

Hunter Engineering Helps Superior Auto Body Keep Vehicle Calibrations In-House

HUNTER
Engineering Company

by Autobody News Staff

Superior Auto Body is an independent, family-owned business in West Virginia's Jefferson County. Owner **Doug Bowman** opened the shop in 1994, but his passion for cars dates back to his years in high school in the mid-1970s, when he worked part-time at a local dealership, washing cars and helping out in the body shop.

"I would go to school during the day, then wash cars 'til the dealership closed down – and at that point, I'd go work in the body shop all evening," Bowman said.

After graduating, he continued to learn his trade, gaining experience working in the body shops of dealerships and independent businesses, before deciding it was time to open his own business. Bowman said when he first opened Superior Auto Body, he was renting space from a car-wrecker. Over time, he was able to buy the whole property and expand into adjoining properties as well.

Having tripled its original footprint, Superior Auto Body is now a thriving business, currently repairing 50 cars per month on average.

"We've always been a family business and when I started here I did everything myself, from the estimating through the delivery," Bowman said. "Now we have 13 employees and I'm very proud of my team. My daughter has been working for me for the last five years. She's pretty much running the office and the shop, so it's very much a family business."

Bowman said the Superior Auto Body business model is to focus on their local market, located within 60 miles of both Washington D.C. and Baltimore, MD, and home to many government employees who commute to their jobs in the city. He said building solid relationships with his customers is what has helped his business grow and remain strong.

"Our goals and our visions are always to do the right thing – do the right repairs at a fair price," says Bowman. "Everybody makes mistakes at times. But when that happens we're not afraid to own



Superior Auto Body proudly serves Jefferson County in West Virginia.

up and make it right. Because of that, I'm still doing work for people who I started with years ago."

As a shop that has been in business for decades, Superior Auto Body has seen a lot of technological change. Over time, vehicles have become increasingly complex, with advanced features like Automatic Emergency Braking (AEB) that require incredible precision to calibrate. Bowman originally sublet that calibration work, which meant sending vehicles out of the shop. But as those advanced features became more common, he began to experience problems with that system.

Besides increasing expenses and slowing down repair times, he found cars often came back to his shop improperly calibrated. In 2021, he decided it was time to bring vehicle calibration and alignment in-house where he would have control over the quality of the work.

After extensive research, visiting conferences and trade shows, Bowman decided to commit to Hunter Engineering, purchasing the DAS 3000 ADAS Fixture for calibrations, the Hawkeye Elite Alignment Machine and ADASLink, Hunter Engineering's premium full-diagnostic scan tool. He was initially impressed with the training that came with the equipment, which prepared the shop techs to use the equipment effectively, but Bowman said the support didn't end there.

"Hunter Engineering's support

and their people and their service – they're right on key," he said. "We don't have a lot of problems, but anytime we have an issue, we can call them up and we might even see them the same day."

Since bringing calibration in-house, Bowman has seen a couple of big changes. The first is faster repair times.

"Using the Hunter equipment has sped up the repair process immensely," Bowman said. "We can pull out the ADASLink and see right away what calibrations are going to be required and get right to work on it."

Ultimately, though, Bowman said performing calibrations with Hunter Engineering equipment gives him peace of mind, knowing the job has been done correctly.

"We know that when we send a car back to the customer it is going to be properly calibrated," he said. "They were failing quite often when we were sending them to the dealer for calibration, and a vehicle being properly calibrated can be the difference between life and death – it's that important."

These days, Bowman is feeling very positive about his business, and he sees his purchase of Hunter Engineering equipment as a solid investment that has more than paid off.

"In our situation, Hunter Engineering is second to none. I have no regrets, and we're still growing with this equipment. I think this was the best product out there for us – and it still is."

Superior Auto Body

Ranson, WV

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www.superiorautobodywv.com

Company At A Glance...

Type: Collision Repair

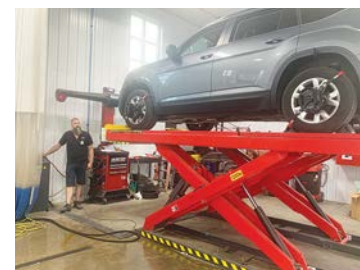
Facility Employees: 13

In Business Since: 1994

Number of Locations: One

Production Space:

12,000 square feet



Owner Doug Bowman said Hunter Engineering equipment has greatly sped up the repair process.



Keeping calibrations in-house means Superior Auto Body employees know the work has been done properly.

Hunter Engineering Co.

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