



December 2023 Bulletin

Please pass me along to other stations!

ASSOCIATION CONTEST

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NOVEMBER 2023 CONTEST WINNER, MCLEAN WHEEL ALIGNMENT, YONKERS, NY. Please read through this bulletin for your chance to win!!! Call the office or email cobalde@ssdgnv.org with the correct answer to the trivia question and you will be entered in the monthly drawing for a chance to receive a free month's dues; a value of \$45.00.

ATTORNEY'S CORNER

Challenges Faced by Gas Station Owners.

1. Increasing competition.
2. Fluctuating fuel prices with margins that vary wildly.
3. Changing customer needs

These are significant industry challenges.

Q. Have technological advances enabled gas stations to overcome challenges and increase profitability and efficiency?

Q. What should be the goal of a gasoline retailer?

Q. How can a retailer minimize operating costs, regulatory compliance, and occupational safety?

Gas stations are generally a small business is often owned by a family, some for generations. The storm clouds predict that as many as 80 percent of stations could be unprofitable by 2035, when many states stop all new gas car sales. Already, fewer cars are gas-guzzlers, reducing demand for fuel.

What can a retailer do?

Establish a C-store

Station owners make most of their profits in their stores, from sales of food and drinks, as well as alcohol where sales are legal. "The idea is to have a very competitive gas price, and when they go in the store, you can make money off that transaction.

Establish Repair Bays

Station owners need to attract patrons. The profit from repairs is very good. The station owner can also consider leasing the bays to a "shop" for a fixed rent and/or a percentage of the sales.

Good Customer Relations

A successful gas station requires reliable, honest, and courteous employees. As gas station owners, you sell a commodity, so small things can add up to better customer value. When your employees handle the customer's touch points with grace, you create more value for the customer in a way they can appreciate.

1. Offer a loyalty program.
2. Create an inviting environment.
3. Offer quality products and services.
4. Implement marketing campaigns.
5. Partner with other businesses.
6. Provide excellent customer service.
7. Provide an array of payment options to your customers.
8. Eliminate fraud at your business.
9. Invest in attractive landscaping for your gas station to improve the first impressions of customers. Keep your gas pumps and station exterior clean and free from litter. Ensure your gas station is well-lit at every corner. Prevent loitering and disruptions at your gas station.

The first gas station in the United States opened in St. Louis in 1905, and by 1994 there were 202,800 across the country. In 2013, station numbers had decreased by 25% or almost 50,000, and by 2020 that number was now 115,200. Yet despite the drop, The Global Filling Station and Gas Station market is anticipated to rise at a considerable rate during the forecast period, between 2023 and 2030. In 2022, the market is growing at a steady rate and with the rising adoption of strategies by key players, the market is expected to rise.

Gas stations will exist, but will have a different kind of model, according to a Wood Mackenzie analyst. Many of today's gas stations will evolve into EV charging stations since many are prime real estate locations, making them sites for installing charging infrastructure.

This is the last Attorney Corner for 2023. I would ask that for 2024, our members and even non-members send suggestions to the Association indicating what topics you may wish to see covered in 2024.

Vincent P. Nesci, Esq.
General Counsel
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December 2023 Bulletin

MECHANIC SHORTAGE MEANS LONGER WAITS FOR REPAIRS, \$100,000 SALARIES FOR SOME SERVICE TECHNICIANS

Jack Weidinger has been trying to hire six more auto technicians at each of his two Long Island car dealerships for more than a year. “It’s the hardest job to fill and it’s one of the most lucrative that are hardest to fill,” said Weidinger, who said he has raised the pay for the jobs about 50% over the last 10 years. Most of his technicians have been with him for three to five years, and earn between \$60,000 and \$100,000 annually, he said. “I have a handful that make \$150,000 to \$200,000,” who have been working at the dealership at least 10 years, said Weidinger.

A nationwide shortage of mechanics began decades ago, partly because high school graduates were increasingly encouraged to pursue four-year college degrees rather than careers in trades, such as auto mechanics or electricians, according to auto repair industry and career development experts. It will become more acute as older mechanics retire, and advanced technologies that demand new skill sets emerge. The staff shortages have meant higher salaries for mechanics and longer wait times for customers seeking car repairs. Between 2002 and 2022, the number of automotive service technicians and mechanics in New York state declined by 7,260, or 19%, to 30,750, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. In the next 5 to 10 years, there will be a massive exodus from the industry as older technicians retire and close their businesses.

