customer. A nice shop, focused on quality with a good reputation. With the experience that Steve and his staff bring to the table, it is no wonder they have been named by Mark Salem as one of the top shops in the Phoenix area for the past several years."

## Timing is Perfect for Grand Prix

The phrase "timing is everything" is appropriate when it comes to the conversion of Grand Prix Body & Paint to The Painter's Edge and the Diamont paint system.

According to owner, Steve McDonnel, "I have known Tim Walsh for many years, going back to my days as an I-CAR instructor and state chairman. We decided to partner together with The Painter's Edge after Tim told me of some of the unique things that his company was doing to assist their customers. I was impressed. They know what's happening in our local market and the dynamics that affect us everyday. What they are doing goes so far beyond paint." He then added, "Sometimes it seems like the vendors always focus on the 'mega' shops and tend to forget about smaller volume shops like mine. I will put our quality of repair up against anyone in the area. We don't fix hundreds of cars every month, but we do fix every vehicle the right way."

# Kopy's Business Continues to Grow

Kopy's Body Shop has been a family owned and operated business from the beginning. Lora, Gail, and Paul Kopy's father, Ambrose, opened their Youngstown collision center in June of 1971, where the shop still resides. Before moving to Arizona, their father worked in the body shop of a Minnesota car dealer. Kopy's Body Shop started as a small, single bay facility and has now grown into a multi-bay, 7,600+ sq. ft. facility.

Our interview with the Kopy's was filled with fond memories. Paul remembers his role in the shop as a young boy. "I remember being picked up from school and taken to the shop. I always snuck away and hid in the garbage can until everyone came to search for me."

Paul took over the business about twenty years ago when his father retired. Paul recalls when his father was running the business, "He would leave town on a business trip and we would make changes while he was gone. For instance, while he was away on one trip, we purchased the two lots behind us for expansion. He was upset at first, then realized we made a good decision and was proud of us."

Kopy's Body Shop is I-CAR Gold certified and their staff attend all BASF training courses offered by Leading Edge. The shop is equipped with a Celette bench, three paint booths, and a frame rack. Most of their mechanical work is done in-house and they offer 24-hour a day towing service with a full access storage lot on their 2.5 acre property.

"We have been working with Kachina Automotive since we purchased our first Celette bench 12 years ago," Lora said, "and we just recently added BASF's Diamont paint. Leading Edge provides many unique services. Bob Kennedy, Leading Edge's technical rep, works with us whenever we need any help in color matching. Matt Johnson makes sure our sprayable cost numbers are where they need to be. This magazine speaks volumes about their marketing capabilities. When Leading Edge say they'll do something they follow through. We don't get the big corporate runaround. But the best part is that we don't have to ask them. They tell us what they are going to do and then do it. We see our Leading Edge service representative, Steve Balsley, twice a week. It's the little things that make a difference at Leading Edge. We are part of their family of collision shops."



*Kopy's Body Shop - 11202 West Michigan Avenue, Youngstown, AZ*

An advertisement for the Leading Edge Diamondbacks picnic. The background is a photograph of a baseball game in progress at a stadium. In the top left corner, there is a logo for the Arizona Diamondbacks, featuring a stylized 'A' with a green and blue diamond shape. Below the logo, it says "DIAMOND BACKS" in large, bold, blue letters. Underneath that, it lists "NL West Champions 1996, 2001 &amp; 2002" and "World Champions 2007". On the right side of the advertisement, there is text that reads "Mark your calendars!" in large, bold, white letters. Below that, it says "The annual Leading Edge Diamondbacks picnic is" in a smaller font, and "Sunday, May 16th." in large, bold, white letters.

## The Importance of Sealer

Sealer is one of the most important steps in the automotive refinish process but is very misunderstood. I always ask students in class "why do we use sealer in a paint job?" and I get answers like "to get better coverage from the topcoat" or "so the paint won't shrink later" but the most common answer is "to fill sand scratches." Seldom do I hear the correct answer which is "a foundation."

