

## INTRODUCING...

# The Car Wash...



## PLUS...

- Wash Insight Trade Show Recap
- The good and bad of brushes
- Upcoming Events
- Preventing workplace back injuries

# of the Future!

# MIDWEST CARWASH ASSOCIATION

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## Advertising Index

Diamond Shine.....	13
Michigan Cleaning Fund.....	5
PDQ.....	15
Warsaw Chemical Company.....	12

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# FROM THE PRESIDENT



By Joe Chatel, *Ride the Tide Carwash*

As we get ready to say our final good-byes to the summer season, I wanted to let everyone know where the MCA is trying to climb, in a directional sense.

Since coming into the role as president of the association, I have done everything in my power to remain transparent regarding my hopes for what we can do to better the association we all love. It is clear the MCA has had identity issues and certain changes, some more difficult than others, are needed to right the ship that has drifted off course. Along with the help of an ever increasing and more aggressive board member presence, I believe a new and more defined direction is needed to position the MCA as a useful presence in our local markets and for our respective brands.

Our industry is one that thrives on relationships. Relationships with customers, employees and vendors drive our washes on a daily basis. As an operator, I am a member of the MCA for this very reason. The networking function we hold dear for one reason or another, I believe, is the driving force for the association's remaining loyalists. This function needs to be curated, cared for, and grown into something that eventually becomes the focus of the association moving forward for years to come. Protecting relationships, the relationships that drive our industry, will be our goal.

For the 2019 calendar year, the MCA will take a hiatus from the Wash Insight Expo to focus on several events that are aimed to promote networking and a culture of unity within our association. Our social events have been a fantastic way to bring operators and vendors together in a relaxed environment to discuss car washing from A-Z and everything in between.

Our social events will include the annual MCA golf outing, a sporting event and gathering, along with our ever popular beer tasting events across the state. These events will be tweaked and focused on with ambitious enthusiasm previously unseen. My love for the MCA and the board's renewed enthusiasm

will shine through so all members can look to the progressively bright future we all hope for.

A renewed enthusiasm comes in part from new faces joining the board of directors. Our newest board director, Jim Vainner, is one of our industry's brightest examples of excellence. Jim is an easily recognizable name and presence whose experience speaks for itself. As a longtime fan of his work, it is my pleasure to welcome Jim as an operator board director. Jim, I look forward to building a better MCA for all with you.

Finally, I would like to close by thanking my fellow board members for their faith and trust as we move forward. I want nothing more than to build on a successful association tradition and foundation and return the MCA to its rightful standing among the regional associations. The sky is the limit and I ask all members to become more involved and build with us.

~Joe

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 3 President's Message
- 4 The Carwash of the Future
- 6 MCA Upcoming Events
- 7 Wash Insight Recap
- 10 The good and bad of brushes
- 13 Member News
- 14 Ergonomic Solutions - Back Injury Prevention

# The Car Wash...



# of the Future!

*The technology driving the next evolution in car washing is here, and it may not be what you think.*

By Nate Schoenfelder

"The car wash of the future." It's an idea on everyone's mind. What will things look like in five years? In 20? What is the next innovation that will change everything we thought we knew about the industry?

These are fun questions to ask, but the answers become more important every day. As the industry grows and the market saturates, it's going to take more than colorful wraps and longer tunnels to stand out against the competition. When the time comes to build the car wash of the future, how will the best in the biz separate themselves from all the rest?

## **LEARNING FROM THE PRESENT**

The last monumental shift in the industry tells us a lot about what the future of car washing may hold. The express exterior model shattered expectations of what financial returns were possible while delivering a service perfectly aligned with customer needs and expectations. Unlimited wash plans, fast service, and convenience made for a winning combination that benefited everyone down the line.

In short, the express model was the perfect win-win.

And it doesn't look like that's changing anytime soon. The express model has empowered new investment

and aggressive expansion for even the smallest family-owned car wash, opening the door to a regional presence once exclusive to larger operations. *Professional Carwashing & Detailing's* "State of the Carwash Industry in 2018" found location expansion was among the highest priorities for current owners. As Car Wash Brokers Inc.'s Roger A. Pencek puts it, in the near future, "solo mom-and-pop express wash survivors will be rare."

When it comes to the car wash of the future, it's safe to assume the next significant revolution will need to play on the strengths of the express model. This means finding better ways to deliver the best customer experience while easing expansion and maximizing return on investment.