Meanwhile, the number of vehicles in operation in the United States grew 16.92% to 290.8 million between 2012 and 2022, said Jennifer Maher, CEO of TechForce Foundation, a Phoenix-based nonprofit that advocates for technical education and careers.

The numbers of students enrolled in training programs has begun to rise in recent years, partly as a result of the soaring costs of four-year college degrees spurring people to seek cheaper post-secondary education avenues, but they aren’t increasing fast enough to keep up with the need, industry experts say. “We basically say, on average over the next five years, we need 117,000 new auto technicians [annually nationwide] to come into the workforce just to keep up with the growth and retirement replacement,” Maher said.

Customer wait times up

One result of the shortage is longer wait times for car repairs — from three to four days to much longer than a week now, said Chris Sutton, vice president of automotive retail at J.D. Power.

Between 2021 and March 2023, the number of days customers waited to get appointments increased by 1.9 days for an average total of 5.6 days for luxury vehicles and by 1.3 days for

an average total of 4.8 days for non-luxury vehicles, according to a J.D. Power report, which said that loaner vehicle availability and parts shortages also contributed to the longer wait times.

Channi Singh’s 10 auto repair shops are so short of mechanics that he began paying for customers’ Uber rides to and from the shops last year, so they could leave their vehicles overnight — or longer — to wait for the work to be completed. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, he had 65 mechanics, which wasn’t enough, but now he has only 55 due to retirements or relocations to Florida or Georgia, where the cost of living is cheaper, he said. “And ... there is no new generation [of auto technicians] coming into this field anymore,” said Singh, who has three auto repair shops/gas stations on Long Island and seven in New York City.

At Singh’s shops, including Mukti 208 Petroleum in Great Neck, Mukti 360 Petroleum in Rockville Centre and Mukti 77 Petroleum in New Hyde Park, vehicle inspections have gone from taking 30 to 45 minutes to two to three hours because of service backlogs, he said. Vehicles whose repairs used to be done same day now must be kept overnight. Furthermore, auto parts suppliers’ deliveries used to come every half hour. Now, the suppliers are limiting deliveries to two a day because they don’t have the supplies in stock, Singh said.

Mechanics’ pay on the rise

Nationwide, the annual median wage for automotive service technicians and mechanics in 2022 was \$46,970, up 11.6% from \$42,090 in 2019. In the New York metro area, their annual median wage was \$52,800, up 15% from \$45,860 in 2019, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The annual median wage for NY automotive service technicians and mechanics in 2022 was \$52,800 up 15% from 2019. Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

But those numbers are skewing lower because of the high job turnover rate for entry-level techs who make less money, said Donna Wagner, vice president of industry and media relations at ASE, the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence. “It’s not unusual for a highly skilled technician to make a six-digit salary,” she said. Entry-level techs may exit the field early if they don’t see a career path or are not receiving training to advance their skills, Wagner said. “And those are all opportunities for the dealers and the service repair shops to offer career paths.”

For technicians working at car dealerships, the earning potential is greater, in part because they are required to be certified by the car brand the dealership sells and they eventually must become certified by ASE, a Leesburg, Virginia nonprofit that accredits high school and college automotive, collision and truck programs.

December 2023 Bulletin

"We have a built-in business with the brands we represent. The more cars we sell, the more cars that come back into our service department for maintenance and repairs," said Weidinger, who has 10 auto technicians at his North Bay Cadillac Buick GMC dealership, which has a showroom in Great Neck and service center in Roslyn, and 15 technicians at his Jaguar Land Rover Freeport dealership.

He started working on cars at age 15, when he was employed part-time at a Texaco gas station in Bellmore changing tires and doing other light tasks, he said.

He took auto classes in high school offered through BOCES, and then became an apprentice, said Mirenda, a Centereach resident, who was about to begin fixing a rear camera on a 2023 Cadillac Lyriq.

Being an auto technician has been rewarding for him, he said. "It's constantly changing. There is always something new. You can make good money," said Mirenda, who lamented the decline in auto repair programs in high schools.

Outdated views hurt

One of the main issues in the field of auto technology is outdated views of mechanics' jobs being dirty, low-paying, last-resort careers, so students have been deterred from pursuing training in the industry in favor of more expensive college degrees in white-collar fields.

"Parents and [guidance] counselors have a lot of those built-in stigmas and it's not doing a service for their kids," said Maher, of the TechForce Foundation.

But today's cars are more technologically advanced than those of the past and they require technicians who have knowledge in science and technology, she said. "It's just a complete game changer ... you can't even replace your windshield without having to recalibrate, so your sensors and your systems continue to be accurate," Maher said. There are growing job opportunities in the field and different paths students can take to get there, she said. "There are a lot of students who can take an auto shop program in high school and depending on the quality of that program, many of them are scooped up by employers right out of high school ... while others would go on to a post-secondary technical education," she said.

