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KIRK'S CORNER

Do Clean, Stocked Rest Rooms Make a Difference? – Of Course, They Do



By Kirk Mccauley,
Director Of Member
Relations &
Government Affairs

Clean rest rooms have always been a traffic builder, but I never could put a number or percentage to the clean vs average vs poor. Doing some research, I found a survey published by National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS) that does put numbers to clean rest rooms. This survey was taken pre-COVID, and I would think the uncharted waters of COVID 19 would make it even more relevant.

The 10th Annual Healthy Hand Washing Survey reveals the business benefits of a well-kept restroom

March 22, 2019

MENOMONEE FALLS, Wis. – One in two Americans are willing to ante up more cash at businesses that have clean, well-maintained restrooms according to the 10th Annual Healthy Hand Washing Survey by Bradley Corp. The number of those who will “definitely” or “probably” spend more money has hiked up seven points to 52% this year compared to 45% in 2018.

“Consistently, over the 10 years of our survey, a large majority of Americans say they expect a high-quality business to have a high-quality restroom,” said Jon Dommissie, director of strategy and corporate development for Bradley Corp, in a press release. “When a customer encounters a messy restroom, their perception of that business and its products and services are tarnished. Even worse, 55% are unlikely to return to a business after a bad restroom experience, which can have a devastating effect on sales.”

In addition, 64% of consumers make a conscious decision to choose a business because it has clean, well-maintained restrooms. Women are even more likely to be drawn to pleasing restrooms compared to men (67% vs. 61%). Clean



When a customer encounters a messy restroom, their perception of that business and its products and services are tarnished.

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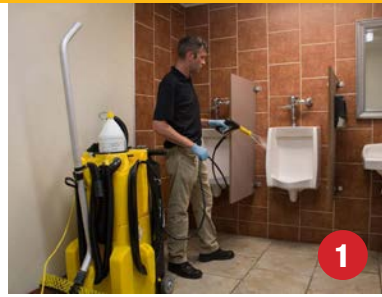


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Do Clean, Stocked Rest Rooms Make a Difference? – Of Course, They Do

Continued from page 1

restrooms are so desirable that one in three Americans say they'd pay to use a restroom if they were assured it was clean and well-stocked.

“On the flip side, well-maintained restrooms attract customers who reward those businesses with increased spending. It simply makes good business sense to keep restrooms clean and modern-looking so customers come back,” Dommissie said.

“Nearly 60% of Americans tell us that, on average, they use public restrooms anywhere from one to five times per week, and an additional 21% use restrooms six or more times a week,” he added. “In all, 80% of people regularly use public restrooms. As odd as it may sound, for many of us, public restrooms are an important part of our everyday lives. Public restrooms also provide functional space beyond the necessities of using the toilet and washing hands. Almost half of adults utilize restrooms to check their appearance and 40% blow their nose or cough. Interestingly, 27% regard restrooms as a respite or getaway. They visit the restroom to avoid someone, cry, hide or take a mental health break. Another 25% use their cellphone in restrooms.

Despite visiting restrooms regularly, Americans report an increasingly high degree of aggravation with them. Their top aggravations include toilets that are clogged or not flushed (85%), empty or jammed toilet paper dispensers (83%), and partition doors that don't latch (78%). In all, nearly 70% of Americans reported having an unpleasant restroom. END

Over the years I have looked at gas stations, repair facilities and convenience stores of all ages while doing the Customer Service Contest. Clean well stocked rest rooms are a bellwether to how a location is perceived in the eyes of a customer. I could see pride in employees when I come out and say, “nice rest room” Small or big, old, or new, they all can be clean and well stocked.

SBA still accepting Economic Injury Disaster Loans

<https://www.sba.gov/page/disaster-loan-applications>

Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)

On August 24, SBA released a new Interim Final Rule (IFR), which provides that owner-employees with less than a 5 percent ownership stake in C and S corporations are not subject to the owner-employee compensation rule. The rule makes no reference to partners, meaning a general partner with any interest in a partnership appears to be an owner under these rules.