## **AUTOMATING AND STANDARDIZING THE EXPERIENCE**

The first things most owners imagine when thinking of the "car wash of tomorrow" is complete automation. The reasons are pretty obvious. First is labor costs. The more a car wash operates on its own, the fewer people it'll need to keep things moving. This extends to every link in the chain, from POS to load-on to exit.

More importantly, automation means consistency. The automated wash tunnel brought a consistent, high-quality product to the consumer, which helped the express model thrive. While further automation only continues this trend, it isn't the only way to standardize your product across sites, if even the most efficient.

The car wash of the future won't just leverage cutting-edge equipment. It will leverage information.

Remote site monitoring tools have existed for a few years, but the latest wave of insight and analytics offerings go far beyond the spreadsheets of the past. Now, owners can get feedback on everything from chemical usage to conveyor status right on their phone. Site-by-site analytics aid in maintaining a consistent quality of service across an entire franchise. In the near future, what you *know* will be just as important as what you *do*.

## THE CUSTOMER COMES FIRST

Car washing is a service-driven business, and that means customers hold the real power. In the next several years, the fight for each patron is going to heat up, and the car wash of the future will be ready.

The success of express has made each individual customer incredibly valuable, and this will only increase in time. Unlimited wash plans have shown to be highly lucrative, and modern technology only boosts their potential. Mobile apps providing loyalty rewards and subscription management ease purchases and keep customers engaged with your business long after they leave the tunnel. New methods of cashless payment do more than cut out the quarters. Customers can pay for their wash before they even get to the lot, speeding up your POS while adding convenience for your loyal patrons.

Unlimited plans and loyalty programs are an exciting prospect for the future of the industry, but they pose a serious risk. If you can deliver consistent quality and a good value, you can be sure your members will keep coming back. However, the opposite is also true — and much more dangerous. If you fail to impress a customer, they won't just go somewhere else. There's a good chance they'll never come back; signed to a subscription at a local competitor.

The car wash of the future needs to take every facet of the customer experience into account, including the oft-ignored topic of safety. Thankfully, advances in computer vision and machine learning have allowed software to stop a conveyor in milliseconds to prevent accidents mid-tunnel. With a system like this in place, customers won't just stay protected, but *feel* protected; comforted by the knowledge their car wash of choice is taking every precaution when washing their car.

## GETTING A HEAD START

In many cases, the technology behind the next evolution of the express exterior car wash is already here. Owners now have access to services and software that help them track nearly every facet of their operation from almost anywhere. Modernized safety tools ensure consistent product quality that eases site expansion without jeopardizing customer loyalty.

The car wash of the future won't be a sci-fi light show. It will use smart enhancements and leverage new technology to provide the best customer experience every time — all without compromising returns on investment. While everyone else is wondering what's on the horizon, the next wave of industry leaders have the tools to make tomorrow's car wash today.



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# Join the MCA Board for 2019

The MCA is extending an invitation to you to have an active role in your association and industry as a member of the MCA Board of Directors. Each year the MCA looks to its members for individuals who are willing to be decision makers in advancing the direction of the association; provide input in developing our goals, policies and services; and to act as representative of the MCA to help the MCA membership expand always in all ways.

Eligibility for the MCA Board requires that you are a paid member in good standing of the MCA for 2019 and directly involved in operating or owning a car wash or provides services or products specific to the car wash industry. New Board Members are voted in by the current Board Members.

If you would like more information about joining the board visit our website [www.MidwestCarwash.com](http://www.MidwestCarwash.com) or email [info@MidwestCarwash.com](mailto:info@MidwestCarwash.com).

## MCA EVENT CALENDAR

### 2018

**September 25**

**ANNUAL GOLF OUTING  
EAGLE EYE GOLF COURSE  
BATH, MI**

**October 25**

**FALL SOCIAL EVENT  
TAVERN & TAP  
LANSING, MI**

### 2019

***Dates to be determined***

- **SPRING SOCIAL/BEER TASTING**
- **SPORTING EVENT**
- **ANNUAL GOLF OUTING**
- **FALL SOCIAL/BEER TASTING**

Don't miss any of these great events! In 2019 the MCA Board is lining up a whole host of events that are free to MCA Operator Members. Take advantage of all your MCA membership has to offer and make sure your membership is current today!

