

INSIDE: MUST-HAVE TOOLS

# WINDOW FILM™

ARCHITECTURAL - AUTO - DECORATIVE - PAINT PROTECTION - SECURITY  
VOLUME 16 - ISSUE 2 - MARCH-APRIL 2012

## Storming Back From Katrina

How One Window Film Company  
Positioned Itself for Growth After the Storm

Free  
Subscription  
Form on Page 42

**Also Inside:**

- Training Tips
- Vehicle Wraps
- Industry News  
and More

## A Johnson Window Film

INTERIOR: Home - Day

JOHNNY

[Staring out his living room window, squinting through the glare in his eyes.]

SV 10

[Enters, blocks out all the UV rays and cuts the glare in Johnnie's eyes instantly]

JOHNNY

[Grinning ear to ear]

Whoa, that's amazing... Mom you gotta see this!

MOM

[Walks over to the window and holds her hand up to the glass]

The heat is gone! What happened to the glare?... Alright, what did you do?

JOHNNY

It's not me Mom, it's SV 10.  
Mom, Can we keep it? Please?

SUN

[Clearly defeated drifts behind a cloud embarrassed of its failure to radiate young Johnny and his family]

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# WINDOW FILM<sup>™</sup>

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*A Publication for the Entire Film Industry*



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### On the Cover

A New Orleans window film shop survived the devastation of Hurricane Katrina and has come back better and stronger than ever. Find out how they are making their comeback on page 24.

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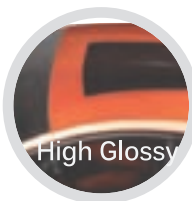
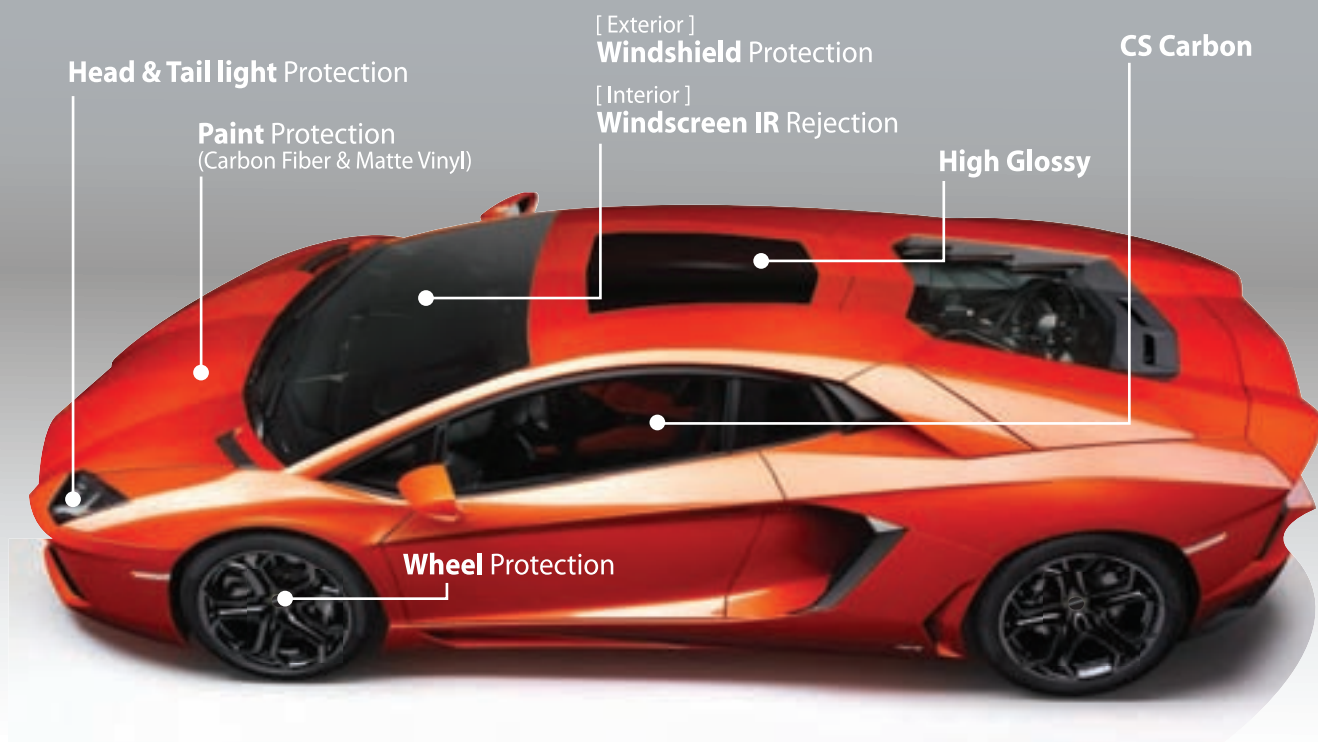
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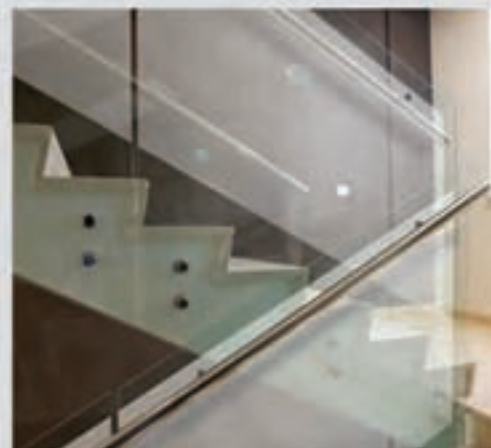
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# DEAR READER