There are final rules on rent and mortgage interest also. Link below:

<https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/2020-08/PPP%20IFR%20-%20Ownership-508.pdf>

Executive Orders in Maryland

AFL-CIO is one of the groups pressing Governor Hogan to make an executive order to give DLLR the authority to enforce COVID orders on Face Mask and social distancing saying OSHA is not doing their job. The Governor's administration so far has not done so saying counties are already authorized to enforce all COVID executive orders for face mask and social distancing in businesses and new orders are not needed.

District of Columbia

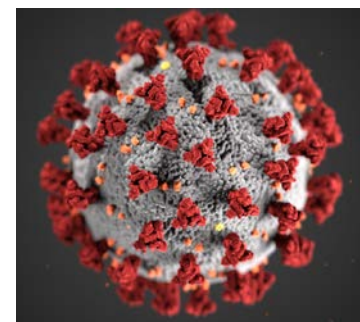
Mayor Bowser signed the Fiscal year 2021 Support Act of 2020. WMDA/CAR lobbied to eliminate new taxes and fees for business as some members of council had wanted. We knew gas taxes would be raised and they were. The final bill did refrain from upping business fees and adding more tax to business for the most part. Mayor Bowser and Chairman Mendelson also supported that position. Now for the gas tax:

As of October 1, 2020:

Tax \$.2350 per gallon and surcharge of \$.053 per gallon = \$.2880 per gallon

As of October 1, 2021

Tax \$.2350 per gallon and surcharge of \$.1030 per gallon = \$.3380



Beginning October 1, 2022 the Consumer Price Index (CPI) will determine the surcharge adjustment. Link to the entire bill below, motor fuel page is 126 <https://lims.dccouncil.us/downloads/LIMS/45466/Signed-Act/B23-0867-Signed-Act.pdf>

Data and Your Customers Cars

OBD 2 onboard diagnostics works for anyone with a scanner to receive information on vehicle maintenance and performance. Today's cars are sending information wirelessly and not to everyone. Can the vehicle owner receive information from a device he/she paid for? Will your regular repair facility receive this information? Well the answer is no to both. Vehicle manufacture and dealerships will receive this information which can include driving behavior, GPS location, maintenance due, fuel data, engine hours and so much more.

All shops should sign on to the letter that the Auto Care Association has put together. Shops should electronically send the link to their customers to do the same. You purchase a vehicle you should have the choice of where information is sent or stored. Link to Auto Care Association telematics

page; <https://www.autocare.org/telematics/>

Any questions email Kirk kmccauley@wmda.com or text to 301-775-0221

Programs by State and county Government

Below is a list of state and county links to relief efforts on COVID 19, some of these programs are closed but more funds could become available. Most are still open especially for small business and provide lots of information

Relief programs by state

District of Columbia
<https://coronavirus.dc.gov/page/dc-small-business-microgrants-program-report>

Relief Grants-DE and New Castle County
<https://news.delaware.gov/2020/08/19/state-of-delaware-new-castle-county-launch-100m-grant-program-for-small-businesses-and-non>

Relief grants and Loans MD
https://open.maryland.gov/blog/additional-covid-19-loans-now-available-maryland-small-businesses/?fbclid=IwAR0fVOoELwb3v3s4_FO

Counties in MD with relief programs

- AA
<https://www.aedc.org/business/financing-and-tax-credits/small-business-customer-employee-protection-grant/>
- Baltimore City
<https://www.baltimoretogether.com/>
- Baltimore County
<https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/News/BaltimoreCountyNow/olszewski-announces-major-covid-19-economic-relief-efforts>
- Carroll Co.
<https://carrollbiz.org/carrollrebound/carrollrebound-business/>
- Cecil Co.
<https://www.ccgov.org/home/showdocument?id=37856>
- Charles Co.
<https://www.meetcharlescounty.com/charles-county-covid-19-business-loans/>
- Harford Co.
<http://www.harfordcountymd.gov/2880/COVID-19-Business-Relief-Grants>
- Montgomery Co.
https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Biz-Resources/pheg/?mc_cid=0589777520&mc_eid=dd1c77971a
- Princes Georges Co.
<https://www.pgcedc.com/covid-business-fund-2020> ■

Covid-19 Positive



By Sandi Weaver
BA Auto Care, Inc.

