



# Industry Insight

with John Yoswick

—John Yoswick is a freelance writer based in Portland, Oregon, who has a body shop in the family and has been writing about the automotive industry since 1988. He is the editor of the weekly CRASH Network (for a free 4-week trial subscription, visit [www.CrashNetwork.com](http://www.CrashNetwork.com)). Contact him by email at [jjoswick@SpiritOne.com](mailto:jjoswick@SpiritOne.com).

## CIC Panel Discussion on Electronic Parts Procurement Takes Unexpected Turns

It was a panel discussion quite unlike any other in recent Collision Industry Conference (CIC) history, with panel members and CIC attendees questioning one another's motivations and even clashing over what the topic of discussion was supposed to be.

"Well, that didn't quite turn out as I expected," CIC Chairman **Randy Stabler** said at the conclusion of the CIC "Parts and Materials Committee" panel discussion in Atlanta. "We're going to circle around and try to ensure that we come up with content that's more meaningful and effective."

The panel was organized and moderated by committee chairman **John Bosin** of I-CAR and was billed as a discussion of the inefficiencies within the current parts procurement environment.

"Randy's over-arching goal [as CIC chairman] is he absolutely wants to drive inefficiencies out of the industry," Bosin said as the discussion kicked off.

Indeed, there was some discussion of that during the 90-minute session, with panelist **Jeanne Silver** of CARSTAR Mundelein in Illinois noting that in order to be most efficient, any parts procurement system must be fully integrated with her shop's computerized management system.

"Every time you go outside of your business management system, you're actually using seconds and minutes, and in my world, every minute counts," Silver said.

Silver also said because some of the auto recyclers she has done business with in the past do not participate in the electronic parts procurement system she uses, the pool of quality used parts she has to choose from is diminished. And previously when she always ordered from a particular representative at a recycler, she said, that person knew her expectations for quality; now someone else at that recycler may handle her electronic parts order, she said, and may ship a part her shop won't accept.

But in part because few of the five panelists — three of whom had not previously participated on a CIC panel — had much if any experience with electronic parts procurement systems other than PartsTrader, the conversation turned almost entirely into a dis-

ussion of the merits and weaknesses of that particular program and State Farm's implementation of it.

Panelist **Clint Rogers**, a second-generation North Carolina shop owner who said he had not used any other electronic parts procurement system prior to PartsTrader, said he now uses it to order parts for all his shop's jobs, not just State Farm jobs.

"It's more efficient. It's a better mouse-trap. That's the reason I haven't been resistant to it," Rogers said. "In my case, it's been a good thing."

Rogers acknowledged PartsTrader is not "100 percent perfect." He pointed to problems with its export feature designed to update parts pricing but that has been found to make other unwanted changes to estimates. He said he also would like to see the system better integrated with OE Connection's CollisionLink OEM parts program.

"This is more an endorsement for the electronic process than it is the PartsTrader application, per se," Rogers said. "It's just the old ways, the phone calls, the faxes, not only are inefficient, but there's no accountability. When you do it electronically, no longer can your parts man tell you, 'I ordered that four days ago,' when he didn't. I can pull it up and see he ordered it yesterday."

Rogers said State Farm deserves credit for pushing shops to order parts electronically.

"As an industry we weren't driving that change," Rogers said. "Let's be honest, guys, no one was pushing the electronic thing until State Farm came along. They've introduced something that can help us. Are there problems? Yes? And does anyone like the idea of having anything shoved down their throat? No. But if you set that aside and give an electronic system a chance, I think you're going to find there's some very good qualities that are better than the old system. Is it perfect? Absolutely not. Is it better than calling and faxing? Of course."

But panelist **Ron Reichen** of *Precision Body & Paint* in Beaverton, Ore., disagreed sharply that shops hadn't already been moving to electronic parts ordering before State Farm began mandating use of PartsTrader.

"We were using electronic parts

ordering eight or 10 years ago," Reichen said. "So it wasn't new to us. To say that I needed somebody else to come in because I wasn't doing that? Maybe the rest of the industry needed that help, but we did not."

At that point, 35 minutes after the panel discussion began, CIC attendees took to the microphone, often criticizing the direction the discussion had taken.

**Andy Ingalls** of *Gerber Collision*, for example, asked why the panel was not discussing any of the other — in his opinion, superior — electronic parts procurement systems available.

Stabler also urged the panel to focus on how they measure the effectiveness of these programs, regardless of which program they use.

**Aaron Schulenburg**, executive director of the Society of Collision Repair Specialists (SCRS), pointedly asked Rogers if PartsTrader had paid him to be at the meeting. Rogers at

first said he didn't appreciate Schulenburg's "accusational tone."

"I think you're trying to make a point that I'm getting paid to be an endorser, and I think you're way off base," Rogers said. "Frankly, I don't appreciate it. I came down here to speak for the PartsTrader guys, but not from the aspect that I'm up here to give you a commercial. I'm giving you my honest experience with the product. Will I endorse a product for someone when the product is helping me? Absolutely. I don't think there's anything underhanded."

But Schulenburg pressed back.