KATIE O'MARA

## An Old-Fashioned Foot Race

It started innocently enough. I opened the door to show my 1-year-old yellow lab that there was no one outside (genius, I know). She proceeded to bolt out the front door and into the rain. She ran down the road and through numerous yards. The faster I ran, the faster she ran. Promises of food, treats, walks and various usual tricks failed to catch her attention. I managed to keep her within my sights and followed her into the woods behind a random home (cue flashback of a horror movie). This is when I realized that you cannot outrun your competition by doing the same thing that your competition is doing. I needed to be smarter. So I began just slowly walking behind her and she quickly slowed down (she is not as smart as she may seem). After being caught in brambles, thorns and sinking my lovely new Sperry's into the mud, I picked up a stick nearby and began to wave it around (caveman style). Lo and behold the puppy's ears perked up and she came cautiously towards me. I snatched her collar and we made our trek back through the woods and to my husband with the waiting car (there were a few choice words spoken to my pup at this point—feel free to use your imagination).

In the moment I listened to my instincts, which was to do what I know. My initial thought was that I could catch the speed demon. However, when something isn't working for you then you have to

change your game plan. Sometimes trying to use the strategies that come naturally to you and that you are familiar with, won't help you. It will just keep you in stride or a step behind your competition.



In this issue of the magazine you will find plenty of new ideas to help you set your business apart from the competition. We are taking a look at different kinds of training—both traditional and non-traditional—to see how businesses are continuing to educate themselves and their employees on page 34.

Finding the right fit between a technician and his tools is another huge factor in determining a company's success. It could be said that a technician is only as good as the tools he uses. Find out what some technicians swear by when it comes to completing a quality film installation on page 30.

Also, back by popular demand, is a new edition of our vehicle wrap pictorial on page 36. Check out the new designs being installed across the country and be inspired to try out new designs or a new add-on service completely.

Finally, I had the pleasure and the honor of traveling to New Orleans to profile a true survivor. The partners behind GT Tint shared their story with me about surviving Hurricane Katrina and re-building as a new company with some major film installations under their belt. Read GT Tint's inspiring story on page 24.

So the next time you are in a good old-fashioned foot race, surprise your competition with something unexpected and the results just might astound you.

WF

Follow the MS tag at right to view a video report from New Orleans and GT Tint.



# WINDOW FILM<sup>™</sup>

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## REFLECTIVE SERIES

These traditional films were originally created for commercial applications due to their highly reflective appearance and ability to maximize heat rejection and glare, but the need for residential use has always remained. Our new Dual Reflective line offers home owners the same great performance without the unpleasant interior shine, eliminating hot spots in the home.

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## IWFA UPDATE

JOHN PARKER



# Pumping Up Awareness

In the last issue of WINDOW FILM magazine you might recall reading about a new informational booklet we were preparing to launch. We're proud to deliver on our promise to you and invite you to check it out on our website, [www.iwfa.com](http://www.iwfa.com) in the consumer information section here, [www.iwfa.com/ConsumerInfo/IWFAWindowFilmBooklet.aspx](http://www.iwfa.com/ConsumerInfo/IWFAWindowFilmBooklet.aspx).

### BOOKLET BREAKDOWN

This booklet is a very powerful new marketing and sales tool we hope you'll take advantage of this year. It is a basic primer on window film and can help educate people who may know nothing about window film at all—and eliminate misconceptions that consumers may have from past exposure to first-generation window film.

Our goal with this is to get the public as excited as we are about the numerous ways that window film delivers on its promises to add immediate protection and long-term value to properties. It gives readers high-impact data in a friendly, easy-to-read format. For example, most homeowners may not realize that window film can be a great alternative to replacing older windows, without the high cost and intrusion of replacing the windows themselves. They can realize an impressive ROI in terms of energy savings, while benefiting from UV protection, glare reduction and safety (i.e., holding shattered glass in place).

We're always scoping out new ways to help you drive your business forward and support growth within our industry overall. And, we appreciate how much today's

**“Our goal with this is to get the public as excited as we are about the numerous ways that window film delivers on its promises to add immediate protection and long-term value to properties.”**

savvy consumers want to get an objective, product-neutral and expert resource's perspective on investments they might be considering for their homes.

### RESOURCEFUL

So—we've created this booklet as a simple but effective solution to satisfy any home (or building) owner's craving for the straight facts on what window film can do for them. The IWFA is a resource for consumers as well as our members in the window film industry, and we're working hard to give consumers the knowledge and confidence they need to do business with you. This new booklet is one resource to help pave the way to more sales opportunities for you in 2012. And, information is power—when you're armed with it, opening new doors will come more easily too!

Please download the booklet and offer to share it as a resource guide. Along with your business card, deliver it to prospects when you meet as an additional way to keep your business top of mind and to assure your prospective customers that you're supported by the IWFA.

