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Tony Tretter (left), sales manager at Zimbrick, helps Phil Hubble find a new truck that fits his business.

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## ON THE ROAD AGAIN

### Businesses Held Back On Adding Vehicles In 2009, But Some Have Resumed Ordering New, Often Smaller Ones This Year

BY JUDY DAHL

Businesspeople drove less and companies purchased, leased and rented fewer vehicles in 2009. Those that did add vehicles tended to choose smaller ones than in the past and were more concerned about fuel efficiency. Some local providers of vehicles are seeing those trends continue in 2010, while others are seeing a rebound in volumes.

Conditions were certainly unfavorable for the car rental industry last year, according to Melissa Banigan, director of business rental sales, Wisconsin Group, for Enterprise Holdings, the parent company of the Alamo, Enterprise and National car rental brands.

"Manufacturing capacity dropped in half, Chrysler and GM—the two largest suppliers of rental fleets—declared bankruptcy, and there was an extreme drop in

travel as the U.S. economy headed into recession," she recalls.

She's hopeful the market is improving, though, and cites a prediction by Craig Banikowski, president and CEO of the National Business Travel Association, that as the economic recovery takes hold companies will take advantage of low travel costs to send more employees on the road.

Business-vehicle purchases are still down for Jon Lancaster Toyota, reports Joe St. Marie, vice president and general manager. "Most businesses are holding on to their vehicles one to three years longer than in the past," he says. "They'll spend the money to maintain or repair them, but are keeping them. Many say they've considered purchasing, but that it isn't in the budget for the next six months, or until their businesses pick up."

continued on page 4

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# GMCC CALENDAR

## AUGUST

### GMCC CHAMBER CAFÉ

Wednesday, August 4, 7:30 AM - 9:00 AM

**Topic:** Federal Health Care Legislation Panel. Topic determined based on questions from GMCC members.

**Host:** Edgewood College (West Campus)

**Address:** 1255 Deming Way, Madison

**Panel Speakers:** Tim Byrne, Vice President of M3 Insurance Solutions for Business, Michael Heifetz, Vice President for Government Affairs for Dean and SSM Healthcare for Wisconsin, and Barbara J. Zabawa, Attorney at Whyte Hirschboeck Dudek.

**Panel Moderator:** Ginny Gilbert, CEO of Gilbert Cost Control Consultants, Corp., and GMCC Board Member.

**Register:** \$10 for GMCC Members, \$25 for nonmembers.

Register online at [www.greatermadisonchamber.com/events](http://www.greatermadisonchamber.com/events).

## SAVE THE DATE!

### GMCC 58th ANNUAL DINNER

Thursday, October 7, 2010

**Keynote Speaker:** Dr. Colin Harrison, Director of IBM's Corporate Strategy team and the inventor of the "Smart Cities" initiative based at the IBM Research Lab in Zurich, Switzerland

**Location:** Monona Terrace Community & Convention Center

**More Info:** Celebrating 58 years of the region's top business event in 2010, the Chamber will welcome more than 1,000 members and guests in October for an evening of dynamic networking and building business connections at the area's largest formal dinner.

**On the Web:** Visit the GMCC website for more details - [www.greatermadisonchamber.com/events/annual\\_dinner](http://www.greatermadisonchamber.com/events/annual_dinner)

**More Events:** [www.greatermadisonchamber.com/events](http://www.greatermadisonchamber.com/events)

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# PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Dear Valued GMCC Member:

While you are busy running your business, we are working hard to make sure that our city's business community continues to thrive.

An important public policy issue that our staff is actively researching is the City of Madison's current work to rewrite the outdated zoning code.

While this may not be a hot topic at the water cooler, let me assure you these changes may impact your business.

In tandem with the zoning code rewrite is an effort being led by the city's Economic Development Committee – at the direction of Mayor Dave Cieslewicz – to review the development approval process.

This is an important and necessary project for Madison. The city's current development process is complicated and unpredictable. Uncertainty in the process leads to higher risk and costs for developers.

Madison is a community that embraces a high level of public participation in the process. And public input is needed on all projects. But there needs to be a uniform, consistent process in place for receiving that input, and ensuring that timely decisions are made. We need a process that is simplistic and consistent.

Some would say that people will always want to do business in Madison, so it shouldn't matter if we have a difficult process.

It's true that due to our region's unparalleled beauty and educated workforce, Madison will attract people who want to do business here. The question is, how much business have we lost – how many opportunities have gone elsewhere – because of an uncertain and intimidating development process?

The success of our region depends on a thriving urban hub and it is important that Madison continues to be a strong economic engine for the eight-county region.