**View the complete calendar at  
[www.MidwestCarwash.com](http://www.MidwestCarwash.com)**



EDUCATION / NETWORKING

# INSIGHT

**JUNE 19-20**

**FIREKEEPERS | BATTLE CREEK**

Thank you to those who joined us for our 2018 show, Wash Insight! We kicked off the first day with our trade show and lunch. Later in the afternoon we had educational roundtables and then headed to the Air Zoo, a truly one of a kind experience, for dinner and networking.

Day two saw us hitting the road to visit three area washes and get a first hand glimpse of their operations. Thank you to Ric & Stan's, Crystal Car Wash and Remington Car Wash for taking part in our tour!



# 2018 VENDORS



- Allmacher, LLC
- Belanger, Inc.
- C.A.R. Products
- Culligan Water
- Cul-Mac Industries
- D&S Carwash Equipment Co.
- DIXMOR
- DRB Systems
- eGenuity
- Erie Brush & Manufacturing Corp.
- Etowah Valley Equipment
- Gallop Brush Company
- General Pump
- Harrell's Car Wash Systems
- Huron Valley Sales
- Innovative Control Systems
- International Drying Corporation
- Kleen-Rite Corp.
- Laguna Industries, LLC
- McNeil & Company
- Michigan Cleaning Fund / RPS Regency
- Motor City Wash Works
- N1 Buying Group
- PECO Car Wash Systems
- Pipetek Infrastructure Services
- Schultz Inc.
- Simoniz
- SoBrite Technologies
- Sonny's The CarWash Factory
- Synergy Solutions®
- Tommy Car Wash Systems
- TSS Inc.
- Vaporlux, Inc.
- Vaughan Industries, Inc.
- Warsaw Chemical Co., Inc.
- Washify Services LLC





# THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!



# The Best of Brushes, the Worst of Brushes

*From car wash brush quality, usage, and configuration, relatively fine distinctions can make a big difference in performance and the bottom line*

**W**ith apologies to Charles Dickens who opened his novel *A Tale of Two Cities* with “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,” in the car wash industry there is often an unclear line between the best of brushes and the worst of brushes.

In other words, a number of small, but important, characteristics can distinguish a good brush from a bad one, including how well it cleans, if it damages vehicles or otherwise creates a bad customer experience.

While standard brushes can be ordered out of a catalogue and cheaply made, brushes can also be well designed and built, and even customized for just a little more. As such, the difference between good and bad often comes down to factors such as brush qualities, utilization, maintenance/cleaning, and configuration.

With these factors in mind, buying on initial price alone and saving a few pennies may wind up being a foolish choice. Instead, making informed choices in car wash brushes by considering a variety of factors can make a significant difference in performance, repeat business, and the bottom line.

To accomplish this, car wash owners and operators need to be aware of certain important brush characteristics. We turn to car wash supplies expert, Dan Pecora, CEO of Erie Manufacturing in Chicago, Ill., on what to look for in a “good versus bad” brush.

## **BEST BRUSH QUALITIES**

For car wash owners who want to provide customers with an exceptional wash that keeps them coming back, there is no substitute for a high quality brush. Poorly designed or constructed brushes that save car wash operators a few dollars up front may be more costly in the long run. This cost may not be in dollars and cents alone, but may affect the reputation of the operation having a negative impact on repeat business.

While a bad brush can do a poor cleaning job from the first wash, a well-designed brush will consistently wash vehicles well over time. Each brush must also provide enough friction to dislodge dirt from vehicle’s surface, without damaging the paint or trim. No matter the type of brush or cloth, it should stand up to the rigors of car washing for a long time to minimize replacement costs.

Poorly constructed brushes may also prematurely tear, rip or fail, whereas a good brush can last many years before needing to be replaced. This also saves money in the long run.

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***No matter the type of brush or cloth, it should stand up to the rigors of car washing for a long time to minimize replacement costs***

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## **STIFFNESS VS. SOFTNESS**

“For car wash owners, a quality brush must be neither too hard nor too soft for the job,” says Pecora. “The surface you are cleaning or polishing will tell you the relative stiffness or softness of the brush you should use.”

Synthetic brushes made of nylon and polypropylene generally have shorter filaments with fewer bristles on the brush head. In general, these types of brushes are stiffer and better suited for scrubbing off layers of dirt from older, unwashed cars as well as for use on tires.

## Brushes

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On the other side of the coin are softer materials such as cloth or foam that are gentler on paint, trim and other surfaces.