Well, it happened. We had an employee who tested positive for Covid-19. We knew it was only a matter of time before someone in our shop was affected but it certainly didn't make it any easier. I thought I would share our experience to hopefully help other shop owners to avoid or understand what to do if it happens at your shop. I know we are not the only shop to have this experience so please feel free to share how you handled the situation or what you might do next time.

Sunday night I got a text from our newest employee, we'll call him Bob (started just three weeks ago), asking me to call him. I called and heard the dreaded news, his adult niece's boyfriend tested positive and she had just been down to see him. The boyfriend showed no symptoms but needed the test to return to college. Bob, his wife and niece, who lives with them, all got tested on Tuesday and received their results back on Wednesday which were negative. Being as Bob's wife works for John's Hopkins, they consulted their doctor who said with no symptoms and negative test results, he was ok to return to work the following Monday. So Bob returned on Monday. Come Wednesday, he and his wife had a fever and a few other minor symptoms. They were again tested but this time, the tests came back positive. Having been in the shop for two days, we had a lot of worried employees, including myself.

What saved the rest of us from getting Covid was Bob's consistent wearing of a face covering and with him being a technician and not in the office very often. Overall, he was out for a total of three weeks and no other employees or customers have it.

Listed here are the steps we take to ensure our employees and customers are safe:

- Wipe down high touch areas on vehicles with sanitizing wipes
- Ionize ever vehicle we work on
- Wear masks at all times when inside the building and within 6 feet of another person when in the shop
- Keeping our lobby/waiting room closed
- Take everyone's temperature each morning
- Periodically wiping down high touch areas in the building
- Not allowing parts delivery person or anyone else into the office
- Using hand sanitizer or washing hands regularly
- Wearing face mask and gloves when in a customer's vehicle

While I think we are doing a lot of things correctly, there is one thing I would have done differently and will do, should someone else test positive. I wouldn't have let Bob come back to work after receiving a negative test. Knowing it can take up to two weeks for someone to have symptoms or to test positive. I should have known better and not allowed him to return even though his doctor said he was good to go.

Knowing no matter what we do to protect ourselves, our employees and our families, we are all still at risk of getting Covid-19. What we can't do is live in fear nor can we ignore. If you haven't written up a procedure for how to handle Covid-19, I highly recommend doing so as soon as possible and sharing it with your employees. ■



What saved the rest of us from getting Covid was Bob's consistent wearing of a face covering and with him being a technician and not in the office very often.

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Beware of What Lies Beneath

By James L. Parsons, Jr., Lynott, Lynott & Parsons, P.A.

If you are a gas station operator, chances are you have had some experience with the subject of environmental contamination. For prospective new tenants of gas station properties, it is especially critical to properly protect the new business against the possibility of preexisting contamination, as illustrated by the case of *Rosenblatt v. Exxon Company, U.S.A. et al.*, 335 Md. 58 (1994).

In that case, a new tenant (Mr. Rosenblatt) leased a parcel of land that was previously used as an Exxon gas station for the operation of a quick lube business. The lease agreement provided that Rosenblatt was accepting the property “as is,” but was contingent upon his obtaining a special exception for the operation of the quick lube business and a building permit for construction. In preparation for the construction of his new facility, Rosenblatt hired a consultant to prepare a geotechnical study. That study noted a “very strong” hydrocarbon odor in the soil, and recommended that a separate environmental study be performed. Meanwhile, Rosenblatt obtained his special exception, and began paying rent. He then notified Exxon of the possible contamination. Exxon responded that the consultant’s report was a geotechnical study and not an environmental report, and denied responsibility for any contamination at the site.

Rosenblatt then requested his consultant to conduct an environmental study, and that study discovered extensive petroleum contamination. As a result of that discovery, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) was notified. MDE conducted its own investigation and issued a notice of violation, and required Exxon to perform a hydrogeological study. After commencing that study, Exxon undertook a remediation of the property. Rosenblatt was informed by the State’s Hazardous and Solid Waste Management Administration that he could continue with construction of the quick lube facility, but that construction would have to be coordinated with Exxon’s remediation work.