Mayor Dave Cieslewicz is right to focus on making our city processes more efficient and should aggressively pursue recommendations to make Madison more competitive.

To read about some of the specific proposals the GMCC is recommending, see the public policy column on page 12 of this issue of *Business Beat*.

Public EDC hearings will be held the evenings of Wednesday, August 25, and Thursday, August 26. The GMCC strongly encourages our members to share their thoughts with EDC members and participate in the hearings. Stay tuned to upcoming GMCC e-bulletins for more information.

I welcome your thoughts on this issue and any feedback you might have for the GMCC.

Thank you,

Jennifer Alexander, GMCC President

# ROAD

continued from page 1

ALD Automotive USA saw a significant 2009 drop in fleet-vehicle sales. "The market became almost paralyzed, with companies like Chrysler not manufacturing and businesses not ordering," says Miel Horsten, CEO. "Existing customers' fleets decreased by about 20%; many of them had lost business and downsized staff." Orders have picked up this year. "There was a lot of pent-up demand and now businesses are catching up," Horsten says.

## Smaller, Less Expensive Models

Roughly half of his company's customers use pickup trucks or vans; the other half use what Horsten calls "perk vehicles," such as a Ford Fusion or a Chrysler 300, for employees with sales or similar positions. Customers are still buying the same types of vehicles, but are selecting smaller, less expensive models with better fuel economy.

Businesses are also looking for flexibility in their vehicles. "Some people are going from sedans to crossovers, like the Buick Enclave or the GMC Acadia, which have an SUV body on a car frame," says Tony Tretter, sales manager at Zimbrick Inc. "They have more space to haul people or products, even though the gas mileage is a little lower than with a car."

The recession changed people's jobs, he notes, which partly drives the need for flexibility. "As companies have slimmed down, they've given more duties to each individual—managers may be making more client calls now." These professionals still want higher-end vehicles, but at times need to carry a supply of products with them.

He's not seeing companies use fewer SUVs, just fewer of the largest ones like the Chevrolet Suburban or Tahoe. Some are switching from SUVs to crossover vehicles, because they get better gas mileage and drive more like cars.

Horsten is seeing companies move away from SUVs and shift to smaller engines. "The V8 is gone; people are going to six-cylinder and even four-cylinder engines," he says.

A few, less than 5%, are trying hybrids.

"People still a little reluctant," says Horsten.

"When they add up the numbers, most people go with regular gas vehicles. Hybrids are a little bit of an unknown, mostly because of the batteries—what will happen in three or four years? If the batteries need replacing it's a very big investment. The purchase price is higher and people are waiting to see what the vehicles will do in terms of resale value."

Hybrids are more suited to in-city driving, Tretter believes, and many businesspeople have longer commutes, or travel frequently to meetings in other cities. "The maintenance costs are substantially more and they're smaller vehicles; it's hard to fit four adults comfortably."

St. Marie is getting more inquiries about hybrids to use as sales vehicles. "Everybody is concerned about the cost per mile," he says.

His customers, too, are considering different vehicles. "They're evaluating whether they can get by with smaller ones that would serve the same purpose as their current vehicles. A few that used full-sized van in the past might switch to a pickup with a cap to be more fuel efficient."

He doesn't believe Toyota's recall woes are a factor in his company's slower commercial-vehicle business. "We haven't been aggressive in that arena; we're the new kids on the block and we're spending most of our time building relationships with prospective customers, so they get to know us and our products. Then when they're ready to purchase, hopefully they'll think of us," he says.

One recent trend St. Marie has observed is that more companies are buying used vehicles. "If they have a vehicle with hundreds of thousands of miles on it, they'll purchase a late-model used replacement rather than a new one," he says. "Or if they've had particular vehicle models in service and they want to try something new, like a Prius, they'll buy a used one for their fleets or salespeople."

## Lease, Purchase or Reimburse?

More of Jon Lancaster Toyota's business customers are leasing than purchasing. "They want to control their monthly


expenses, and just get a bill each month for the lease," says St. Marie.

Zimbrick Inc. is experiencing the opposite. "We're seeing a switchover from leasing to purchasing," Tretter says. "More businesses are willing to purchase so they can keep cars longer if they need to."

He's seeing fewer companies own fleets, and instead, giving their employees allowances to purchase vehicles and use their own insurance. "With all the purchase incentives and rebates available today, fleet incentives aren't always a much better value," he says. "And it may be easier for a company to give car allowances rather than own and manage a fleet."

A company's financial position is one element of the purchase vs. lease vs. employee reimbursement decision. "Since depreciation is tax-deductible, there are benefits to buying, but there are also hidden costs, for purchasing, maintenance, selling, the title ..." says Horsten. "You also have to consider your bargaining power with leasing companies and what interest rate you could negotiate. It depends on the size of your company, too, whether you have the scale to manage your vehicles, or whether a company like ours should manage your fleet for you."

