

# NORTHWEST *The Monthly Publication of* The Northwest Automotive Trades Association **AUTOMOTIVE JOURNAL**

FEATURE

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## Employee Recruiting Tips

Northwest Automotive Journal is published by the Northwest Automotive Trades Association (NATA), which proudly associates with...



SOCIETY OF COLLISION REPAIR SPECIALISTS



## Shops rate State Farm as best auto insurer, but give four insurers grades of 'D+' or lower

State Farm and several smaller Northwest-based auto insurers remain among the best at taking care of their customers after an accident. And some of the companies best-known for their television commercials – including Progressive and GEICO – are among the worst.

That was the finding of a new survey of businesses that interact with auto insurers on behalf of vehicle-owners every day: Oregon collision repair shops.

"Collision repair shops on a daily basis see how various insurance companies take care of Oregon drivers after an accident, so we felt it was worthwhile to ask how they rate the various insurers," said Barbara Crest, executive director for the Northwest Automotive Trades Association (NATA), which conducted the survey

of Oregon shops. "We believe their views will be helpful to insurance companies and to consumers."

Nearly 700 collision repair shops throughout the state received the sur-

*"Collision repair shops on a daily basis see how various insurance companies take care of Oregon drivers after an accident, so we felt it was worthwhile to ask how they rate the various insurers..."*

vey, which asked them to grade the Top 21 auto insurers in the state in terms of as to how well that company's "policies, attitude and payment practices ensure quality repairs and customer service for Oregon motorists."

The association conducted a similar survey in 2004, allowing for some comparisons of how shops' views of insurers have changed.

Crest pointed to a number of items of interest in the findings of the latest survey:

- Although State Farm remains the only insurer to receive an overall grade

of A-, three Northwest insurers – North Pacific, Oregon Mutual and Mutual of Enumclaw – were once again the only three to receive grades of B or B-.

- Four companies received below-average overall grades of D+ or lower. These companies were Farmers, GEICO, Progressive and Safeco.

- The other 13 auto insurers on the survey – including Hartford, Liberty

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Among those enjoying the Northwest Automotive Trade Association's "Holiday Casino Night" last month were (from dealer's left) Vince Vierck of Re-Born Automotive in Portland; Kathy Garbe of Esquire Motors in Portland; and Stacey Roberts of First Payment Systems, Jeff McLean of Benu, and Dave Roberts of First Payment Systems. The event, held at Precision Body & Paint's training facility in Beaverton, included dinner, wine tasting, casino-style gaming and prizes. More information and photos from the event can be found on page 11 of this issue.

## Start planning now for April's Car Care Month

Northwest shops are gearing up for National Car Care Month in April, and the Northwest Automotive Trades Association (NATA) is ready to help.

"National Car Care Month is a great opportunity for shops to help consumers understand the need and value of regular vehicle maintenance," Barbara Crest, executive director of NATA, said. "Shops around the state are finding various ways to turn Car Care Month into increased consumer awareness, and we're working to find ways to help them do that."

Shops in the Albany and Corvallis area, for example, are once again planning car care jamborees in conjunction with local high school and

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# Shops rate auto insurers...

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Mutual, USAA, American Family and Nationwide – received overall grades of between C+ and C-.

- Allstate showed the most improvement from the 2004 survey in which it was ranked 19th with a grade of D+. This year, Allstate received a grade of C and moved up to be tied for 14th.

- Progressive became the first insurer in the survey to receive a D-, replacing Farmers Insurance at the bottom of the ranking.

- In most cases, the grades given a particular insurer from shops involved in that insurer's direct repair program (DRP) were higher than those given by shops that are not part of that DRP. This was particularly true with GEICO, USAA, Unitrin and California Casualty, whose DRP shops gave them grades of B or better while non-DRP shops gave these same insurers grades of C+ or lower. But even Farmers' "Circle of Dependability" shops gave that insurer relatively low scores, and Nationwide's "Blue Ribbon" shops actually gave the company lower grades than shops not on the program.

- Safeco showed the largest decline in grade and ranking compared to 2004, when it was about in the mid-

dle of the pack with a grade of "C". This year, shops gave Safeco a grade of D+, dropping it to the 18th spot in the rankings.

"Collision repairers say the insurers receiving the highest grades – which includes both larger and small-

***"We hope consumers will take these ratings into account when choosing an auto insurer, and that insurers who received lower grades will work to improve their performance."***

er insurance companies – do the best job of taking care of Oregon drivers after an accident," Crest said. "We hope consumers will take these ratings into account when choosing an auto insurer, and that insurers who received lower grades will work to improve their performance."

More than 100 shops from 47 Oregon communities responded to the survey. These shops had an average of 10 employees and have combined total sales of an estimated \$113 million.