Rosenblatt then filed suit against Exxon, seeking to be reimbursed for the expenses that he incurred as a result of the contamination, and lost profits from the planned quick lube business. The causes of action that he alleged in his complaint included negligence, strict liability, trespass, and nuisance. Shortly after he filed suit, his bank informed him that it would not finance the quick lube project, in part due to the contamination that was discovered. Without his financing, Rosenblatt was unable to start his new business.

Rosenblatt subsequently added as defendants in his lawsuit the prior independent service station dealers who operated the Exxon gas station at the site. Exxon and the other defendants filed a motion for summary judgment, asking the court to enter judgment in their favor as to all of Rosenblatt’s claims. The circuit court granted the motion, finding that the claims raised by Rosenblatt (negligence, strict liability, trespass, and nuisance) were available only to occupants of neighboring land, and that Exxon did not owe any duty to Rosenblatt that would give rise to a negligence claim. Rosenblatt appealed the trial court’s decision, and the case was ultimately heard by the Court of Appeals of Maryland, the highest court in the state.

The Court of Appeals affirmed the judgment of the trial court. With respect to the claim for strict liability, the court recognized that “one who carries on an abnormally





dangerous activity is subject to liability for harm . . . resulting from the activity, although he has exercised the utmost care to prevent the harm,” *i.e.*, the person conducting the dangerous activity is “strictly liable,” regardless of the absence of fault. The court noted that the doctrine of strict liability has been applied to a claim by a residential property owner against the owner of an adjacent gas station after gasoline leaked into the residential property owner’s well, and also to claims by purchasers against prior owners of contaminated property. However, the court rejected Rosenblatt’s claim for strict liability, in part because Exxon and the prior dealer/tenants did not own the land. The court was unwilling to extend the application of the doctrine to a claim by a tenant against a prior tenant.

In addressing the claim for negligence, the court recited the principle that a person asserting a claim for negligence (the plaintiff) must establish that the person being sued (the defendant) has a “duty” to protect the plaintiff from injury. The court rejected Rosenblatt’s claim for negligence, because it was “unwilling to impose upon a lessee of commercial property a duty to remote successor lessees for losses resulting from a condition on the property that could have

been discovered with reasonable diligence prior to occupancy and thus could have been avoided.” 335 Md. at 77. The court expanded on this finding as follows:

A lessee of commercial property . . . is expected to make basic inquiry and inspection of the property prior to entering into a lease. When Rosenblatt entered into the lease, he was aware that the property had been used for a gas station. Thus, he knew or should have known that gasoline contamination was possible. He could have required that the property be tested for contamination; he could have negotiated express warranties in the lease. He was in a position to avoid completely the harm he now alleges.

Id. at 77-78. The court found that since no duty was owed to Rosenblatt, Exxon was entitled to judgment in its favor on the negligence claim. The court also found that, as a subsequent occupant of the contaminated land, Rosenblatt had no viable claim against Exxon for trespass and nuisance. Accordingly, the judgment of the trial court was affirmed.

The *Rosenblatt* case illustrates a valuable lesson: a prospective purchaser or lessor of property that is occupied by a gas station or other use involving hazardous substances must exercise extreme caution with respect to the

possibility of environmental contamination. One way to address the possibility is to include a contingency in the purchase agreement or lease that the property be subject to environmental testing prior to the closing on the purchase or commencement of the lease, providing the purchaser/lessee with ability to terminate the purchase agreement/lease if the testing reveals contamination. In purchase transactions, the purchaser’s lender will almost always require environmental testing as a condition precedent to the loan. Another option, as mentioned by the court in the *Rosenblatt* case, is to include express warranties in the purchase agreement/lease, but it must be remembered that such warranties are only as good as the person or entity that stands behind them. Typically, a refiner or distributor that owned the underground tanks at the site will honor its remediation obligation when contamination is found, especially when MDE requires that they take such action. Although environmental testing can be expensive, the cost is very minimal when compared to the cost of having to clean up a contaminated site. This is a classic example of the expression, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” ■

Work Comp Insights: How Opioid Use Affects Workers' Compensation

Brought to you by AmeriTrust Group, Inc.