Analyze how you'll use vehicles, Tretter advises. "How many miles will you drive, what size vehicle do you need, what would your maintenance and fuel costs be? If you're not a high-mileage driver and you only need the car for a couple of years, leasing can be very sensible—it gives you options at the end. If the vehicle's value has dropped significantly, you can just drop off the keys and get a new one. If the value has increased, you can buy it."

When determining how to manage its business vehicles, "a company needs to look at the utilization and the hard and soft costs of owning and maintaining them," says Banigan. "Enterprise can help companies look at these factors to help determine if owning, leasing or renting—or a combination of these options—makes the most economic sense." 

*Judy Dahl is a Madison-based freelance writer and editor specializing in the areas of business, finance and technology. Reach her at judydahl@charter.net.*

[www.greatermadisonchamber.com](http://www.greatermadisonchamber.com)



# MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

## Social Media + Greater Madison Chamber = Business Growth

BY BOB ANSHELES

GMCC Director of Membership & Marketing  
bansheles@greatermadisonchamber.com

Social media is a unique mode to promote your business, connect with customers and build traffic to your website. Participants in these virtual communities are able to expand their networks, advertise their company and pass along recommendations and referrals from current and former clients. Done correctly, these activities lead to business growth.

The key to success with social media is finding e-sources that have similar interests with your business and contributing to the conversations. Social networking sites work best when you are involved with others who share common interests and views. This creates a cohesive, reliable group of colleagues who are connected by virtual means. Your successful social media business strategy should include these actions:

**Find your audience.** Do your research and discover what social networks your clients visit and the blogs they read. You can find industry specific websites and join appropriate groups in Facebook or LinkedIn. Go to where your audience is and get involved in the conversation.

**Establish goals.** Is your strategy to drive traffic to your website or blog, or is it simply to get your company's name out there for brand recognition? Begin with specific goals to make social media work best for you.

**Be focused.** It's easy to get overwhelmed with all the new sites, lingo and various tools, especially as you start out. You don't need to use them all. Work with a little at a time, keep what is effective and move on to sample new options.

**Add value.** In social media communities, if you give, you will receive. Add value to the conversations and you will reap the rewards.



GMCC recognizes the value in this new form of networking and brand building. We offer our members several social media options to maximize connections and grow business:

**1. LinkedIn** - Connect with GMCC President Jennifer Alexander, staff and the GMCC Group at [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com).

**2. Facebook** - Be a GMCC fan at [www.facebook.com/greatermadisonchamber](http://www.facebook.com/greatermadisonchamber).

**3. Twitter** - Catch the Latest GMCC Tweets. Follow GMCC's Delora Newton on Twitter at [http://twitter.com/gmcc\\_delora](http://twitter.com/gmcc_delora).

You can learn more about GMCC's social media plan by attending the GMCC 101 program on Wednesday, September 15 at 3:30 p.m. You can also contact GMCC Communications and Marketing Manager Jessica Burda at 608-443-1952 or [jburda@greatermadisonchamber.com](mailto:jburda@greatermadisonchamber.com).



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# GMCC STAFF SPOTLIGHT

## JOSIE FLOYD

GMCC Program and Event Manager

### Education & Prior Work Experience:

I earned my bachelor's degree in Art History from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Prior to the GMCC, I was a Conference Planner at the Fluno Center for Executive Education.



**What are your duties at the GMCC?** I develop and coordinate logistical details for programs and member events. I am always looking for ways to improve the quality of our programs in order to provide our members with more opportunities to grow their businesses.

**What do you enjoy most about working for the GMCC?** Meeting new people within the greater Madison business community.

**What is one GMCC member benefit you like to tell members about?** The Chamber hosts more than 40 programs and events per year – most of which are of no cost to GMCC members. Make an effort to attend and you will be surprised by the number of valuable connections you'll make!

**What do you enjoy doing in your free time?** Running, reading, yoga, cooking.

**What is something most people don't know about you?** My family owns and operates a mushroom farm; I am very knowledgeable about the white button and portabella mushroom growing process.

# GMCC UPDATE

## How Will Federal Health Care Reform Affect Your Business?

After asking Chamber members for their questions about federal health care legislation this spring, the GMCC is pleased to bring together a panel of industry experts to answer your questions at the Chamber Café on Wednesday, August 4.