Every paint company requires at least two mils of build before applying the paint topcoat. We need to build a solid foundation because the structure is only as good as its foundation. The foundation can be a few things, primer over the bodywork areas or an existing OEM paint job but what about new panels? The car manufacturers only put on about one mil of e-coat and we sand off some of that. We need a little more build and that is where sealer comes in. We can paint directly over sanded e-coat, but the paint would be very brittle and chip easily. Some kind of cushion is needed under the paint. New panels will always require some form of sealer, as well as primed areas, that have been sanded through extensively. We don't want to paint over bare metal or exposed bondo areas. Remember, the last reason to ever use a sealer is to fill sand scratches as this will create dieback in the paint job.

BASF has recently introduced a new sealer line called Power Fill DP25, 26 and 27. Although these products can be used as primer filler over repaired areas, they work wonderfully as a sealer as well. The new Power Fill comes in three shades, black, gray and white and as a sealer they MUST be tinted with either single stage

color or even better, with the basecoat color, at a ratio of three parts sealer to one part color, one part hardener and one part reducer. With the ability to tint three shades of sealer with any color, almost any color can be achieved. This provides topcoat coverage much faster.

Power fill is also a DTM (direct to metal) primer or sealer and all three shades have great adhesion to all bare metal surfaces without the use of etch primer first. Another advantage to the new Power Fill is its tendency to lay down much flatter than other sealers because it gives enough film build with one coat and still lays down with no texture to come through the topcoat.

Another great advantage of the Power Fill sealer is how it sands. Most painters want to nib or sand the sealer prior to the first coat of basecoat to remove any dirt or imperfections. The new Power Fill sands dry or wet within about 3-5 minutes without tearing or scratching.

With the ability to tint the sealer 30%, a painter can apply one less coat of color to achieve coverage. This eliminates the waste of leftover basecoat toners. The new Power Fill has resulted in more positive feedback from painters than any of the other new products recently released. It is a great product in any shop.

This is just another of BASF's recent product additions which makes the life of a production painter much easier. One thing always hold true at BASF. All of their products are developed to improve productivity and improve profitability for the shop.

BOB'S CORNER



Tech Tips from  
Bob Kennedy

## Creative Auto Body Joins CARSTAR

Creative Auto Body, located near the Deer Valley Airport in north Phoenix, is owned by Bruce Giordano. Bruce has been in the collision repair business for more than 22 years and he's been at the current location for three years. It is a new two story building with 16,000 sq. ft. Creative has developed DRP's relationships as well as dealership accounts.

"I've partnered with Leading Edge for six years. We love the BASF product. All of our painters are BASF certified, and we are I-CAR gold certified. We do all our mechanical work in-house, we utilize a heated downdraft paint booth, and we are part of the CARSTAR team of 10 stores in Phoenix. If there's one thing that jumps out at me regarding my relationship with Leading Edge, it is that they always go the extra mile for me whenever I need something."

Leading Edge enjoys their relationship with Creative Auto Body as well. Steve Balsley, service representative, sees the staff at Creative a few times per week. He knows Bruce is committed to quality collision repair and is proud to have them on the Leading Edge team. "Creative is a great organization and I enjoy working with them very much."



Creative Auto Body - 21601 North 9th Avenue, Phoenix, AZ



There is no doubt there's a lot of competition in the collision repair industry. Bill Jones and Jess Leaver, partners in National Auto Collision Centers, also know there are huge opportunities for collision shops that are committed to quality repairs. They have an ongoing commitment to offering **only the best** in customer service.

With more than thirty years in the automotive field, Bill Jones understands what it takes to build a successful business. Bill started as an automotive technician and has spent the last 17 years in fixed operations management, successfully increasing sales for three companies by an average of 300% to 500%. With a track record like that, it's obvious that Bill knows a thing or two about what it takes to be a success in what is essentially a customer-driven industry. Bill will be overseeing the day-to-day operations for National Auto Collision Centers.

Jess Leaver brings to NACC thirteen years of finance, administration

and marketing experience. With a background in banking and finance and his experience in successfully owning and operating six companies, (three of which he still owns), Jess brings a complimentary set of skills to the partnership.

National Auto Collision Centers will open their first Tucson shop this spring; a 13,000 square foot facility at a convenient westside location. A second eastside location is scheduled to open this fall. Future plans include at least two more Tucson locations.