A recent John Hopkins study determined that employees who were prescribed just one opioid had total claims costs that were four to eight times greater than employees with similar claims who didn't take opioids.

Prescription opioids are the number one workers' compensation problem in terms of controlling the ultimate cost of indemnity losses. This comes from a recent Lockton Companies report that also states that there's never been a more damaging impact on workers' compensation claims than the abuse of opioid prescriptions for the management of chronic pain.

In fact, the economic toll of the opioid crisis exceeded \$1 trillion between 2001 and 2017, according to research and consulting institute Altarum. One-third of that cost is typically shouldered by health insurers and workers' compensation carriers.

Costs Are Hidden

Many claims professionals, CFOs and corporate risk managers are oblivious to how much influence prescription drugs have on their claims costs. They're aware of the discount pricing their third-party administrator communicates to them but are unaware of what pharmacy stewardship reports fail to mention.

What's contributing to hidden prescription costs is a process called physician dispensing, which allows doctors to sell opioids to injured workers at a markup of 60-300% more than what a pharmacy benefits manager would charge.

What's more, research shows that when physician dispensing takes place, doctors prescribe 3.2 times the quantity of opioids that they should.

Claims Are Skyrocketing

A recent John Hopkins study determined that employees who were prescribed just one opioid had total claims costs that were four to eight times greater than employees with similar claims who didn't take opioids. The reason was that employees who took opioid prescriptions had increased emergency room visits for addiction treatment, related illness, overdose and even death.

The opioid epidemic is becoming even more important in workers' compensation settings since prolonged opioid use has been associated with poorer outcomes, longer periods of disability and higher medical costs for injured workers.



Government Action

Many states either have implemented parameters on prescribing opioids or are in the process of doing so. For example, some states now limit the quantity of opioids dispensed for first-time prescriptions. Certain states are also proposing that opioids are kept off insurers' preferred lists for pain medications.



Some workers' compensation carriers and government agencies that have shouldered the cost of the opioid crisis want their money back. But any reimbursement is likely to require an investigation by Congress, lawsuits by individual states, counties and cities, collaboration among attorneys general and class-action lawsuits.

Contact AmeriTrust at 800.825.9489 for more information on workers' compensation insurance. ■

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Using Instagram to Expand Your Reach & Boost Your Sales

It's no secret that social media has exploded. Although Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram all started out as quick and easy ways to connect with friends and share content, they have gradually evolved into platforms that offer a dynamic way to build your business. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has only increased their importance as internet usage took a geometric jump after more than 155-million Americans went into lockdown and began practicing social distancing this past spring – a shift that has dramatically altered the way people shop for tires, repairs, and parts and just about everything else. Even though the economy is opening up, most of your potential customers turn to the web as the first step of any buying journey in the “new normal.”

While almost every business has a website and a Facebook page these days, most overlook the growing power of Instagram. Instagram marks its 10-year anniversary in 2020 and, with more than one billion visitors each month, the visual-centric platform that began as a photo-posting app has grown into the fastest growing social media platform today with a 5% growth per quarter—significantly ahead of Facebook at 3.14% for the same time frame. But compared to Facebook, Instagram is largely a network of younger users.

According to recent studies, more than half of the global Instagram user population is younger than 34 years old and the 18–24-year-old age group is the largest slice of that demographic. Overall, there's a mostly even split between the genders with 51% female and 49% male users.

This younger population is what makes it such a potent tool for dealers. With its easy-to-use visual interface, it's a great way to build your brand because Instagram puts a “face” on your business that encourages trust and engagement among potential customers. Having an Instagram account signals that your business is reputable, real, and transparent to this audience.



While almost every business has a website and a Facebook page these days, most overlook the growing power of Instagram.



Plus, in the age of COVID, having another way that people can get to know your business is highly valuable. Many of these younger buyers don't have a lot of experience in maintaining their vehicles, but all of them begin to shop for everything in their lives by browsing the internet. Most importantly, the platform is often used as the first step in the discovery portion of the sales funnel as a staggering 83% of Instagram users report that they use the app to discover new products and services on the platform.