Held at Edgewood College's west side campus (Room 150, 1255 Deming Way, Madison) from 7:30 – 9:00 a.m., the upcoming Chamber Café welcomes Tim Byrne, Vice President of M3 Insurance Solutions for Business, Michael Heifetz, Vice President for Government Affairs for Dean and SSM Healthcare for Wisconsin, and Barbara J. Zabawa, Attorney at Whyte Hirschboeck Dudek.

The panel will be moderated by GMCC Board member Ginny Gilbert, CEO of Gilbert Cost Control Consultants, Corp.

Register today for this important panel. Seats will fill fast. Registration is \$10 for GMCC members and \$25 for nonmembers.

Register at [www.greatermadison-chamber.com/events](http://www.greatermadison-chamber.com/events).

## Save the Date! GMCC Annual Dinner Oct. 7 with Dr. Colin Harrison

Mark your calendars for the GMCC's 58th Annual Dinner on Thursday, October 7. Held at Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center overlooking beautiful Lake Monona, the GMCC Annual Dinner is the area's premier business event.

Headlining the evening as keynote speaker, the GMCC is also pleased to welcome Dr. Colin Harrison, the director of IBM's Corporate Strategy team and the inventor of the "Smart Cities" initiative based at the IBM Research Lab in Zurich, Switzerland.

Learn more at [www.greatermadison-chamber.com/events/annual\\_dinner](http://www.greatermadison-chamber.com/events/annual_dinner).



Before families can put kids on stage, they have to put food on the table.

Hunger is a real issue for many area families. We are helping by supporting organizations such as Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin which serves nearly 85,000 people here each year. We are giving so our neighbors have a better chance of succeeding at play, at work and in life.



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# AMBASSADOR ACTION

## BRIDGET KEELER

Industry Marketing Coordinator  
for Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP  
[www.bakertilly.com](http://www.bakertilly.com)

### How long have you been a

**GMCC Ambassador:** I am still a newbie, having joined the ranks in February 2010.

**What do you enjoy most about being an Ambassador?** Being new to the Ambassador program, I already enjoy the sense of camaraderie among the Ambassadors, It's a great feeling to be connected to other local professionals who have a passion to give back to the community and support the community by attending and helping out at events. It's great to meet local businesses and learn about how they help make the greater Madison area unique.

**What suggestion(s) do you have to help GMCC members get the most from their membership?** I suggest taking full advantage of the events the Chamber puts on from business card exchanges and new company open houses to attending and exhibiting at the GMCC Expo. These are all excellent ways to showcase and market your own business while connecting with peers on a variety of levels. Every event I have attended has left me with learning something new about a business or this community that I didn't know previously. That wealth of knowledge is providing to be priceless.

**What is unique, important or famous about your business or organization that GMCC members should know?** Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP is a full-service accounting and advisory firm whose specialized professionals connect with you and your business through refreshing candor and clear industry insight. We speak your language and identify with your goals to consistently deliver solutions that are just right for you.



**They have the Amy just got her license and drove through the back of the garage so Dad decided to keep an eye on her policy.**

At American Family Insurance, we work with you to choose from over 375 products and features to create your own Custom Family Protection. Products ranging from Gold Star Homeowners Insurance to our Teen Safe Driver<sup>SM</sup> Program. Is your coverage as unique as your family? Find out at [amfam.com/family](http://amfam.com/family).

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS

### First Weber Group

First Weber Group is Wisconsin's Largest Real Estate Team serving you better with over 50 convenient office locations and over 1,500 real estate professionals throughout the state.

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In 2006, we established First Weber Group Foundation, Inc. to enhance our strong commitment to strengthening our

[www.greatermadisonchamber.com](http://www.greatermadisonchamber.com)



local Wisconsin communities through charitable contributions and volunteer leadership. Whether you are thinking of buying, selling, building, or relocating, you can trust First Weber Group to provide the highest level of knowledge, service and expertise for all your real estate needs. Learn more at [www.firstweber.com](http://www.firstweber.com).



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# MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS



your community energy company

## MGE

MGE is serious about our responsibility to provide energy for this community. We are more than pipes and wires. As your community energy company, we are committed to improving the quality of life for all of us who live and work here. We hope that you believe this community is a better place because MGE is here. We take responsibility to:

- Plan and provide a reliable energy supply that balances the needs and values of those we serve.
- Provide information and education to serve our customers and stakeholders and help inform their energy decisions.
- Preserve and protect our environment while providing affordable, reliable energy.
- Encourage and support business and community development to keep our economy strong and vibrant.
- Engage in open and honest dialogue, partnership and collaboration to best serve our customers and the broader community.



## Morgan Murphy Media

Morgan Murphy Media (MMM) is a multiplatform media company communicating with south central Wisconsin citizens through two television stations, the area's largest Internet site and Madison's most widely distributed locally oriented magazine.