New York state does not license or certify auto technicians, but those who perform vehicle inspections must be licensed to do so by the New York Department of Motor Vehicles.

Students can also enter the field via a valid apprentice program, "where the state has verified that the program provides the relevant curriculum and access to training to be certified," said Funk of the repair shops association. "The program we offer is state-registered, and after a two-year period of paid, on-the-job

training, they can be certified 'journeymen'; that accreditation is valid nationally."

Some school districts, such as Brentwood, Longwood, West Islip and East Hampton, have stand-alone auto tech programs. The state Department of Education could not immediately say how many high schools in the state offer auto tech programs. To respond to the mechanic shortage, the Greater New York Automobile Dealers Association in 2005 built a \$30 million, 90,000-square-foot training facility in Whitestone, Queens. The curriculum is administered by Lincoln Tech.

It was the first facility of its kind built by new-car dealers, said Mark Schienberg, president of the association. Before COVID, there were about 750 students enrolled. Now there are 600, he said.

The pandemic didn't just affect enrollment in auto training programs. It also affected the life choices of people working in the profession, said Scott Benavidez, chairman of the Automotive Service Association, a North Richland Hills, Texas-based nonprofit trade group.

During the pandemic, people learned to live on less, eliminated commutes to work and simplified their lives, so some technicians left repair shops to work on their own — on their own schedules, he said.

"They'll do two to three jobs in their yard. Instead of making \$100,000 a year, they'll make \$60,000 a year," said Benavidez, 54, who owns a collision repair shop his father founded in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

But there is some reason for optimism that the employment numbers will improve, since there has been growing enrollment in some trade school and vocational programs in the past few years.

Suffolk County Community College has record enrollment for its auto technology program at the Selden campus in this fall semester — 365 applicants for 168 seats, 24 of which were added this semester, said David Macholz, academic chair of automotive technology.

The quality of the applicants has increased in the past few years, and there is renewed interest in automotive careers because the technology is advancing for cars, such as electric and autonomously driving vehicles, he said. "We've gone from something that was highly mechanical in nature and we're moving to electric power trains and 70, 80, 100 control units on a vehicle that are highly complex and require an advanced skillset to diagnose and repair. There has been more change in the last five years than the previous 30," he said.

December 2023 Bulletin

To handle the growth in its auto program, the college is planning to build a new 55,000-square-foot, \$25 million automotive facility at its Brentwood campus in the next few years.

The Eastern Suffolk BOCES campuses in Oakdale and Riverhead have 166 high school students enrolled in automotive technology programs this semester, up from 136 last year, said Leah Arnold, director of career, technical and adult education at the educational cooperative.

She believes the growth is fueled by both the quality of the program and changing perceptions about technical education and careers.

“Since COVID, I think people are reconsidering and thinking about the value of a four-year degree vs. a technical education,” she said.

As seen on newsday.com

VISA, MASTERCARD SWIPE-FEE SETTLEMENT CLAIM PROCESS MOVES FORWARD

18 million businesses, including c-stores and grocers, to receive notices starting Dec. 1

The 18 million businesses, including convenience-store retailers and grocers, that accepted Visa or Mastercard branded payment cards from 2004 to 2019 will begin receiving claim notices in early December as part of a \$5.54 billion class-action settlement. Certificate Clearing Corp. (CCC) is offering to monetize claims by bidding to purchase the claims for an early payout.

For many card-centric retailers, the case represents an opportunity to reclaim a portion of their transaction fees paid during the period, CCC said.

The class-action suit alleged Visa and Mastercard colluded on the **interchange or “swipe” fees** that they charged merchants in the United States from Jan. 1, 2004, and Jan. 25, 2019. Any business or entity paying these fees (typically 1% to 2% of sales) during that period is eligible to file a claim. The claims administrator plans to begin distributing claim notices on Dec. 1, 2023, and the filing window closes May 31, 2024.

Each claimant’s share of the \$4.8 billion total award, net of administrator and legal fees, will be proportional to their total interchange fees paid during the class period, and will be calculated after the filing period ends. This final pro rata calculation will hinge on the redemption rate—the percentage of eligible claimants who actually filed accepted claims, CCC said.