## Insurer Report Card

*What grade do Oregon collision repair shops give auto insurers in terms of how their "policies, attitude and payment practices ensure quality repairs and customer service for Oregon motorists."*

Insurer	Overall Grade* <small>(followed by grade in 2004)</small>	Non-DRP Shops**	DRP Shops**
State Farm	A- (A-)	B	A
North Pacific	B (B)	C+	A-
Oregon Mutual	B (B-)	B-	A-
Mutual of Enumclaw	B- (B)	B-	A-
Hartford	C+ (C+)	C+	B
Western Protectors	C+ (C+)	C+	B+
USAA	C+ (C)	C+	A
Liberty Mutual	C+ (C)	C	C+
Valley Insurance	C (C+)	C	C+
American Commerce	C (C)	C	B
Country Companies	C (C-)	C	B
Unitrin	C (C)	C-	B
California Casualty	C (C)	C	B
Allstate	C (D+)	C-	B+
AIG	C- (D+)	C-	C+
American Family	C- (C-)	C-	C+
Nationwide	C- (C-)	C-	D
Safeco	D+ (C)	D+	C
GEICO	D+ (D+)	D	A
Farmers Insurance	D+ (D)	D	D+
Progressive	D- (D)	D-	C+

\* Based on responses from all shops.

\*\*Based only on responses from shops participating in (or not participating in) that insurer's DRP.

## Why belong to the Northwest Automotive Trades Association?

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**  
Northwest Automotive Trades Association (NATA)  
1710 NE 82nd Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97220  
(503) 253-9898 or (800) 730-7282, FAX (503) 253-9890  
www.aboutNATA.org

I (We) hereby apply for membership in Northwest Automotive Trades Association (NATA). I (We) agree to be governed by the By-Laws of the Association, to observe its code of ethics, and to follow the policies set forth by the Board of Directors.

Business Name \_\_\_\_\_ Corporate Name (if different) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name(s) of Owner(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Name(s) of Owner(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 General Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_ Safety Contact \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Fax Number \_\_\_\_\_ Mailing Address (if different) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Website Address \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_ Name & Address of Branches \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of Employees: \_\_\_\_\_ Year Business Started: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Employees: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Major Business Activity \_\_\_\_\_ How would you like to receive information \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
 PLEASE GIVE A SHORT DESCRIPTION OF YOUR FIRM: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Applicant Signature(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Payment: Check Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Visa or MasterCard #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_  
 APPLICATION MUST BE COMPLETE AND BE ACCOMPANIED BY CHECK OR CREDIT CARD INFORMATION.

Annual Membership Dues are based on number of employees and owners:  
 1-2 employees \$175.00 11-15 \$330.00  
 3-10 \$300.00 16-over \$430.00

Dues refunds will be prorated and a \$25.00 administrative fee withheld. 6/06

- Insurance Services (including licensed agents)**
  - Group Medical & Dental Insurance
    - Health Net PPO or Kaiser Permanente
    - Regence BlueCross BlueShield Dental
    - Supplemental health plans – AFLAC
  - Property & Casualty Insurance
    - Garage liability, general business insurance
  - Workers' Compensation Insurance
    - 10 percent discount through SAIF for qualified members
- Government & Industry Relations**
  - Legislative oversight
  - Updates on legislative activity
  - Regulatory agency representation
- Information Resource**
  - Northwest Automotive Journal
  - Website: www.aboutNATA.org
  - Industry Updates
- Public Relations**
  - Statewide projects to increase public awareness of the automotive industry
- Human Resource Services**
  - Employee handbooks
  - Required posters (federal and state)
  - Resource for employment questions
  - Employment referral program
- Customer Referrals**
  - Shop listing on website
  - Motorists looking for a qualified shop contact NATA for referrals
  - Members refer customers to other member shops around the Northwest
- Misc. Discounted Services**
  - Bankcard processing discount
  - Credit Union – Pacific NW Federal Credit Union
  - Laundry services - Overall Laundry
  - Legal consultation
  - Payroll processing - ADP
  - Pre-collection, collection services - NACM
- Training & Events**
  - Industry-specific training
  - Local informational meetings
  - Business/Management education
  - Hazard communication training
  - Environmental compliance assistance
  - Employment & human resource issues
  - Sales, marketing and customer relations
- Safety & Health Services**
  - Free shop inspections
  - Safety committee management
  - Sample safety programs
  - Discounts on safety supplies: first aid kits, eye wash stations, signs and labels, spill kits
- Industry Affiliations**
  - Society of Collision Repair Specialists
  - Automotive Service Excellence (ASE)
  - Northwest Education Automotive Training
  - National Auto Body Council (NABC)
  - Automotive Recyclers Association
- Technical Education Advocates**
  - Local and statewide efforts to support high school and college auto-related programs, as well as on-going technician training

**Check us out online: www.aboutNATA.org**  
**Or call us at (503) 253-9898 or (800) 730-7282**