Using the combined resources of these four companies MMM provides advertisers with both mass and niche audiences to maximize their message and their advertising dollars. Television stations within MMM are WISC-TV, which airs the area's top prime-time programming and top-rated newscasts, and sister station TVW on digital channel 3-2, Charter Channel 14

and Direct TV. Its programming includes a prime time newscast at 9 p.m.

Channel3000.com is the area's top news website with the ability to reach audiences both at work and at home.

*Madison Magazine* reflects the area's lifestyle in its monthly print publication as well as daily on its website madisonmagazine.com.

Sales staff at Morgan Murphy Media work cooperatively with clients to produce TV, print and Internet advertising which is focused, targeted and effective. For information contact Steve Scadden at 277-5118 or Mike Korneman at 270-3611.



## Neider & Boucher, S.C.

In this, our 15th year, we celebrate a history of continuous growth and development with 2009 our best year ever despite the economy.

In those years we served the business law needs of small, closely-held businesses. Our clients, colleagues, profession and community are our major focus.

Our attorneys are regularly recognized as "Best Lawyers in America," "Wisconsin Super Lawyers," *Madison Magazine's* "Best Lawyers" and *In Business Magazine's* "Executive Directory."

As a small business, we understand the needs of small businesses. We realize their problems and worries, and know how to deal with them in an efficient, effective manner. We also serve individuals with a

full range of estate planning and tax planning services. We are continuously on the move for our clients. And now, we are on the move with new offices in the University Research Park, First Business Bank Center, 401 Charmany Drive, Suite 301. Visit us at [www.neiderboucher.com](http://www.neiderboucher.com).

## Vita Plus Corporation

Established in 1948 and headquartered in Madison, Wis., Vita Plus Corporation, a 100% employee-owned company, is a leading Midwestern livestock feed, nutrition and agricultural technology company.



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Vita Plus is connected to the latest research and production technology, allowing consultants to share the very best in technical expertise with all Vita Plus customers.

Vita Plus' goal for each customer and supplier is to develop a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship that is based on trust, outstanding product quality and unparalleled commitment and service.

For more information, contact Vita Plus at 800-362-8334, visit [www.vitaplus.com](http://www.vitaplus.com), become a fan of Vita Plus Corporation on Facebook or follow VitaPlusCorp on Twitter.

## Want to Shine the GMCC Spotlight on Your Company?

Call your GMCC Member Development Executives today to find out how!

Jennifer Bruhn - 608-443-1945

or

Anne Otter - 608-443-1951

# MEMBER NEWS

GMCC Members Post Their Latest News and Updates on the GMCC Website in Member News - Here's Just a Quick Sample of the Latest Headlines ...

Chairman of **Johnson Financial Group**, Helen Johnson-Leipold announced in July that Richard A. Hansen, CEO of Johnson Financial has formally announced his plans for retirement. In the same meeting, Johnson-Leipold announced Russell C. Weyers would become the fourth President and CEO of Johnson Financial effective January 2011. *Pictured right are (L-R) Weyers, Johnson-Leipold and Hansen.*

**Bella Domicile** is proud to announce the addition of their newest designer, Dondi Szombatfalvy. As lead designer, Dondi will work directly with Bella Domicile's clients and business partners to create functional custom spaces. For more information on Bella Domicile, call 608-271-8241 or visit [www.belladomicile.com](http://www.belladomicile.com).

Mary Grundahl has recently been promoted to Director of Business & Community Development at **JG Development, Inc.** Mary will be developing relationships with organizations of the public and private sector to discuss new initiatives that will foster growth for the community. Call 608-437-6181 or visit [www.JGDevelopment.com](http://www.JGDevelopment.com) for further information.

**White Jasmine** recently partnered with Meister Cheese Co. of Muscoda, Wis., to create three different types of rBGH-free specialty cheese infused with President Huma Siddiqui's signature spices: cumin gouda, tandoori gouda and sajji BBQ gouda. For more information on White Jasmine, visit [www.whitejasmine.com](http://www.whitejasmine.com) or call toll-free 866-421-8117.



Photo by Elias Adams

The Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired (WCB&VI) is pleased to announce new Executive Director Loretta Himmelsbach after a national search. To learn about the Council's services, please call 608-255-1166 or visit [www.wcblind.org](http://www.wcblind.org).