To make it even better—our public relations team at Warner Communications is pulling out all

the stops and getting word about the booklet into the hands of editors and reporters at magazines, websites, radio stations and television stations around the country and working together with the IWFA team to provide expert interviews with the media. Please take a look at the news section of our website [www.iwfa.com/NewsEvents/MediaReleases.aspx](http://www.iwfa.com/NewsEvents/MediaReleases.aspx) to familiarize yourself with some of the coverage this has generated in media outlets from Today's Home to CBS Radio.

We've already told you that in 2012 we want more people than ever to think of window film right away when they're looking for solutions to their energy savings, a reduced carbon footprint, UV protection, safety and glare issues. That is the goal we're committed to—more awareness and generating more demand for the uses of window film—and this is one step we hope will go a long way in making it happen!

**WF**

John Parker is the president of the International Window Film Association (IWFA), whose members include window film dealers, distributors and manufacturers. Contact the IWFA at 276.666.4932 or [admin@IWFA.com](mailto:admin@IWFA.com), or visit [www.iwfa.com](http://www.iwfa.com).



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MANNY HONDROULIS



# Managing Mail

**M**y company's network administrator recently upgraded our server to replace six year-old equipment and take advantage of new technology. Our server came pre-loaded with Microsoft Exchange and our personal computers were upgraded to Outlook 2010 to ensure compatibility. If you are an avid email user, you are most likely familiar with Outlook. For those who aren't, Outlook is a component of Microsoft Office and is a user-friendly application that allows you to write, check and manage email, all the while integrating almost seamlessly with other Office applications.

### OUTLOOK

I've been using Outlook for years and wouldn't compose an email without it. I use it to check personal and professional email accounts. Prior to the server upgrade, my work email was managed through our website provider, GoDaddy. Essentially mail sent to any company employee was stored on GoDaddy's servers until we checked our email through Outlook, at which time email is grabbed from GoDaddy's server and displayed on our computers. This type of email arrangement is called POP and there are pros and cons to it. On pro is that GoDaddy is responsible for making sure that the equipment used to manage your email works. Among the cons, it is very difficult to sync all of your email (inbox, outbox, sent items, deleted items, personal folders, etc) between your computers, tablets and smartphones.

In a time when email management and online data organization are key, having all of your devices synced together can mean the difference between high and low productivity.

### EXCHANGE

Microsoft Exchange is the world standard for organizations that want to host their email. Having come with our new server, we migrated our email from GoDaddy/POP to Exchange for numerous reasons. First, our network administrator wanted to manage our email internally for security purposes. Too often incoming viruses sent via email would put our network at risk (just to be clear, this is not GoDaddy's fault nor is GoDaddy responsible for these viruses). Now that we host our email, it is easier for our network administrator to eliminate or quarantine any potential threats, thereby increasing the security and reliability of our network.

But what was important to me as a user is that Exchange provides great flexibility in how email is stored, managed and delivered. The most noticeable benefit is that email is "pushed" to your device, whether a computer, tablet or smartphone. When checking POP email through Outlook, email needs to be "pulled" from GoDaddy's servers, either manually or during a scheduled check, leading to a delay in the receipt of email. Exchange email is delivered to my inbox instantly once the sender hits the send button. When an email is sent, my laptop, iPad and iPhone receive the email

at the same time.

The most significant benefit is how email is synced between different devices. Any change I make in Outlook can be viewed across my computer, tablet or phone. Here is an example—I send an email from my laptop to John Smith in the morning at the office. Later that day, while at home, and while my laptop is sitting on my desk at the office, I can view that same sent email from my iPad or iPhone because everything I do is automatically synced across all three devices. The same is true for my calendar. If a colleague schedules a meeting with me by sending an Outlook meeting invitation, the meeting is automatically placed on my iPhone and iPad calendars—no double or triple entry required. Another bonus feature is that when I add a contact in one device, the same contact appears in the other two. Don't get me wrong, this functionality can be achieved through POP email hosting but third party applications and a bit of manual entry may be required. The use of Microsoft Exchange makes it easy.

Given the nature of my job, I often write mass emails to multiple customers. Many POP providers limit the number of emails that you can send in a day.


After using Exchange for almost two months, I regret that we weren't using it earlier. Having a handle on the correspondence that we send and receive, knowing where we need to be at a given time on a given day, and having accurate contact information on our business associates makes us more productive. **WF**