CCC assumes a near-100% redemption rate when estimating final awards for clients, it said. “If everyone in the class files an accepted claim, we project they may recover approximately 1% of their interchange fees paid over the 15-year period,” said Brian Blockovich, CCC president and general counsel. “So, a store with total interchange fees of \$1 million through the period would receive about a \$10,000 award payment.”

If the redemption rate is not that high, the payback will be even greater, according to CCC.

“Large settlements like this typically take three to five years. Given the class size and potential disputes over the logged interchange fee data, we expect the process to extend far into the future—perhaps five years or more,” said CCC CEO James Tharin.

CCC bids to purchase claims. Monetization gives businesses immediate liquidity, it said, without the uncertainties of waiting years. CCC takes on the risks, betting on an upside opportunity to recover a greater amount depending on the ultimate redemption rate, the company said.

Claim forms are being delivered and are available online beginning Dec. 1, 2023. Class members need not sign up for a third-party service in order to participate in any monetary relief. No-cost assistance is available from the Class Administrator and Class Counsel during the claims-filing period.

- *More information is available at the Court-approved website, www.paymentcardsettlement.com.*

Certificate Clearing Corporation (CCC) is part of Chicago Clearing Corp.’s family of companies. CCC has been filing claims and recovering settlement proceeds for harmed claimants in class action litigations for more than 30 years, with more than 13 million individual claims filed and more than \$2 billion dollars recovered for harmed class members across hundreds of class-action settlements, it said.

By Greg Lindenberg on cspdailynews.com

REFERRALS

If you know of a station that needs our services and is interested in becoming a member, refer them to us and upon signing you will receive a \$50.00 Amazon gift card. If you know of someone interested, please contact our Sales Representative Bill Griese at 914-227-0144.

December 2023 Bulletin

DECEMBER TRAINING

HANDS ON! Mastering The Lab Scope: Join G. Jerry Truglia and Pete Meier for this focused 2 days of hands-on training! No matter what scope you own, you'll learn how to unlock all the diagnostic power this tool has to offer. NOTE: This class is limited to 20 techs so register TODAY! (Fee includes book and lunch)

Date and Time: December 16th & December 17th (8am-5pm daily)

Location: Mahopac, New York

Instructors: Jerry "G" Truglia and Pete Meier

<https://www.dormantraininglive.com/event-details/hands-on-mastering-the-lab-scope>

Cost: \$1200.00



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ATTEND FREE FOR A LIMITED TIME

*limited registration available

Date	Time	Course	Duration
Tuesday, December 5, 2023	6:00 PM EST	<u>Vehicle Electronics System Diagnostics</u>	3 hours
Thursday, December 14, 2023	6:00 PM EST	<u>Service Manager's Guide to Shop Performance</u>	3 hours



Hunter Engineering Company offers Training on:

- ADAS
- Wheel alignment
- Wheel balance
- And more!

For more information go to: hunter.com/training/

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

A M S Transmissions
Bronx, NY

NEW OXFORD HEALTH NSURANCE RATES

The Oxford Plans are renewing on January 1st. If you are already in the Oxford plan and want to switch between plans you must do so before December 20, 2023. If you want to stay with the plan you currently have there is no need to submit a new election form, however you MUST submit the NYS-45. Please see the new rates on the next page.

TRIVIA QUESTION

What do you have to do to get a chance to win a free month's dues?

Call the office or email cobalde@ssdgnny.org with an answer for a chance to win a free month's dues.

CLASSIFIEDS

For Sale: You can be your own boss! Est. shop that specializes in trailer repair, snowplow and salter sales, parts and repair. We also offer vehicle up-fitting. We sell and install numerous truck bodies. The shop is geared towards landscapers and contractor's needs. The service center has an excellent reputation that repairs all makes and models of box trucks, utility trailers landscape and boat trailers. Welding and fabricating repairs/parts as needed. We have the ability to make hydraulic hoses that we make on site. The showroom is fully stocked with inventory. The shop can fit 4 vehicles inside. Shop equip. includes: 2 post lifts, torches, welder, tire changer, balancer, band saw, drill press, work benches & more. There is also a private office. We are an authorized BOSS snowplow, Ramp Rack, Buyers and Woolwax dealer. Motivated to sell IMMEDIATELY due to relocating out of the area. Great opportunity to get in now during the snow season. Please call 845-590-5800 for more information.

For Sale: Brand new Mobile Inspection Cabinet purchased through Global Industrial. Purchased for \$400.00 asking \$275.00 please contact 845-279-9598

I hope you enjoyed reading this month's bulletin. If you have any questions, feel free to call the association. We are here to help you and your industry.

❄️ Happy Holidays from your friends ❄️
at SSDGNY!