**See more Member News posted by GMCC members at [www.greatermadisonchamber.com/member/news](http://www.greatermadisonchamber.com/member/news).**

## GMCC UPDATE

### Construction Survival Guide Promoted on In Business With Jody & Joan Radio Show

The GMCC Small Business Advisory Council, in partnership with the City of Madison, unveiled the Road Construction Survival Guide for Businesses in 2009. The guide offers tips and business practices to consider before, during and after road construction projects, in addition to a list of important contacts in the city to help businesses best survive road construction. This guide is available online at [www.greatermadisonchamber.com](http://www.greatermadisonchamber.com) as a resource to small businesses.

GMCC President Jennifer Alexander and SBAC member Jim Garner (Sergeant's Floor Coverings) also promoted the guide this July on the In Business With Jody & Joan Radio Show on Madison 1670 AM. Listen to the archived July 14 podcast here - <http://www.wtdy.com/content/IN-BUSINESS-29.html>.



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***Vita Plus Corporation is a leading Midwestern livestock feed, nutrition and agricultural technology company.***

***Established in 1948 and headquartered in Madison, Wisconsin, Vita Plus is a 100% employee-owned company.***



*Terry's Car Care technician Aaron Pagel uses a scanning tool to diagnose a vehicle with computerized engine controls and electronic fuel injection. Most newer vehicles have more than 25 computers that can communicate via a network.*

## YOUR ROLLING BILLBOARDS

### Maintaining Your Business Vehicles Makes You Look Good And Saves You Money

BY JUDY DAHL

Rick Beck, outside sales representative for Octopus Carwash and Detailing, spends much of his workday talking with business owners about their "rolling billboards."

"When a potential customer sees your truck or car, that's the first impression they get of your company," he says. "When you're trying to make an initial sale it could turn the whole thing."

Appearance counts for Pete Dottl, owner of Ideal Body Shop, when he's hiring a service provider. "If I see that a business has a rusty, dirty vehicle, I think that's

how they'll operate: I won't be impressed with the work they do and they won't clean up," he says. "I once attended a seminar where the speaker said he wouldn't go inside a business if there were cigarette butts on the ground. It's the same with your vehicles."

Not only can a clean vehicle help you close a sale, it also protects your investment. "Regular cleaning protects vehicles from rusting and hopefully enhances the longevity of their service to business owners," says Shaun Peterson, director of regional sales at Octopus. "Acid rain, rail dust, all kinds of things can potentially

affect a vehicle's paint and even the sheet metal."

In winter, road salt is very corrosive to a vehicle, so a periodic undercarriage flush is important, Beck notes. "And inside the vehicle, dirt creates a wear pattern in your carpet if you don't have it vacuumed. With tight budgets, a lot of companies want to keep their vehicles longer."

In addition to a regular cleaning—wash and dry the outside, vacuum and dust the inside—many businesses have their vehicles detailed, or deep cleaned. "Some companies do so quarterly; others that transport customers frequently might get

more of a maintenance-level cleaning and do the deep cleaning every six months or so," says Peterson.

### Maintain So You Don't Have To Repair

Even if your vehicles are old, touching up the paint and waxing improves their appearance, Dottl notes, as does a little body work. "You can get away with a few little door dings, but you don't want the headlights or fenders all smashed up, cracked windows, or duct tape holding the doors shut—and even small dents will start to rust."

It's more cost-effective to maintain than to repair a vehicle. That's true with body work, and even more so with the engine and moving parts. "According to an industry survey, it costs about \$1,500 less per year, or \$.10 a mile, to do preventive maintenance on a car than to wait until it breaks down," reports Gary Pivotto, president of West Town Monona Tire.

For instance, if you rotate your tires regularly and in the process get your brakes inspected, you can possibly reduce the costs of brake repair. You can replace the lining before it's gone and the rotor or drum gets damaged, notes Will Sparks, president of Terry's Car Care. And if you check and top off fluids, you might notice one is chronically low, which could indicate an early-stage problem.

"It's certainly more convenient to schedule service than to take a car off the road after it's failed," adds Sparks. "Maintenance makes vehicles more reliable, so employees can keep their appointments and do what they've said they will for customers."

Most businesses are small and rely on a few vehicles to keep their organizations running, observes Allen Foster, vice president and general manager of Smart Toyota/Scion. "They can least afford unexpected breakdowns—there's the cost for repair, but also the downtime."

### Follow Manufacturer Recommendations

All vehicle manufacturers provide recommended maintenance schedules, and business owners should follow those schedules. "Most have separate recommendations for commercial and fleet

vehicles as opposed to consumer vehicles; the driving conditions are typically different," says Foster. "Vehicles used on dusty or gravelly roads need more maintenance, but I've seen companies mistakenly use consumer schedules, which may be inadequate."