**Manny Hondroulis is marketing manager for Energy Performance Distribution in Baltimore.**



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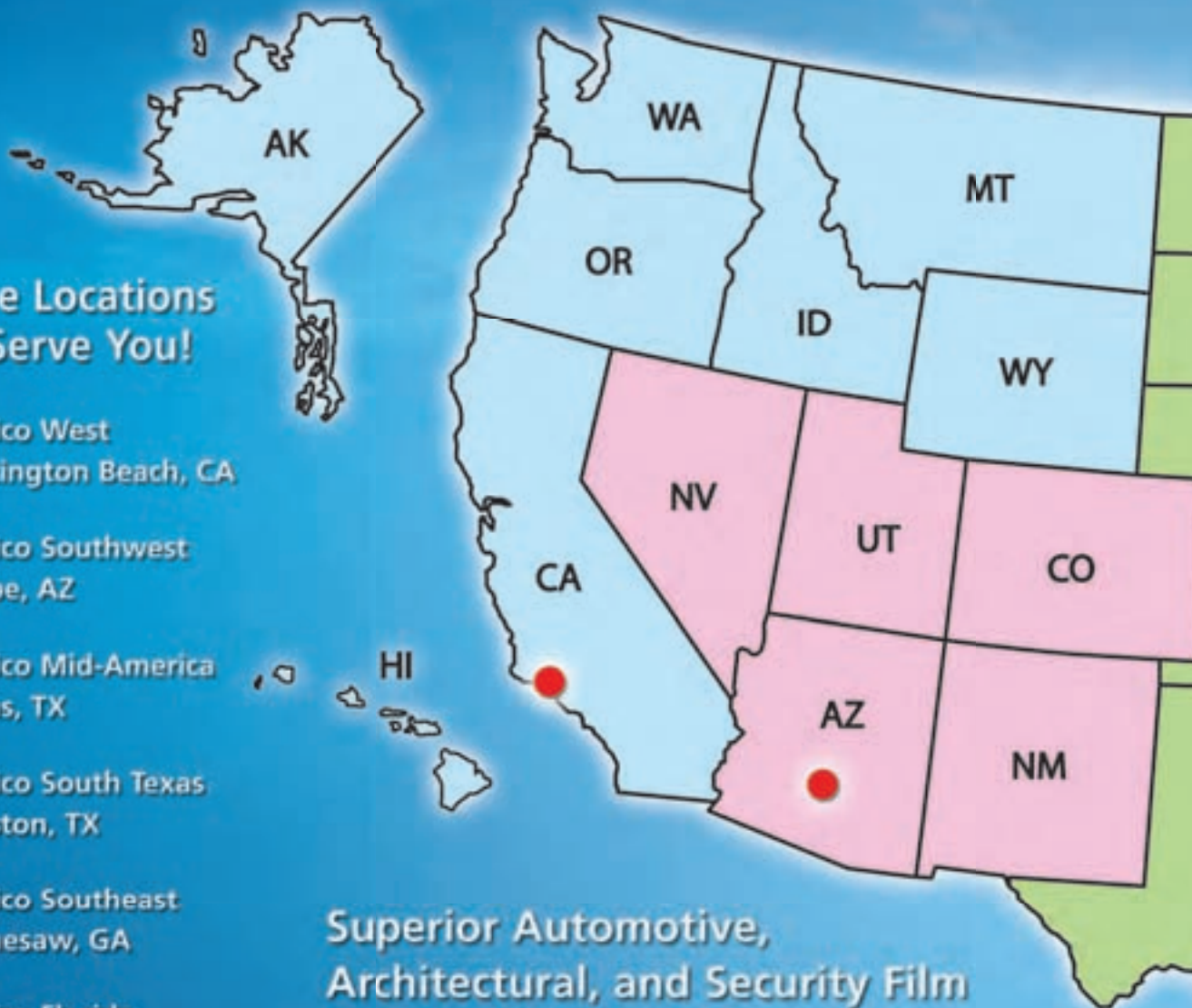
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## Follow Through

**H**ello and welcome to another spring—another year for all of us to set the world on fire and another year to figure out how we are all going to make 2012 the best year ever. Two words come to mind when I think of what will help make you successful or cause you to fail. Those two words are “follow through.”

### ASSESSING

How many times have you said, “If only they had called me in a timely manner,” or “They said they would finish on Monday and today is Wednesday and they are still not finished?” Yes, we have all been on the receiving end of someone not following through. We have all thought to ourselves, “How do they stay in business?” Now, let’s turn that around and ask ourselves, how many times have we not followed through? What happens to our business relationships when we make a commitment and then do not follow through?

First, let’s examine what this term means.” Quite simply, it is the art of completion; seeing a project through its various stages and making sure that the end result is satisfactory. Sounds simple enough, but some people have a difficult time with the finishing part of the job. As an entrepreneur, you must not only be able to

**“As an entrepreneur, you must not only be able to start a project, but nurture it through its cycles, making sure that every step is being tended to properly.”**

start a project, but nurture it through its cycles, making sure that every step is being tended to properly. It doesn’t matter in which area of the window film industry you specialize, follow through is important. It is important to those whom you made the commitment to as well as those who may be waiting on you to take the next step. Don’t fall into the phrase, “I’ll do that tomorrow.” Do it today! When you make a commitment, follow through!

### MOTIVATION

Why do we not do this? Usually the reason falls into one of three categories: 1) I don’t want to do that project; 2) I don’t feel like doing that project; and 3) I just don’t have the time to do that project. We all have things we don’t want to do or don’t like to do. Unfortunately, that is just a part of life. My best advice is to do those projects first thing in the morning and get them off your plate. The longer you wait or put them off, the more agonizing they become. So, don’t delay—follow through.

What if the project seems larger than life? What if we just do not have the time to complete it in a timely manner? Consider delegation. Many times, we have



business associates that we could lean on to help us get through the task at hand. Delegating empowers us and those around us. It is human nature to want to help others. It makes us feel good. Delegating will allow you to complete the project and perhaps boost the self-esteem of a work associate.