Regards,

Carla Obalde

Operations Manager



Service Station Dealers & Automotive Services of Greater NY

Inter-City Insurance Fund



Oxford Health Plans

January 2024 Oxford Medical Election Form

Full Name	Station Name	Effective Date	
Home Address	City	State	Zip
Email Address	Home Phone Number	Fax Number	

Plan Features	Gold Freedom PPO		Gold Liberty EPO*	Silver Liberty Gated EPO*	Silver Metro*
	In-Network	Out-of-Network	In-Network Only	In-Network Only	In-Network Only
Benefit Period	January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024				
Deductible (Indiv / Family)	\$1,500 / \$3,000	\$4,000 / \$8,000	\$1,250 / \$2,500	\$4,500 / \$9,000	\$3,750 / \$7,500
Deductible Type	Embedded		Embedded	Embedded	Embedded
Out-of-Pocket Max (Indiv / Family)	\$7,250 / \$14,500	\$10,500 / \$21,000	\$7,000 / \$14,000	\$9,450 / \$18,900	\$9,450 / \$18,900
Out-of-Pocket Type	Embedded	Aggregate	Embedded	Embedded	Embedded
Part D Creditable	Creditable		Creditable	Creditable	Creditable
Referral Needed	No		Yes	Yes	Yes
Network	Freedom	N/A	Liberty	Liberty	Metro
Primary Care Visit	\$25 Copay	40% after Deductible	\$30 Copay	\$30 Copay	\$30 Copay
Specialist Visit	\$40 Copay	40% after Deductible	\$60 Copay	\$60 Copay	\$80 Copay
Diagnostic Lab	50% after Deductible	Not Covered	50% after Deductible	50% after Deductible	50% after Deductible
X-Ray	\$25 Copay after Deductible	40% after Deductible	\$35 Copay after Deductible	50% after Deductible	40% after Deductible
Complex Imaging	\$100 Copay after Deductible	40% after Deductible	\$100 Copay after Deductible	50% after Deductible	40% after Deductible
Hospital Outpatient Surgery in Office/Facility	\$150 after Deductible	40% after Deductible	\$150 after Deductible	50% after Deductible	40% after Deductible
Hospital Outpatient Surgery in Hospital	\$250 after Deductible	40% after Deductible	\$250 after Deductible	50% after Deductible	40% after Deductible
Hospital Inpatient Services	20% Co-insurance after Deductible	40% after Deductible	\$500/Day after Deductible, \$2000 max	50% after Deductible	40% after Deductible
Emergency Room	\$500 Copay	\$500 Copay	\$500 Copay	50% after Deductible	50% after Deductible
RX Deductible – per person	\$150 – Tier 2 & 3	Not Covered	\$200 – Tier 2 & 3	\$200 – Tier 2 & 3	\$200 – Tier 2 & 3
Retail Pharmacy	\$10 / \$40 / \$80		\$10 / \$50 / \$90	\$10 / \$50 / \$90	\$10 / \$65 / \$95
Mail Order Pharmacy	\$25 / \$100 / \$200		\$25 / \$125 / \$225	\$25 / \$125 / \$225	\$25 / \$162.50 / \$237.50

Monthly Premium and Plan Selection

Note: Liberty & Metro plans – exclude CVS pharmacy

Single	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,318.02	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,165.21	<input type="checkbox"/> \$977.57	<input type="checkbox"/> \$888.22
EE/Spouse	<input type="checkbox"/> \$2,606.04	<input type="checkbox"/> \$2,300.42	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,925.14	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,746.44
EE/Child(ren)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$2,219.63	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,959.86	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,640.87	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,488.97
Family	<input type="checkbox"/> \$3,700.86	<input type="checkbox"/> \$3,265.35	<input type="checkbox"/> \$2,730.57	<input type="checkbox"/> \$2,475.93

Waiver of Coverage

I hereby waive coverage for myself and/or dependents in the Inter-City Insurance Fund medical plans

*If you elect the Gold EPO, Silver Gated EPO or Silver Metro plan, you must select a primary care physician. If you do not elect a PCP, one will be elected for you. Please visit Oxford at https://www.oxhp.com/secure/providerSearch/content_doctor.html to find a network provider and note below:

Name	Relationship	SSN	Date of Birth	PCP Name	PCP Number
	Subscriber				

"By Signing below, in order to avoid cancellation, I agree to pay all insurance premiums by the end of the billing month."

Signature

Please return completed form via Secure Fax to: (914) 962-0108.
If you have any questions, please call (866) 573-4768 ext. 2481

Date