Regular oil changes top the maintenance list. "It's one of the cheapest ways to keep a vehicle running but it's often overlooked," Foster says. "We also frequently see tires improperly inflated, and according to [www.fueleconomy.gov](http://www.fueleconomy.gov), underinflated tires are the No. 1 reason vehicles don't get the best fuel economy. Proper inflation also helps prevent premature wear, and having inadequate tread is unsafe."

Brakes tend to wear out more quickly on commercial vehicles, he notes, so should be checked regularly. "The vehicles get heavy use and often carry additional weight."

Pivotto often sees businesses overlook having fuel injection systems cleaned and serviced. "To do it properly can cost \$100 to \$150, but if the system needs to be replaced, it can cost \$1,500 to \$2,000," he says.

Many also forget to replace the cabin filters that affect the air you breathe inside a vehicle. "And especially in this economy, people are putting off fluid replacements," says Pivotto. "You top them up when you get oil changes, but there's a replacement schedule too. You change them to remove dirt; fresh fluids will keep a vehicle's internal parts working like they're new."

### Assess How You Use Your Vehicles

Customers often ask Sparks what maintenance they can put off. "They'll say, 'Do I have to do this?' and the answer is no, if it means you can't meet payroll," he says. "It's something you're planning for the long term — if you have to put off a transmission service for a month, it's not a problem. If you put it off for five years, it might be."

The way you drive will affect how you schedule service, too. "If you routinely get the vehicle up to operating temperature and drive more than three or four miles, and drive mostly highway miles, you can

## When To Get Your Vehicle In For Service

In addition to regular maintenance, you should have your vehicles serviced when certain warning signs pop up, before small problems turn into big, expensive ones.


Allen Foster, vice president and general manager of Smart Toyota/Scion, advises visually inspecting your vehicles frequently so you're familiar with their usual appearance and can spot any abnormalities.

"And be aware of unusual smells, or sounds you haven't heard before," he says.

"We recommend people write down when they first heard the sound. Was it when you first started the vehicle, when it's cold, when it's warm, on bumpy roads or curves? That will help us diagnose it quicker."

go longer between oil changes than if you take mostly short trips," says Sparks. "Owners' manuals generally list regular or severe schedules, and most people need the severe service schedule."

It also depends on a company's goals for its vehicles. "If they plan to drive one a very short time and then trade it in or dispose of it, there isn't as big an advantage in maintaining it," Sparks says. "But a well-maintained vehicle will have a higher resale value, and maintaining a vehicle and using it for a long time is most economical. A few years ago *Consumer Reports* posted an article saying an average vehicle owner could save over \$20,000 by driving a vehicle 200,000-plus miles—over \$30,000 if they invested that money."

When it comes to vehicles, Pivotto says, "The main thing a business cares about is saving money and gaining peace of mind by doing regular maintenance—you know the vehicles your people are in are safe and reliable, and can get them to your clients to make sales or to your job sites to complete projects, or whatever you need them to do." 



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Thrive's Capital Connections Inventory Online Now

BY JENNIFER SMITH  
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR, THRIVE  
jsmith@thrivehere.org

Thrive's Capital Connections Inventory is now online and ready to serve you!

### What Is It?

Thrive has created a comprehensive inventory of financial tools that are available for businesses and economic development projects in the 8-county Madison Region.

The inventory includes over 350 financial programs available at the federal, state and local levels to businesses, communities, and nonprofits.

The Capital Connections Inventory is free and available on our website: [www.thrivehere.org/capitalinventory](http://www.thrivehere.org/capitalinventory).

Thrive staff is here to help businesses and communities identify programs that fit their needs.

### Why Is This Important?

One of the barriers that companies and communities face when seeking economic development funding is the lack of concise, accessible information – there just isn't time to identify and understand each of the hundreds of programs that are available.

This inventory, coupled with Thrive's expertise, will allow businesses and communities to quickly identify appropriate financial resources.

### How Does It Work?

The inventory includes a brief description and basic eligibility criteria for each program.

It also includes typical program terms such as loan or grant amounts, loan amortization periods, interest rates, and contact

information. When a business owner walks through the door at Thrive, he/she will know what is available and if their project is eligible.

If the business chooses to seek funding, it will receive skilled and informed support from the staff at Thrive.

Existing regional businesses, businesses interested in locating in the region, and local communities are encouraged to contact Thrive for assistance in accessing the region's diverse financial resources.

For more information about how you can use the Capital Connections Inventory, contact: Brad Elmer, Project Director, at 608-443-1967 or [belmer@thrivehere.org](mailto:belmer@thrivehere.org). Learn more at [www.thrivehere.org/capitalinventory](http://www.thrivehere.org/capitalinventory).