"My question is: If a product endorser paid you to be in the room, and you're endorsing it, and the rest of the panel isn't being paid to be in the room to endorse other [products], I think there's something disingenuous to the audience about that," Schulenburg said.

Rogers then acknowledged that

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## ASA Board of Directors Installed During Annual Business Meeting

The Automotive Service Association (ASA) held its annual business meeting April 21 at the Westin Crystal City Hotel in Arlington, VA. The week kicked off April 20 with a welcome reception sponsored by *Feder-*



Attendees of ASA's recent annual meeting in Washington, D.C., enjoyed a private tour of George Washington's home, Mount Vernon

*ated Insurance.* On April 21, there were association meetings in the morning, including a closed board of directors meeting and an affiliate directors meeting, followed by a luncheon. In the afternoon, ASA members attended an open board meeting, followed by the swearing in of a new chairman and other board members.

**Donny Seyfer**, AAM, *Seyfer Automotive*, Wheat Ridge, CO, is ASA's new chairman.

"I am very excited about where ASA is going. We're in the midst of reorganizing our business model, and we are building up our industry relationships and want to get more members involved in the association," said Seyfer, whose father, **Don Seyfer**, served as chairman of ASA from 1996-1997.

Following the board and committee meetings, attendees enjoyed a private tour of George Washington's home, Mount Vernon. At the conclusion of the tour, the group shared dinner and honored outgoing ASA Chairman **Darrell Amberson**, AAM, for his service to ASA.

**Dan Risley**, ASA President/Executive Director said, "With more than 40 years of experience in the collision industry, Darrell brought valuable insight to the leadership of ASA during his two years as chairman. We remain profoundly grateful for his contributions to ASA, as well as the automotive industry in its entirety. We wish him all the best in his next endeavor."

The Automotive Service Association's new board of directors began

their term at the close of the annual business meeting. Serving two-year terms on the board are Seyfer; **Darrell**



ASA's new board of directors, who were installed at ASA's recent Annual Board Meeting in the Washington, D.C., area. Front row, from left to right: **Bill Moss**, AAM, secretary/treasurer; **Donny Seyfer**, AAM, chairman; **Roy Schnepfer**, AAM, chairman-elect; **Darrell Amberson**, AAM, past chairman. Back row, from left to right: **Ed Cushman**, AAM, general director; **Scott Benavidez**, Collision Division director; and **Bob Wills**, AAM, Mechanical Division director

**Amberson**, AAM, *LaMettry's Collision Inc.*, Minneapolis, MN, as immediate past chairman; and **Roy Schnepfer**, AAM, *Butler's Collision Inc.*, Roseville, MI, as chairman-elect. **Bill Moss**, AAM, *EuroService Automotive*, Warrenton, VA, a former general director, was nominated to serve a one-year term as secretary/treasurer.

**Ed Cushman**, AAM, *C&H Foreign Auto Repair*, Spokane, WA, was elected to serve a two-year term as general director. Moss's move into the secretary/treasurer role leaves a general director vacancy that will be filled at a later date.

**Bob Wills**, AAM, *Wills Auto Service*, Battle Creek, MI, begins the second year of his two-year term as Mechanical Division director; and **Scott Benavidez** was elected to a two-year term as Collision Division director.

Risley also serves on the ASA board of directors in an ex-officio capacity.

ASA's next national event is the NACE | CARS 2015 expo and educational conference in Detroit, MI July 23-25, held in conjunction with several other industry events throughout the week. For more information, visit [www.CARSevent.org](http://www.CARSevent.org) and [www.NACEexpo.com](http://www.NACEexpo.com).

To learn more about ASA, visit [www.ASAshop.org](http://www.ASAshop.org) or call (817) 514-2900.



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### CIC panel discussion

PartsTrader had paid for his flight to the meeting in Atlanta.

"If what you're saying that someone paying \$200 for my flight here is me getting paid when I take a day off of work to come down here, I think that's kind of silly, Aaron," Rogers said. "Two hundred dollars and now I'm a paid endorser? Let's be serious."

The panel discussion continued but only occasionally focused on inefficiencies in the current parts ordering environment. After the meeting, Stabler and Bosin said they'd not known PartsTrader had picked up Rogers' travel expenses, although Bosin said a PartsTrader representative on the CIC committee had suggested Rogers when Bosin was looking for shop owners to be on the panel.

Stabler said steps would be taken to avoid any such issues in future CIC presentations. Bosin said he plans to present his own look at inefficiencies in electronic parts procurement at the next CIC meeting, being held July 21 and 22 in Detroit in conjunction with NACE.

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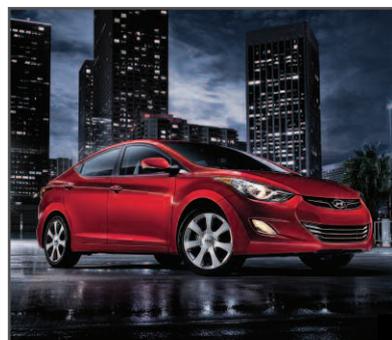
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