Finally, think about your commitment to follow-through and how it affects others in your office? If you do not complete a project, will it keep others from being able to follow through on their projects? Will your lack of commitment cause a chain reaction? How will that make you look and, more importantly, will it tarnish your company’s reputation? So, the next time you catch yourself saying “I will handle that next week,” don’t. Do it now and follow through!

**WF**

### Got a question for Donna?

Ask the Expert by emailing your thoughts and questions to Donna at [komara@glass.com](mailto:komara@glass.com). Individual names and company names will be withheld upon request.

Donna Wells is the division head of the wholesale division at Window Film Depot.



## NOTEWORTHY

NEW PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

### Extra Hands

The installation services of Pittsburgh-based U.S. Film Crew have multiplied in the past three years. Last year, the company installed more than 500,000 square feet of film with 60 percent of those projects encompassing 5,000 square feet of film or less. They have experience



with wet glazing only projects and are being studied as a process standard for a major film manufacturer. The company has also been a part of multiple international projects.

► [www.usfilmcrew.com](http://www.usfilmcrew.com)

### Inked

3M introduced a new ink for printing on 3M brand opaque, translucent and reflective graphic films. GX 3M ink is available in eight colors including cyan, magenta, yellow, black, light cyan, light magenta and two shades of white. GX 3M ink is made for use in the Seiko I Infotech ColorPainter H Series printers and when used with the proper over-laminate, the inks are also durable and weather resistant, according to the company.

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Zola Distributing, a national supplier of window film installation tools, is excited to announce our new free shipping program. Beginning in February, Zola began offering free Ground UPS delivery on any domestic order over \$49.50.

For more information visit [www.zolatools.com](http://www.zolatools.com).



Saul Buchinsky

Chris Baccus

Brien Looney

Wing Kwang (Solutia)

Tommy Silva

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# NEWSWORTHY

THE LATEST INDUSTRY NEWS

## COMPANY NEWS

# Solutia Re-Ups With Performance

**T**here is much in store for 2012 at Performance Films Distributing. With the late 2011 announcement of the renewal of the company's distributorship agreement with Solutia, 2012 is off to a strong start for the company.

"We are extremely happy that Solutia has renewed the agreement," says Bo Ryan, vice president of Performance Films Distributing. "We are looking forward to progressing with Solutia and it puts our customers at ease to know there will be stability with the Solutia brand and with us as their distributor."

Performance Films Distributing will continue to serve as the exclusive supplier of LLumar, Vista and Formula One window films in the Midwest through 2015.

"As the last independent distributor left, I believe Solutia is confident that we have and will continue to deliver value to our customers," says Ryan.

Hinting at some possible surprises in 2012, Ryan adds that what they have in store for the new year includes a new approach to the window film market.

"Our focus is to provide our market with a new and fresh approach

adding value to our customers and continue to serve our customers the best way possible. Our growth strategies for 2012 are all focused on understanding our customers' needs and developing solutions to meet those needs," says Ryan.

## Madico Acquires Select Enpro Distribution Assets

Madico has taken more of its window film distribution into its own hands. The window film manufacturer has purchased select assets from The Enpro Group, including the distribution rights of Madico products in 16 states.

"The Enpro Group has been successfully distributing Madico products for over 30 years and we have truly enjoyed this long-standing relationship," says David Fletcher, president of Madico Window Films. "After the purchase is completed, Madico Window Films will leverage its broad resources to build upon Enpro's legacy of outstanding customer service, while The Enpro Group will focus its energy on its FirstCut program, retail services, contracting and other business segments. We are confident that this purchase will be very positive for our window film customers, for Madico Window Films and for The Enpro Group. We are also pleased that our relationship will remain strong since we will continue to meet Enpro's needs for window film products."

The states affected by the purchase include Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas.



Performance Films Distributing (above) has renewed its agreement with Solutia to be the sole distributor of LLumar, Vista and Formula One window films in the Midwest.



"Distribution has been the foundation of our business since our first day in operation," says David Dickey, president of The Enpro Group. "This acquisition of assets is a testament to over 30 years of outstanding sales and marketing efforts, territory development and relationship-building strategies. Madico has been an excellent partner and we look forward to continuing our long, successful history with them."

## Paint Protection Industry Continues to Grow

Paint protection film (PPF) has taken the window film industry by storm. The future of the product remains unknown, but some manufacturers are feeling optimistic about its potential.

"Cars today cost more and are designed to last longer than ever before. Both factors are giving consumers more reason to hold onto their cars for longer periods," says Phil Novac, director of marketing and business development at Avery Dennison's Designed and Engineered Solutions division. "Whereas at one time a typical car owner might trade in after two or three years, today that period has expanded to five to seven years."

Manufacturers are continuing to promote PPF as an add-on service to existing window film companies as the two industries have common ground.