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# MAXIMIZE YOUR MEMBERSHIP

## GMCC Offers Diverse Marketing Support To Members

BY BOB ANSHELES

GMCC Director of Membership & Marketing  
bansheles@greatermadisonchamber.com

One of the valuable returns on your GMCC membership investment is the unique marketing support provided by GMCC. Here are 10 easy ways to market your business through the GMCC:

- A listing in the online GMCC Member Directory on the GMCC website including a 25-word description, contact info and web link accessible for quick, easy reference for members and the general public.
- Company contact information listed alphabetically and by category in the printed *GMCC Member Directory & Buyer's Guide*, a valuable resource distributed once a year to all member businesses.

• Sponsorship opportunities that offer unique recognition and are available for more than 36 programs and events.

• Posting your company's full media releases on the GMCC website in the Member News area, shared with GMCC members and the general public.

• Discounts on local media advertising buys allowing you to save on television, radio and print advertising.

• GMCC Member window decals for your office, store and vehicle. It is a great way to let others know you support GMCC and its mission.

• GMCC ceremony options including your choice of a ground breaking, ribbon cutting or open house ceremony with

GMCC staff and Ambassadors assistance in organizing, publicizing and executing the event.

• Advertising banners that are available throughout the GMCC website in three size options.

• The GMCC Member mailing list. It is available as mailing labels or on disc with company name, street address and complete contact information for more than 1,400 area businesses.

Use the "Points of Business" chart below as your checklist towards maximizing your GMCC membership. For more information, please visit [www.greatermadisonchamber.com](http://www.greatermadisonchamber.com) or contact Jennifer Bruhn at 608-443-1945 or Anne Otter at 608-443-1951.

## GREATER MADISON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE Points of Business

### MEMBER SERVICES

GMCC ChamberCARE Health Insurance Program  
[www.GreaterMadisonChamber.com](http://www.GreaterMadisonChamber.com)  
Business Beat Newsletter-Monthly  
E-Bulletin Update - Weekly  
Membership Directory  
UW-Small Business Development Center Discount  
\$50 referral credit  
Media Discounts  
Office Depot Discount Program  
GMCC Member Mailing List  
GMCC Member Window Decals

### PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Chamber Cafe  
Annual Dinner  
CEO Forum  
GMCC 101  
Business Card Exchange  
Annual Business Expo  
Connect@Lunch  
Eggs and Issues  
Special Seminars  
Leadership Greater Madison  
Civitas

**What The  
GMCC  
Does For  
You**

### PUBLIC POLICY

Business Advocacy on Issues Impacting  
the Greater Madison Area  
Legislative Blueprint  
Campaign Boot Camp  
GMCC Direct Givers Conduit  
Small Business Advisory Council  
Minority Business Advisory Council

### BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

GMCC Ceremonies:  
• Open House  
• Ribbon Cutting  
• Grand Opening  
Small Business Advisory Council  
Minority Business Advisory Council  
Business and Education Partnership  
GMCC Ambassadors  
Marketing and Sponsorship Opportunities

### GMCC MISSION

The role of the GMCC is to support enlightened economic growth, positioning the greater Madison area as a globally competitive place to live, work, play and do business.

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# Dane County Small Business Awards 2010 recipient



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For a full listing, please visit the Member Directory on our website.

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4801 Voges Rd., Ste. G, Madison WI 53718  
(608) 838-5820 Fax: (608) 838-9501  
[mdhaggerty@adt.com](mailto:mdhaggerty@adt.com)  
[www.adt.com](http://www.adt.com)  
*Professional Services & Consulting*

### **Alkaline Consulting LLC**

Stuart Gilkison  
110 Glen Highway, Madison WI 53705  
(608) 576-0709  
[gilkison@alkaline-consulting.com](mailto:gilkison@alkaline-consulting.com)  
*Professional Services & Consulting*

### **Boutelle & Associates**

Jane Boutelle  
6046 S. Highlands Ave., Madison WI 53705  
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190 Paoli Street, Verona WI 53593  
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[www.clearybuilding.com](http://www.clearybuilding.com)  
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[akessenich@dlevanscompany.com](mailto:akessenich@dlevanscompany.com)  
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1934 N. State Road 104, Albany WI 53502

(608) 862-3156  
[dp\\_laura@tds.net](mailto:dp_laura@tds.net)  
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[nissa@ibsystemsinc.com](mailto:nissa@ibsystemsinc.com)  
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[ronb@ilchq.com](mailto:ronb@ilchq.com)  
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### **Service Specialists**

Jeff Ollerman  
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*Business Beat* provides a forum where members and partner organizations can share their views on a variety of topics. Opinions expressed are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect the views held by GMCC management, staff, or board members.

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