Plush materials such as “cashmere-type” cloth, for example, take advantage of a tufted surface (like the nap on a rug) to do a better overall cleaning job on the vehicle. This includes doing a better job cleaning windshields. The “tufts” on this type of cloth can range from ¼ inch to one inch, with longer tufts capable of reaching deeper into crevices and providing more overall surface area for cleaning.

According to Pecora, a car wash that uses a high-quality “gentle foam” material can reduce damage claims to nearly zero, while offering a quieter wash and better final polish. Unlike typical foam, which is usually offered at standard levels of softness, gentle foam is significantly softer.

*“I’ve noticed that Erie’s Gentle Foam doesn’t catch and pull on mirrors, antennas, license plates, or loose moldings like cloth sometimes can. It’s so soft and stretchable. I’ve had no damage claims since I opened my express wash almost three years ago.”*

*Bill Seniw, Owner  
Beverly Hills Car Wash*

Pecora recommends hog’s hair brushes for prep work or final touch-up at tunnel washes on headlights, license plates and door handles. This type of brush is also the softest, most effective option when used for foaming brushes in self-serve car wash operations.

“Hog’s hair – actual hair that comes from hogs – has the smallest diameter tapered filament, which helps to make it the softest,” he says. “Since it is tapered, and feathered at the tips, it tends to release grit when properly lubricated toward its ends and will not grind it into the car surface. Despite being soft, tapered hog’s hair retains enough stiffness for harder scrubbing when required.”

## CUSTOMIZE AUTOMATED BRUSHES TO AVOID COMMON PROBLEMS

Even if car wash owners and operators select a quality brush and follow best practice cleaning techniques, there are times when the brush configuration must be altered to prevent common cleaning mistakes. Fortunately, knowledgeable brush manufacturers can help resolve some of these nagging quality issues.

One common problem is that the tops of the side and rear of the taller vehicles such as SUVs, trucks and vans are sometimes left dirty even after a wash. This can turn off customers to the point they do not return.

When the tops of the sides or back of taller vehicles are left dirty, the brush core height of wraparound brushes may not be tall enough, says Pecora.

“Rocker panel brushes used to be 18” tall a couple of generations ago. Today they should be much taller because there are so many trucks and SUVs,” says Pecora. “If you are not cleaning high or low enough on the sides, you need a better angle, taller brush core, longer washing material or possibly all three.”

The problem may also stem from wraparound brushes that do not unfold or extend properly. Because of the vehicle’s forward movement in a tunnel/conveyor wash, the wraparound brush actually has to unfold and extend enough to apply adequate friction to the vehicle’s rear for a proper wash before it moves out of reach.

“Wraparound brushes have to run after cars as the cars are going forward while the machine is standing still,” says Pecora. “So the brush on the machine has to unfold properly to chase the car forward, and that is not easy to do.”

Another reason that the vehicle may not get properly cleaned is failure to take into account the aerodynamic, tapered design of modern vehicles.

## Brushes

"Today, cars are tapered in length and width, so you want your cloth or foam brushes on wraparound, side, or rocker panel equipment to taper the same way the cars do," says Pecora.

This might involve a simple fix like making sure the washing material is long enough to adequately reach the vehicle at its narrowest point. For example, the 20" material that worked in the past might need to be closer to 30" today.

Some brush manufacturers try to adjust to more tapered vehicle designs by using a "stair step" design that comes in 1, 2 or 3 inch stepped increments. However, this can leave vehicles insufficiently washed due to overly large gaps in the brush material.

"Instead, it is better to use brushes that are tapered without increments, which offer more complete coverage without the 'skips' of standard brushes," says Pecora.

Even seemingly minor design features such as the width of the slits in cloth or foam "fingers" can affect the quality of the cleaning. Slits that are too far apart may mean the material does not fit into the nooks and crannies as needed for sufficient cleaning.

"The slits are often cut wider to increase the life of the cloth or foam, but you sacrifice in the quality of the cleaning. Without a doubt, narrower slits in the material means it can clean much better," says Pecora.

### BEST BRUSH PRACTICES

To achieve the best brush performance, Pecora advises car wash owners to operate brushes at the correct RPMs and with the proper force. Brushes also should be lubricated properly with a chemical so they quietly glide over the vehicle's surface.

In a conveyerized car wash, Pecora also recommends avoiding the use of high pressure or high volume



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hoses to wash down the concrete floor each night. This can cause sand and grit that has accumulated on the floor to inadvertently get on the brush, foam or cloth. Vehicles that go through the wash the next day suffer the consequences.