"The process of installing paint protection film is basically the same as installing window film, so window film installers will have a very short learning curve," says Novac. "But perhaps more important is the opportunity for window film installation companies to

## EVENT NEWS

### Registration is Open for the International Window Film Conference and Tint-Off<sup>™</sup> 2012

Registration for the International Window Film Conference and Tint-Off<sup>™</sup> (IWFC) 2012 is now open online at the official event website, [www.windowfilmmag.com/IWFC](http://www.windowfilmmag.com/IWFC). The IWFC is set to be held September 20-22, 2012 at the Kentucky International Convention Center and the Hyatt Regency Louisville in Louisville, Ky. The Exhibition/Extravaganza, including the Tint-Off<sup>™</sup> competitions, will be held September 21-22.



Attendees can now pre-register online for an early bird discounted price of \$179 for non-IWFA members and \$149 for IWFA members. Attendees can save \$50 by taking advantage of the best rates during early bird registration, which will be available until June 29—regular pre-registration ends August 31. An attendee registration includes registration to all seminars, workshops and admittance to the Exhibition/Extravaganza.

Registration is also open to compete in the International Window Film Tint-Off Architectural and Automotive Divisions. The competitions will be held September 21-22, 2012, as part of the IWFC with the champions being announced Saturday evening at the Gala Awards Reception and Ceremony.

Contestant registration will be open now through July 27. Registration to compete in the Automotive or Architectural Divisions of the International Window Film Tint-Off is \$250 for IWFA members and \$350 for non-IWFA members. Contestants interested in competing in both divisions will receive a discounted price of \$450 for IWFA members and \$650 for non-IWFA members. Contestant registration includes all seminars, one ticket to the Gala Awards Reception and Ceremony, and access to IWFC Exhibition/Extravaganza where the competition will be held.

The International Window Film Conference and Tint-Off is co-sponsored by WINDOW FILM magazine and the International Window Film Association. Auto Glass Week<sup>™</sup> will also be held concurrently.

► [www.windowfilmmag.com/IWFC](http://www.windowfilmmag.com/IWFC)

expand their businesses. Paint protection film opens the door to an adjacent market and additional revenue stream right at the time existing customers are committing to have their windows tinted or protected."

Market-wide the expectation is to see growth for PPF among all car brands and window film shops adopting the product as an additional service.

"From a market perspective, look

for continuing growth. PPF was first recommended for owners of high end cars, like Maserati and Lamborghini, where paint jobs cost tens of thousands of dollars," says Novac. "But lowering costs of PPF technology, and awareness of its value among the auto consuming public, has made PPF affordable and desirable for most new car buyers. We estimate its growth at 15-20 percent for the foreseeable future." **WF**

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# Storming Back From Katrina

**How One Film Company  
Positioned Itself for  
Growth After the Storm**

*by Katie O'Mara*

In August 2005, Americans sat with eyes transfixed to their television sets taking in the images of the sunken city of New Orleans. Hurricane Katrina, the most destructive hurricane to ever strike the United States, devastated the famous Louisiana town and the surrounding area. In the weeks to follow, as reports rolled in, the loss of homes and human life was staggering. However, the toll that a storm like this one could take on a small business was not a major headline around the country.



## BACK TO THE BEGINNING

For two window film professionals, the storm forever changed their paths and eventually brought them together. Peter Kaufmann, former owner of Solar Solutions of Louisiana, and Gregg Taylor, owner of GT Tint, joined forces and companies to promote their new joint business, GT Tint. Kaufmann suffered an injury in the years after Katrina to his shoulder that has made it difficult for him to continue tinting. Joining forces with Taylor, Kaufmann is staying in the business doing marketing and sales for the new company. The former location of Solar Solutions of Louisiana will now house the new South shore location of the company.

"For the last year and a half I have mothballed my former company Solar Solutions. I've known Gregg since before Katrina and we worked well together for years," says Kaufmann. "I finally decided since I can no longer do what he does, we need to figure out a way to make this work for both of us. We are small and steady. I don't believe the one-man operation is the way to go, but I don't want to worry about a staff of 12 either. We have one or two other guys we work with and try to keep our book full about 3-15 days out, working on a few things here and there."

"I'm passionate about the film industry and clearbras are another kind of film we work with," says Taylor. "A lot of tint shops will have car stereos and upholstery and things like that. Those kinds of shops offer window film as an extra service, but this is our main service."

Kaufmann and Taylor came together to work on the U.S. Customs House, a historic landmark and the third most prestigious building in the GSA. The building houses offices for the Department of

**"I was tinting police cars and cars for FEMA personnel. The water was so bad coming out of the sink that the FEMA guys would drop off cases of water just so I could tint their cars."**

**—Peter Kaufmann, GT Tint**

Homeland Security, the Department of Commerce, Federal Maritime Commission, U.S. Tax Court, Audubon Nature Institute, Small Business Administration and GSA.

"Almost as many people came through there as did Ellis Island," says Kaufmann. "We wrapped about 13,000 squares. Since then we've felt like, 'why fight this?' Some people have it and some people don't, but Greg has it."

As the partnership between Kaufmann and Taylor takes off, both are confident that they have met their match.

"I like to sell and market and I can't tint any longer and he hates paperwork and people," says Kaufmann with a smile.

GT Tint will serve the New Orleans market completing architectural and automotive tinting jobs. While Taylor and Kaufmann are happy with the size and offerings of the company, they are open to some additional film related products in the future.