But using Instagram for searching for products and services is just the start. Over one-third of Instagram users have used the app to purchase a product online, making them 70% more likely to do so than non-Instagram users. In addition to this, 75% of Instagram users take action, such as visiting a website, after looking at an Instagram advertising post.

Bottom line: If you are not using Instagram to promote your business, enhance your brand, engage a new generation of customers, and sell products and services directly, you're leaving money on the table!

This article was created by the team at Net Driven. Learn more about Net Driven digital marketing solutions by visiting www.netdriven.com. ■

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Government Affairs Report



By Roy Littlefield IV

As the summer winds down, WMDA/CAR working through SSDA-AT remains heavily involved in many issues in Washington including infrastructure funding, COVID-19 relief packages, PPP loan stipulations, and government funding proposals.

Last month, SSDA-AT took part in a legislative roundtable to discuss COVID-19 relief efforts and the pending transportation proposals. At the meeting, SSDA-AT spoke with Rep. Fred Keller (R-PA-12) and Rep. Ted Lieu (D-CA-33). Both members expressed their views from the Hill and

the prospects of legislation going forward as we move toward the November elections.

On July 31, the House of Representatives passed a package of six fiscal year appropriations bills (H.R. 7617) including Department of Transportation (DOT) funding, by a vote of 217 to 197.

The Transportation-HUD spending measure included \$107.2 billion in total “budgetary resources” for the DOT. And it would provide \$75 billion in emergency coronavirus-related funding for infrastructure, including \$26 billion for the DOT.

The Senate Appropriations Committee has yet to make progress on their appropriations efforts and they are unlikely to make traction on anything but a continuing resolution to keep the government running after the September 30th deadline leading up to the fall elections.

As Congressional leadership continues to struggle to agree on the scope and content of the next COVID relief package, we are fighting to ensure that State DOT relief is included in the package.

We are reaching out to House and Senate leadership, the Senate Appropriations Committee, key Congressional offices, and the Administration to make the case for State DOT relief to ensure vitally important roadway projects can continue through fiscal year 2020 and into fiscal year 2021.

In August, SSDA-AT signed onto a joint trades support letter for, H.R. 7777 - “The Paycheck Protection Program Small Business Forgiveness Act.” The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), established by Congress in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, has provided millions of small businesses the economic relief they need to meet the challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis. This bipartisan legislation would ensure our nation’s small business owners can focus their time, energy, and resources back into their business and communities instead of allocating significant time and resources into completing complex forgiveness forms.

This straightforward legislation would forgive all PPP loans of less than \$150,000 upon the borrower’s completion of a simple, one-page forgiveness document. PPP loans of \$150,000 and under account for 86 percent of total PPP recipients, but less than 27 percent of PPP loan dollars. Expediting the loan forgiveness process for many



We are reaching out to House and Senate leadership, the Senate Appropriations Committee, key Congressional offices, and the Administration to make the case for State DOT relief to ensure vitally important roadway projects can continue through fiscal year 2020 and into fiscal year 2021.



GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

of these hard-hit businesses will save more than \$7 billion dollars and hours of paperwork. SSDA-AT strongly supports H.R. 7777 and look forward to working with the Committee, and the 116th Congress to pass this bill and have it signed into law.

During the month, SSDA-AT signed onto a beneficial ownership NDAA coalition letter. WMDA/CAR urges members to exclude non-germane provisions that would burden small businesses with new beneficial ownership reporting requirements through the creation of a federal registry. Now is not the time to kick small business owners while they are down and target the smallest businesses in America with a new, permanent reporting requirement that compromises the privacy of law-abiding small business owners. The House passed H.R. 6395, the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021, contained an amendment offered by Representative Carolyn Maloney that incorporated the text of H.R. 2513, the Corporate Transparency Act of 2019. This unrelated amendment was grouped with 154 other amendments within a massive en-bloc amendment that received only one minute of debate. In the Senate, Senators Crapo and Brown submitted a similar amendment, Senate Amendment 2198 to S. 4049, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021, but ultimately, the

amendment was excluded from the legislation.

