

Four News Stories from 2014 that Will Impact the Entire Collision Repair Industry in 2015

by John Yoswick

As in most years, 2014 ended with some unfinished business for the collision repair industry. Here's a look at four of the news stories from this part year that will likely continue to make headlines in the year ahead.

1. "We are requiring that you have the separation of the work area, but that can be (achieved) using curtains and proper filtration; it's not going to require brick and mortar."

Ford Motor Company's **Paul Massie** was a featured speaker at many in-

dustry events in 2014 as they automaker prepared to roll-out its 2015



Paul Massie

F-150 pick-up, the first high-volume aluminum-intensive vehicle. Ford and Massie worked last year to convince about 750 of its dealership body shops – and about 850 independent shops – to invest in the equipment and training to be certified by Ford to work on the vehicle. For shops with virtually

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Auto Body Associations Look Back on 2014

by Chasidy Rae Sisk

From record snowfalls in the southern U.S. to a missing Malaysian airplane to the fear of an Ebola outbreak, 2014 was a memorable, if somewhat frightening, year around the world. In the American collision repair industry, 2014 was riddled with lawsuits against insurers' unfair business practices and other battles for the rights of collision repair professionals, but industry associations still managed to provide some positive experiences for their members throughout the year. As the New Year rolls around, *Autobody News* asked a handful of association leaders about the most memorable things their associations did in 2014.

Dan Risley, Executive Director of ASA-National, states that "without a doubt, the most memorable thing in 2014 was NACE|CARS in Detroit. We made significant changes to the show including but not limited to the location, dates and show management company. We had no idea what to expect or how the industry would respond because the show had steadily declined for several years. What made it memorable was the overwhelming support and positive response from the industry. We are humbled, thankful and appreciative for all of those individuals and companies that helped make it a success."

"I think one of the most memorable moments of 2014 for me was at

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Freer Auto Body in Illinois Raises Money Year-Round for Community Christmas

by Victoria Antonelli, Online Editor

At the age of 18, it was **David Freer's** dream to own a body shop, and that dream came true in 1991 when he and his brother, **Tim**, opened *Freer Auto Body* in Godfrey, IL.

From the start, Freer Auto Body contributed to Community Christmas, which was David's favorite project.

Community Christmas, sponsored by United Way and Telegraph, raises money, toys and clothes for 15 local agencies. These agencies then distribute the goods to more than 6,000 less fortunate families in Riverbend.

According to his mother and shop owner **Margaret Freer**, David would purchase sale items throughout the year and save them for the event.

When David passed away in an

automobile accident on September 11, 2008, the Freer family decided to go even further with their contributions



The Godfrey Women's Club baked all of the cookies for the year's Cookies and Cocoa Community Christmas event

to Community Christmas by creating Cookies and Cocoa for Community Christmas the following December.

"Freer Auto Body is very com-
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Main Auto Body and CitySquare Brighten the Holidays for Dallas, TX, Children

Main Auto Body has reached an agreement with CitySquare in which the body shop will collect and donate unwrapped toys and gifts to families CitySquare serves that are unable to



One of the many children to benefit from the CitySquare holiday fundraiser poses with Santa Claus, surrounded by donated gifts for Dallas youths in need. Photo credit: CitySquare

provide for their children on Christmas. In exchange for donating an unwrapped toy, Main Auto Body will give a free headlight restoration.

Each year, CitySquare collects



(l to r) **Albert Perez**, technician; **Ray Mundo Esqueda Jr.**, technician; **Gerardo Valadez**, owner and technician; and **CeeCee Evans**, manager; pose below the *Main Auto Body* shop sign

new, unwrapped toys and then distributes them as Christmas gifts to children in need. "Main Auto Body is very excited to be working hand-in-

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Community Christmas

munity minded,” said Margaret. “Our community has supported us 100 percent in all of our endeavors, so we try to give back as often as possible.”

The shop’s finances, office management, public relations, and “you name it” are handled by Margaret. Her son, Tim, who co-owns the shop took over as president after David passed away. Margaret’s husband and daughter-in-law are also employees.

The family’s seventh annual Cookies and Cocoa event, which took place on December 4, has raised \$3,800 in cash donations so far, as well as 41 bikes and barrels of coats and toys.

“We bought 36 of the bikes, and then our friends contributed the other five,” said Margaret. “I buy the coats from Rothschild; they give me an 85 percent discount for the event.”

This year, Godfrey Women’s Club made all the cookies for Cookies and Cocoa, while in past years, Margaret and her two granddaughters, **Taylor**, 11, and **Lily**, 8 were in charge of baking.

“[Godfrey Women’s Club] is a group of local women who do a lot of

good in the community,” said Margaret. “We are friends with all the ladies, so one of the members asked if she could make the cookies this year, which saved me a lot of work.”



Margaret’s granddaughters, Taylor and Lily Freer, pose in front of the spread of cookies before the crowd comes

The traditional holiday season isn’t the only time the Freers spread Christmas cheer. For the past five summers, they have raised money for the Community Christmas in December with a Christmas in July event.

“It all started when Taylor wanted to donate her piggy bank to Community Christmas,” said Margaret. “I suggested they start a lemonade or Kool-Aid stand instead.”

The idea for a lemonade stand took off, and turned into a full-blown fundraiser. The girls raised \$2,500 the first year, \$6,500 the third year, and a whopping \$18,200 this past summer.

“My granddaughters and their friends do everything – they wait on people, serve food, sell the raffles, etc., while we make 100 lbs of Sloppy Joe’s.”

The yearly prize for the raffle winner is a trip to Disneyland. Margaret and the rest of the family at Freer Auto Body ask 50 of their friends to sell 20 raffle tickets for \$10 a piece in order to reach \$10,000.

Over the years, Freer Auto Body has raised over \$36,000 in cash donations, toys and clothes for Community Christmas, which is one of the many reasons the Godfrey Women’s Club awarded the shop a Golden Leaf in 2011.

“We are the most respected body shop in the community,” Margaret said.

Please call United Way’s South-west Illinois Division at 618-258-9800 or visit HelpingPeople.org for more information.

www.autobodynews.com

Arson Investigation at Body Shop in Watsonville, CA

A fire at *Auto Tech Auto Body* on E. Lake Avenue started at 10:24 pm on December 15, but firefighters were able to put it out quickly.

The cause of the blaze is under investigation due to suspicious circumstances, kionrightnow.com reported.

The Watsonville Police Department Investigations Bureau urges anyone with information to call (831) 768-3350 or the tipline at (831) 768-3544.

ABRA Expands in Three States

ABRA Auto Body & Glass, a national damaged vehicle repair company, expanded for the third time in just 30 days, in three separate states, and with three separate transactions.

ABRA announced the acquisition of *Consolidated Collision Center* in Park Forest, IL, *three CARS, Inc.* locations in Knoxville, TN, and *Murdock Collision Center* in Woods Cross, UT.

The additional openings increase ABRA’s total repair center portfolio to 258 in 20 states.

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