"We are dipping into automotive paint protection," says Taylor. "It's doing well for the word-of-mouth business that we are getting. We really haven't marketed it at all."

"We do like decorative films, plotters and vinyl work," adds Kaufmann. "We have been tooling around with a full wide-format printer. It's a matter of one or two good jobs or some steady revenue."

GT Tint works mainly with thinner films, but have good connections around the New Orleans area and can bring in additional

help if needed.

"We like to think of ourselves as mainly working with thin films. That's where we like to stay," says Kaufmann. "We are not scared of safety and security [film], but if it gets stupidly thick or big then we will partner up with someone or bring someone else in to complete the job."

## UP TO THE CHALLENGE

The Customs House tops the list for Kaufmann and Taylor as one of the most challenging projects that they have been a part of.

"You have to imagine the situation—you are outside in the French Quarter where they don't ever stop serving alcohol and you are allowed to preach on the corner. You have drunk people walking through your barricades and your yellow tape," says Kaufmann.

"We are working off of an 80-foot articulating boom that you have to drive around the building and deal with the one way streets," adds Taylor.

Despite the challenges, Taylor and Kaufmann's work helped the U.S. Customs House obtain a couple of LEED points. For Kaufmann the project changed his path as he sustained a rotator cuff injury that has kept him from being able to install film. However, the pair continues to work towards new high-dollar projects like the local aquarium and some of the historic homes that New Orleans is so

*continued on page 26*

## Storming Back From Katrina

*continued from page 25*



**Peter Kaufmann and Gregg Taylor installed film on 13,000 squares at the historical U.S. Customs House in downtown New Orleans.**

famous for, in the Garden District.

"We are in with the aquarium now and everything has been budgeted so we are just waiting on that. We did a sample floor for a major hotel down here," says Kaufmann. "Most of my good money came in these high-end houses. People here will have \$20 million in priceless furnishings and heirlooms. People have drapes that cost \$400 per square yard that need to be protected."

In addition to tricky projects, Taylor and Kaufmann have found that just dealing with the competition is a major challenge for their company.

"The hardest thing in the world around here is the phrase, 'I got a buddy,'" says Kaufmann. "A lot of our competition is arrogant. They use poor products and are dishonest. They have super-egos. I've been doing this for 35 years and my competition could at least listen. I might be wrong, but at least listen to what I have to say. We are educated and accredited with the IWFA and we are honest."

Following the storm, the men have dealt with trying to educate the community about film's true capabilities.

"I love safety film, but it is not a hurricane product," says Kaufmann. "We had water here during the storm and film can't help in that area. I find we spend a lot of time policing the industry against others. Whether a customer is going to buy from me or not, I want to make sure they are educated and know what they really need."

Window film can help protect inhabitants from broken glass and flying debris, but it is not a hurricane-

proof product. Taylor and Kaufmann has worked to give customers realistic expectations and honesty when it comes to window film's ability to protect in a hurricane.

### **SURVIVING THE STORM**

Life changed for the city of New Orleans as well as the businesses there in 2005.

"This building only lost power for three days and the water came within a block of the building," says Kaufmann about the former home of his old business and the new location of GT Tint. "We evacuated, went to Shreveport and we watched the storm on TV there. We knew it couldn't get much worse."

"We just assumed that everything was gone from watching it on TV," says Taylor. "We drove back five days after the storm and we couldn't even recognize our street. We didn't have power for three and a half to four weeks. I got a job in Florida tinting windows while we were evacuated and [the Florida tint company] really took me in."

Following the storm, Kaufmann actually moved into his shop because of damage to his house and the need for his services.

"It was a complete reset to zero," says Kaufmann. "After the storm I moved in here and lived in the shop for about four months. I was able to get back to the shop before I could get into my house. The police would drop off rations and my wife would drop off coolers of food and tools. The National Guard and helicopters were here and you couldn't get in the city without a pass. I was tinting police cars and cars for FEMA personnel. The



water was so bad coming out of the sink that the FEMA guys would drop off cases of water just so I could tint their cars.”

Both Kaufmann and Taylor’s businesses experienced an influx of tinting needs following the storm.

“I couldn’t keep up with the work,” says Kaufmann. “A lot of the people forced to higher ground would call whoever did the work for them four or five years ago to come tint their houses again.

“The car business picked up tremendously too,” adds Taylor. “A lot of cars were damaged and hit my trees so everybody got new cars. From the end of September through February I was booked three weeks out all the time. That eventually slowed down and now it’s back to normal.”

## REBUILDING EFFORTS

Now, more than six years later, Kaufmann reflects on the rebuilding efforts.

“We have so much federal money that is still here. There is a ton of construction going on here,” says Kaufmann. “One of the ironic things is that I went to the Hyatt shortly before Katrina and there they had no tint on the building and management pretty much laughed me out of the building. Well the roof came off the super-dome and took off half of the [Hyatt’s] glass. They just re-opened it three months ago.”

For many in New Orleans, rebuilding has been a slow process that is still on-going.

“Anytime you have to wait for the government to get permission to do something it’s slow,” says Kaufmann.

“We just assumed that everything was gone from watching it on TV. We drove back five days after the storm and we couldn’t even recognize our street.”