According to Bill, their number one priority is and will always be "to treat the customer with respect and deliver quality work in a timely and professional manner." The employees of National Auto Collision Centers are hand-chosen from among the best in the industry, have demonstrated an ability to provide superior service, and take great pride in the quality of their work. "This is very important, especially in the auto body repair industry where trust and honesty are not always the image of repair facilities," said Bill.

By focusing on the customer, National Auto Collision Centers will attract and maintain a loyal retail and commercial customer base. Amenities such as free loaner vehicles, free pick-up and delivery, free towing, clean and comfortable waiting areas with complimentary refreshments, and knowledgeable and friendly staff will immediately put the customer at ease.

From the initial contact with the customer, through the repair process with its state-of-the-art equipment, to the follow-up contact with the customer, National Auto Collision Centers will demonstrate in every phase of the process that "customer satisfaction" isn't just a catchy phrase—but a commitment that Bill and Jess and their employees make to each and every one of their customers.

A-1 Automotive Refinish Supply and BASF is pleased to have developed a relationship to supply BASF refinish products. NACC will also feature a Celette dedicated fixture bench, a Brewco frame rack and a GenIV Spraybake heated downdraft booth.





## Eric's Auto Centers Joins CARSTAR Network

In October 2003, Eric's Auto Centers joined the CARSTAR Network and changed the name to Eric's CARSTAR/South and Eric's CARSTAR/North. According to owner, Eric Grossman, "Trying to stay up with the industry and compete on a larger scale was the major motivation to join forces with this group of progressive businesses around the country. Eleven collision shops have joined the CARSTAR Network in Arizona and our membership is growing.

This has been an exciting two years for us. We've invested over \$300,000.00 in remodeling our facilities, including a new facade at our south location, new customer reception areas and offices at both locations, and installed new heated downdraft paint booths at both shops. We are investing for the future."

Eric's CARSTAR is a family owned business and proud to be a company of firsts. They were the third shop in the country and the first body shop in Arizona to become I-CAR Gold, the first shop in Tucson to invest in the ARMS software and one of the first shops to own a frame rack and a down draft paint booth. Eric's CARSTAR is proud to be an industry leader.

The collision industry is changing and trying to keep up is a never-ending job. To survive, business owners must recognize industry trends and adapt new strategies, but it's tough to go it alone in today's business environment. Business relationships with vendors who share an industry vision is becoming increasingly important. Businesses need partners who have and will commit their resources to assist their customers.

According to Eric, "Our business relationship with A-1 Automotive Refinish Supply, the BASF paint distributor in Tucson, is a perfect example of developing relationships with a vendor who can help our business succeed. When we originally changed to BASF we were focused on A-1's service and BASF products. We knew our paint costs would decrease and productivity would increase but at that time we didn't anticipate the full benefits of this relationship.

In 1997, Leading Edge Auto Refinishes in Tempe, AZ invested in A-1 and it didn't take long to discover their vision for the industry focused on the future. Dave Chimera and Ruth Phillips continue to run the business but we've seen A-1 evolve from a vendor into a valued business partner and industry trendsetter. A-1 and Leading Edge explained from the beginning their philosophy was to raise customer expectations and we've watched as they introduce programs for collision shops that are simply not available elsewhere.

Today, it's not about the paint. It's about getting work in the front door and then getting it out the back door efficiently, while maintaining quality workmanship. A-1 and Leading Edge realize they won't succeed unless their customers are successful. A-1 understands the collision industry; they are involved in the industry and have unparalleled industry relationships. They know what's going on in Arizona."



*Eric's CARSTAR / South - 1330 South Alvernon Way, Tucson, AZ*

# Competition Body and Paint is Turning 50

Competition Body and Paint is approaching its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It had its humble beginnings in 1955 in Toledo, Ohio, as a one man, one stall rental garage shop. The founder, Robert Butler, began the business as a young man with few tools and little experience. He attended local hot rod competitions (hence the name Competition Body and Paint), and offered services for minor dents akin to paintless dent repair today. He soon developed into a highly skilled and talented customized body specialist. Throughout the sixties and seventies he migrated west, bringing a growing business with him.

