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Venango Area

Chamber of Commerce

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Business of the Year Selected by Venango Chamber

Action Auto Service chosen to be recognized at luncheon

The Venango Area Chamber of Commerce has selected Action Auto Service Inc. as their 2008 Business of the Year. The business will be recognized for their achievements over the past year at the Venango Chamber's annual Business Tribute Luncheon at noon on July 23, 2008 at the Arlington Hotel.

Each year the Business of the Year is selected from the Venango Chamber membership. Criteria for consideration includes having been in business for no less than three years and exhibiting a number of achievements such as increased productivity, business expansion, demonstrated commitment to community, and a reputation for good customer service.

Executive Director Susan Williams shares, "This is never an easy decision as the Chamber's membership is made up of businesses who routinely exhibit these traits. The selection committee brought forth several nominees, but the recent accomplishments of Action Auto made them the strongest candidate this year.

Bill adds, "This is such a huge honor because I can't be successful without having a successful team behind me. My staff is incredible. They work very hard and pay attention to the details. Action Auto has been able to grow because of their efforts."

Expansion

in 2007 Action Auto Service purchased Stephens Auto Body in Seneca to better serve their customers and expand their services. Action Auto Service was formerly located at 279 Elm Street in Oil City prior to the move to 3778 State Route 257 in Seneca in December 2007.

Owner Bill Kapp has been in business for 13 years and is pleased to be able to acquire a business with such a long history. "Stephens Auto Body has been in business for 80 years and it's rare for a mechanical shop to buy a body shop." Action Auto also added another six employees since their move, most who were with the former Stephen's Auto Body.

Productivity

Action Auto Service now houses both a full service auto repair and collision shop as well as continues services such as their free shuttle service to customers. This year the business will offer even more

value-added services to customers such as tire sales and an in-car air cleaning treatment, which is especially good for smokers or people with allergies.

Service Manager Ian Schilk, who's been at Action Auto for six years adds , " We have a focused vision and Bill makes sure the customer always comes first. We are constantly being educated and keep up with all of our professional certifications to be able to provide the best services to customers."

Marketing

Action Auto has the official Action Auto shuttle and offers customers Action Auto Bucks good toward services. At its former business site Action Auto was known by the red Volkswagen parked on top of the roof.

Bill also has a proactive and responsive approach to marketing. "If I see a need to be met I step in and deliver." That was just the case earlier this year when Bill came across articles by a Venango Newspapers staff writer who lamented about all the problems she had with her car as well as the aggravation in not being able to find a mechanic who could diagnose and fix the problem. Bill called her directly and invited her to tour their facility and learn about their approach to car care. That reporter ended up getting her car fixed by Action Auto with success.

"She was very happy and turned her happy ending into a front page news story, which was great for us too."

Bill adds that the best marketing tool they have is the Action Auto warranty which is 2 years or 24000 miles, which is considerable for the area. "We experiment with creative ways to market our business. Most of our customers were referred by another customer and it's important to find ways to build relationships with your customers as well as thank them for their business. That's always been important to me."

Commitment to Community

Community is very important to Bill as his business has sponsored many community events as well as helped coordinate car shows for Oil Heritage Festival.

This year Action Auto coordinated the first annual Community Car Care Aware event in collaboration with the National Car Council's *Car Care Awareness Month* in April. During the event 30 cars were checked by Action Auto and five child car safety seats were installed wrong and corrected by Venango County Safe Kids.

"We plan to do this every year because I think it's really important to educate the public on the importance of proper vehicle maintenance and car safety. We were fortunate enough to have some really great area businesses and organizations involved and I expect we'll grow with each event we have."

There's no doubt that Action Auto's visibility has kept the business thriving. Their move to Seneca has only heightened their visibility as Action Auto is experiencing record sales and customer intake. "One thing is for sure...Action Auto Service won't be slowing down anytime soon."

2 PHOTOS ATTACHED:

PHOTO CAPTION: An Action Auto technician and a Baker's Auto Parts/Auto Plus employee check the engine compartment of one of 30 vehicles that visited the first annual Community Car Care Aware Event at The Cranberry Mall on April 26.

PHOTO CAPTION: Action Auto Service Owner, Bill Kapp, stands next to the new shuttle van. The van is used to pick-up and drop off customers as well as for use by customers.