The amendments are structured similarly and would require millions of small businesses, nearly every employer with 20 or fewer employees, to register their personally identifiable ownership information with the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) at the Department of Treasury and update that information periodically for the life of the business. Willful failure to provide completed and updated paperwork could result in significant fines and imprisonment. These amendments seek to transfer a substantial regulatory requirement, FinCEN's Customer Due Diligence Rule, from financial institutions to the smallest businesses in America.

The artificial deadline of August 7 that Congressional negotiators had set for reaching a deal on the next round of COVID-19 relief legislation has come and gone. In response, on 8/8, the White House announced four executive actions on payroll taxes, unemployment benefits, student loans and evictions. In particular, the actions on payroll taxes and unemployment are likely to raise some significant questions and issues for small businesses and their employees in the coming weeks.

Nearing the end of August, the House passed legislation barring Postal Service cuts through January and giving it an extra \$25

billion. This would prevent the U.S. Postal Service from making any changes to its operations that could slow delivery of mailed-in ballots for this fall's elections. The bill passed largely along party lines, 257-150, with 26 Republicans bucking party leaders to support it. The Senate is unlikely to follow.

In August, SSDA-AT also signed onto a highway bill extension letter with the Highway Users Alliance. The deadline to reauthorize surface transportation programs is quickly approaching. Due to the limited days remaining in the legislative calendar, SSDA-AT and the Highway Users urge Congress to pass a one-year extension of current surface transportation law with increased highway investment funding. SSDA-AT and the Highway Users support a one-year extension to ensure that roadway users can benefit from the roadway projects and safety improvements that will occur from a seamlessly continued construction season. Congress should increase investment in the highway program through the extension to jump start the additional funding both the Senate and House were pursuing through their transportation reauthorization bills.

We anticipate legislative action to ramp up in September as Congress deals with several looming deadlines. WMDA/CAR will continue to update you on these legislative developments. ■

SSDA-AT Loses A Strong Leader Ralph Bombardiere

For thirty-six years I have watched Ralph represent our members, issues, and industry to lawmakers in Federal and State legislators, regulators, members of the media, and industry officials.



By Roy Littlefield III

Members of the Gasoline and Automotive Service Dealers Association, the Service Station Dealers of America and Allied Trades, and service station dealer and automotive repair facility operators nationwide have lost a leader, a champion, an advocate, and a friend.

For thirty-six years I have watched Ralph represent our members, issues, and industry to lawmakers in Federal and State legislators, regulators, members of the media, and industry officials. Few knew the industry like he did, few were as respected as he was, and few made the impact that he made.

I will always remember the 1993 nationwide effort when Melvin Sherlert, Harry Murphy, Mike Ingle and so many other local members successfully moved the PMPA members through congress. Ralph coordinated a grass roots telephone campaign from New York; and made several trips to Capitol Hill to help us out.

Ralph headed up the largest state dealer association in America; but he always had time to aid any other state or regional association, to respond to any industry request, and to explain any issue. He was always a strong, consistent, and visible supporter of SSDA-AT.

Ralph always told me that he would work for service station dealers and repair facility operators up until he passed away, and then he hoped and prayed that God would welcome him to Heaven.

Well, Ralph made good on his pledge to work until the end; and then, I am sure, God welcomed this very religious man into Heaven. God bless our dear friend. ■



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What do the Bog Turtle and the Delmarva Fox Squirrel have in common with small businesses in Maryland, Delaware, and District of Columbia?



Small business has become a piggy bank for legislators and are now on the endangered species list. While the above two animals have the state's help to try to increase their habitat and population, it seems legislative bodies are doing everything they can to hurt and eliminate small businesses. A change is needed in the halls of Annapolis, Dover, and District of Columbia. WMDA/CAR is your advocate every day to bring your viewpoint and business common sense to legislators. With COVID 19 spending in trillions of dollars, legislators will target businesses to replenish funds. We want to pay our fair share but must put an emphasis on FAIR.

Your WMDA/CAR PAC FUND contributions will go towards helping elect people that understand the responsibility of making a weekly payroll and having all your family's assets, hopes and future tied up in the value of their business. We also must educate legislators who are currently in chambers.

This is going to be a multi-year project and we will join with other like-minded organizations to get the most bang for the buck.

Thank you,

WMDA/CAR PAC Committee
Chairman Rick Agoris
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