In Phoenix since 1976, Competition Body and Paint is approaching its 28<sup>th</sup> year of continued service, having established a reputation for excellent repair quality and value to the customer. Competition Body and Paint has always been committed to its customers, placing a great value on the strength of a job well done that brings repeat customers back, and directs new customers to the shop. They know their customers are their future.

During the next two decades, Competition Body and Paint operated from its first location on West Indian School Road. Several remodels and expansions later, it finally outgrew its first location. In 1994, Competition expanded to a second and its present location at 27<sup>th</sup> Ave and Camelback, a large facility with 25,000+ square feet under roof and



*Competition Body & Paint - North 27th Ave., Phoenix, AZ*

more than two acres of parking. For several years, Competition operated two facilities, but tragically in 1998, the first location on West Indian School was devastated by fire. The entire building which housed the offices, frame shop and the paint booth were completely destroyed. Both frame machines, a computerized-laser frame measuring system and several welders were also lost. It was a true trial by fire for Competition.

The decision was made to consolidate to one location. No one was laid off. All employees were absorbed in to the 27<sup>th</sup> Ave shop. Although this put a financial strain on the shop, it quickly became apparent that amid less confusion, greater productivity would turn the tide. "Just as we value our customers, we valued our employees. They're our greatest assets. We understand the value of skilled and

certified technicians. Our technicians are I-CAR trained and our shop is I-CAR Gold certified. The management staff has extensive experience in the collision industry, as well as superb leadership skills."

Recently Competition Body and Paint transitioned smoothly to a second generation of management and ownership, comprising of Tim East, Dawn Butler, and Raymond Butler. This brings to the business fresh strategies, improved productivity, and an increased commitment to maintain their reputation as a state-of-the-art collision facility.

In order to meet the needs of their customers and the needs of insurance DRP programs, Competition Body and Paint is dedicated to keeping the shop on the cutting edge. They use BASF paint, along with BASF's ColorMax system, achieving a finished product that is equal to or greater than the manufacturer's fit and finish. They have two paint booths, a heated down-draft, and an infrared cross-flow. The technicians are well trained on the four frame systems which include a Celette dedicated fixture bench, a Gold Medallion frame rack, a Chart frame rack and a Car-O-Liner computerized measuring system. Additionally, they utilize two Pro-Spot inversion welders which produce car manufacturers factory certified welds.

Competition Body and Paint continually strives to provide excellent service to all customers and prospective clients from all points of contact. This includes courtesy and professionalism in every department, from reception to follow-up phone calls with customers whose vehicle are being repaired in our facility. They provide a limited lifetime guarantee for each repair. Tim East summarizes their goals well by saying, "Our commitment is to improve efficiency in everything we do in order to provide a better value and service to each of our customers. These core values are the foundation for the continued success of our business."

# Rapid Collision Joins Leading Edge

In February 2000, Tim and Stacy Mecl founded Rapid Collision Center, located in East Mesa. Tim has been in the collision industry for 25 years, working in the paint shop as well as many other facets of the business. They relocated from Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1987 where Tim's father operated a body shop. He dreamt of one day owning his own facility.

Rapid Collision Center is ASC Certified and has more than 7,000 sq. ft. of shop space. They do most of their mechanical work in-house and they have DRP relationships which keep the shop very busy. "Our business is structured around a commitment to quality. We are totally hands-on. It is because of our steadfast commitment to quality collision repair that our business tripled in 2003," said Tim.

Leading Edge is honored to play a role in the success of Rapid Collision. "To be perfectly honest, Leading Edge has been wonderful. They have made our life a lot simpler with their BASF paint products, the quality of their employees, and the Color Max system. We had so many color matching issues with our prior vendor; they knew they couldn't get it right. When we switched to Leading Edge and BASF those problems disappeared."

Rapid Collision uses its Celette bench and Brewco Legend frame rack to maintain the highest



Rapid Collision Center - 10132 East Apache Trail #1, Mesa AZ

standard of collision repair. "We know what the specifications are to repair a car to factory standards. To be committed to quality, you must be committed to getting it done right the first time. We made that commitment from the beginning."

Tim's relationship with Leading Edge's master technician, Frank Astrain, is critical. "Frank's a wizard in the paint booth. He's available to answer any questions we have or challenges that arise."



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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**OPENING APRIL 2004!**

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