“To keep the sand and grit on the floor, use a low pressure hose to ensure it goes down the drain where it belongs and doesn’t end up on your brushes,” says Pecora.

For a similar reason, he advises training any operators using a brush for prep or touch up to repeatedly dip the brush in a barrel of soapy water until all the grit falls to the bottom of the barrel. “Your brush cannot have even a little bit of grit left in it,” says Pecora.

Finally, car wash operators should regularly inspect and replace damaged brushes.

“If there’s grit or oil on your brushes, you can take quick corrective action to clean them. However, if your brushes are in bad shape, replacing them will improve the quality of your wash so customers know they can rely on you time and time again,” he says.

## NO SUBSTITUTE FOR REGULAR INSPECTIONS

For tunnel wash owners that really want to know how their automated, conveyor brushes are performing, there is simply no substitute for ongoing close inspection.

“Stand at the end of your tunnel wash and watch as the vehicles exit,” concludes Pecora. “Look carefully at all sides and you will see what you are missing. You can’t just do this with 10 cars; it needs to more like a hundred. Then work with a knowledgeable brush manufacturer to improve your operation to keep customers coming back.”



# MCA Member News

## DRB Systems Named One of Northeast Ohio’s Top 150 Workplaces for the Second Year

DRB Systems, Green, Ohio, is proud to announce that it has been included in Northeast Ohio’s Top 150 Workplaces for a second year in a row. Cleveland’s *Plain Dealer* newspaper has teamed with Energage (formerly called Workplace Dynamics), an employee research and consulting firm, to determine the area’s best workplaces based solely on employee surveys.



Here are just a few of the words employees used to describe DRB Systems: Success, Fun, Customers, Growth. Employees firmly agreed that DRB Systems is going in the right direction, that the company operates by strong values and ethics, and that they would highly recommend working at DRB Systems to others.

# ERGONOMIC SOLUTIONS:

## *Back Injury Prevention through Safe Lifting Procedures*

By Michigan Cleaning Fund

Over one million workers suffer back injuries each year. Twenty-five percent of all workers' compensation indemnity claims are related to back injuries. Back injuries are painful and affect all aspects of life. The chance of re-injury after a back injury is significant.

The following procedures can help reduce the potential for Back Injuries: Plan ahead; assess the lift and your surroundings. Knowing what you're doing and where you're going will prevent you from making awkward movements while holding something heavy.

- ✓ Is the load of a size and weight that you can adequately handle?
- ✓ Is the path of travel for the lift clear of obstructions?
- ✓ Can the load be broken down into smaller components?
- ✓ Will the load interfere with your vision?
- ✓ Can the load be lifted safer with the help of a co-worker? If you are lifting with another person make sure you both agree on the plan.
- ✓ Can the load be lifted safer with a mechanical device?

### **When lifting always remember the following:**

- Get as close as possible to the load. You will be a stronger and more stable lifter if the object is held close to your body rather than at the end of your reach. Make sure you have a firm hold on the object you are lifting, and keep it balanced close to your body.
- Center yourself over the load with your feet shoulder width apart. A solid base of support is important while lifting. Holding your feet too close together will be unstable, too far apart will hinder movement. Keep your feet about shoulder width apart and take short steps.
- Tighten your stomach muscles; this helps to support the back.



- Squat down, bend your knees and keep your back in its normal arch. Let your legs do the lifting.
- Get a good tight hold on the load and keep it close to your body.
- Move with a smooth motion, lifting straight up.
- Keep load in front of torso. Do not twist the back. Your nose and feet should always be pointed in your direction of travel. Carry the load between your shoulders and your waist.
- If you become tired while carrying the load, stop, set the load down and rest. When setting down the load, squat down bending your knees, keeping the load close to you. Release the load when the desired position is achieved.
- When using mechanical devices remember to push the load rather than pull the load. Keep an arm length from the load with your arms in the locked position and your back in its normal arch. Use your body weight and legs to push the load.
- When storing objects on shelves put heavier objects on the shelves located at waist level. Put lighter objects on the upper or lower shelves.
- Good nutrition and exercise can also contribute to back injury prevention. The mattress that you sleep on is also important in maintaining good posture.
- Following these guidelines should help to reduce the potential of becoming one of the many people presently suffering from back injuries caused by unsafe lifting techniques.

*The Fund strongly encourages all members to implement safe lifting procedures to reduce their exposure and liability.*



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