



## *The Industry Update*

A membership service of the Northwest Automotive Trades Association  
For the weeks of April 20 and 27, 2009

**New Refrigerant on the Horizon** - SAE International reports that R-1234yf is on the fast track to become the next automotive A/C refrigerant, replacing R-134a. At the EPA's R-1234yf Commercialization Meeting held recently in Dallas, Texas, EPA Director of Strategic Climate Projects Dr. Stephen Andersen made it clear that even though there is no current U.S. or state regulation, both EPA and the California Air Resources Board want industry to voluntarily beat or at least match the European Community's planned phase-out of R-134a.

According to SAE, Andersen said the European Community's phase-out of R-134a starting in 2011 and concluding in 2017 is "slow" and that a more "rapid phase-out is certain in leadership markets. If EPA grants the California waiver related to greenhouse-gas emissions, as widely expected, it and a dozen other states [would wish to] implement quickly."

R-744 (carbon dioxide as a refrigerant), and R-1234yf are the only active prospects for replacement of R-134a. Three refrigerant producers, DuPont, Honeywell, and Arkema, are endorsing R-1234yf.

SAE said that new equipment is still being developed for charging and recovery systems using R-1234yf. The equipment will require special safety features because R-1234yf can be flammable.

Only members of the German auto manufacturers association remain officially committed to R-744; all other carmakers have endorsed R-1234yf according to SAE.

**Low-Cost Marketing Ideas** - Want to attract a little more attention for your business without spending a fortune? Here are few low-cost but potentially high-impact marketing ideas automotive businesses are trying.

**Dinner on the shop.** One shop owner is trying to spend a bigger portion of his marketing budget during the tough economic times in his small community to directly help local families and other community businesses. At least once a week when he's out eating in a local restaurant, the shop is picking up the dinner tab for one or more other couples or families elsewhere in the restaurant.

"It's not a big expense, and I figure every time I'm doing it, at the very least I'm touching three households: the people whose dinner I'm buying, the waitress who tells them, and the owner of the restaurant," the shop owner said. "And you know those people are telling others about it. That can have an impact in a town this size."

The paid dinner tab comes with one of the shop's business cards.

**Happy birthday to you.** Robert "BJ" Bjerneby says that he first put his best low-cost marketing tool to work back in the mid-1970s, the last time a gas crisis seriously cut into people's driving habits and "you could have played football on the street" in front of his shop near Seattle. He invested in a reader board he still uses near the street in front of his shop on which he displays birthday greetings to local residents and customers and other "fun stuff."

**Happy birthday, dear BMW.** Similarly, real estate agents, investment advisors and insurance agents have for years used birthday cards as an annual way of keeping in touch with clients. Mike Anderson of Wagonworks Collision Center in Alexandria, Virg., has put his own twist on the idea by sending birthday cards to his customer's cars.

The shop notes the production month and year of customers' cars, and each month sends a "birthday" postcard to all customers whose cars "were born" in that month of the

year. The card invites the customer to schedule a free wash, vacuum and 12-point inspection of the vehicle.

**April Showers Bring May Flowers** - The Women in Automotive (AWA) are sponsoring their annual Plant and Yard Sale, Saturday, May 2 from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., Hawthorne Auto Clinic Parking lot, 4307 SE Hawthorne Blvd., Portland. Proceeds from the sale benefit the AWA Automotive Scholarship Fund. Their goal is to raise \$3,000 for three automotive scholarships in the school year beginning September 2009.



### **Join Us As The Ecological Business Program for Automotive Repair Celebrates 100 Shops!**

Dick Pedersen, Administrator, Department of Environmental Quality, will present Sherwood Auto Repair with a plaque recognizing them as the 100th shop certified as "An Eco-Logical Business" in Oregon. Sherwood Auto Repair, along with the other 99 certified automotive repair shops, took extra steps to exceed local environmental requirements that help to reduce and prevent pollution.

There will also be guests from Northwest Automotive Trades Association (April is Car Care Month), the Oregon Environmental Council, Jim Houser, Hawthorne Auto Clinic (first shop certified as Eco-logical), and many other automotive shops who have gone beyond environmental compliance in between 1 and 100.

Come and enjoy, learn about Eco-Logical Business Certification, and sign the Eco-Logical guest book.

Sherwood Auto Repair Award Presentation, refreshments, Wed., April 29, starting at 11 a.m. 9965 SW Tualatin Sherwood Rd., Tualatin OR 97062.

*Also sponsored by:*

**April is Car Care Month**, take care of your car, and it will be kind to you and to the environment.

**Free 56-page consumer Car Care Guide, including environmental and fuel economy information!**

The P20 Group

To RSVP, or for more information on how to become an Eco-logical Business, contact the NATA office, 503 253-9898 or 800 730-7282.

### **Have questions? Want more information? We are here for you!**

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