—Gregg Taylor, GT Tint



**GT Tint’s new location used to house Peter Kaufmann’s former business, which helped tint police and FEMA vehicles in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.**

Kaufmann’s house is still undergoing renovation and sustained significant water damage. Taylor experienced long-term power outages, debris and downed trees in his neighborhood. Luckily, both men were able to keep business moving by tinting cars and homes for other New Orleans residents after the storm.

Moving forward Kaufmann and Taylor hope to grow GT Tint.

“I still see new hope in this indus-

try,” says Kaufmann. “We really want the manufacturers to step up and help facilitate us doing what they think we should be doing. Show me how to sell these buildings without charging me \$10,000 per module.”

At the end of the day Taylor just wants to have a successful business to support his family.

“I want this to last,” says Taylor. “I have two kids and want to leave them something to come into when they get older.”

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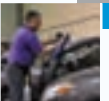


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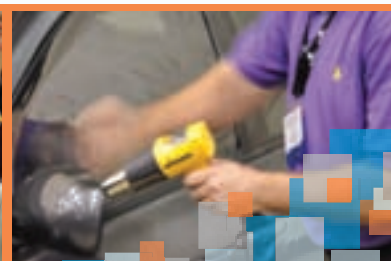
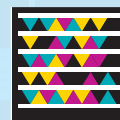
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# Toolin' Around

## Window Film Installers Share Their Must-Have Tools

by Katie O'Mara

**A**n installer is only as good as his tools. It may sound clique, but for many installers their tools can make or break a film install. However, in the age of technology and invention the idea of a tool has evolved. There are still classic tools that installers will always rely on, but now many installers are creating their own tools and finding ways to use technology to grow their business.

### The Classics

Among some of the most loved and reliable tools most tinters will always tell you that their knives, chisels and squeegees are must-haves.

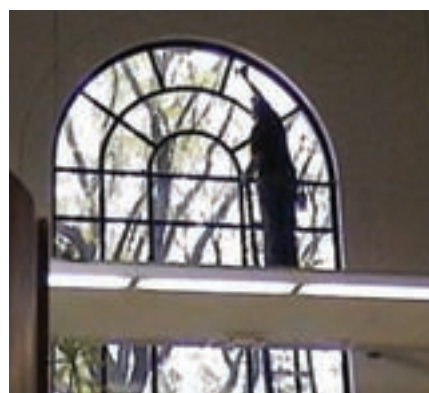
"We use the blue max blade, which is just a squeegee blade, for flat glass applications and you can use it in different length handles to get higher pressure on film," says Rick Puthoff president of Eclipse Window Tinting Inc., in Cincinnati, Ohio. "We use red dot knives which

are a little different than your standard OLFA knife. They are left and right-handed so you can put the blade in either way."

"You have to have an OLFA stainless steel cutting knife. That is by far the most powerful tool no matter what kind of film you are installing," says Charlie Arakelian, owner of Northeast Tint Co., in Boston, Mass. "I always use an old-fashioned five-way. You can flip it around five different ways to get perfect angles on your windows."

While squeegees may not have evolved much over the years they remain essential to an installer's job.

"Another important tool would be the orange crush squeegee. It's a little easier on your wrists after you have evolved a few million square feet of tint," says Arakelian. "I was reluctant to make the change over from my old wooden-handled squeegee, but eventually switched it up to the orange crush because it was easier on my wrists



**Always being prepared and finding larger tools, like scaffolding, to help in high places is the key for Charlie Arakelian, owner of Northeast Tint Co.**

and forearms. You get a longer reach and more pressure."

Heat guns have changed and grown a lot over the years as well and every tinter has a preference of how they want to want to apply heat to film. For some newer heat guns are valuable, but others prefer to stick with an old favorite.



“Some people use different variations of heat guns. Probably 95 percent of my automotive installations involves using a torch, which actually helps things dry quicker and makes for a cleaner job,” says Steve Wilke, owner of S & A Restyling & Accessories in Midland, Texas. “Also, I am not using any electricity with a torch. A lot of people don’t even know how to use a torch. I have probably been using it for automotive installations for 26 of those years.”

Large equipment can be expensive and take up space, but comes in handy when a challenging install requires extra height or space.

“From an installation perspective with complicated installs you always have to be prepared. That is my motto. Scaffolding is definitely a necessity,” says Arakelian. “Every installer has to have something like that or a place that will rent it to them fairly inexpensively.”

## A New Spin

Technology has changed the way most industries do business and for window tinting it is no different. Non-traditional tools continue to be exceptionally valuable to window film shops who are trying to take their business to the next level and bring new customers in the door.

“We use Computer Cut. We have two 40-inch plotters and a 60-inch plotter and it’s a great tool for taking you to the next level as far as automotive, paint protection film (PPF), architectural and decorative,” says Puthoff. “We are doing final overlays—we cut a Camaro with carbon fiber roof, but then we



**Most installers use a trial and error system to discover which tools work the best for them. Many then create a tool kit to use when doing different jobs.**

made some SS stripes go up the hood and Computer Cut was able to do that. It shaves a lot of time off. You can take an entry-level guy and have him pull the cars in, cut them out on Computer Cut, set the patterns out, clean the car down and it’s just the same as if I had a third full-experienced window tinter. You can get more work done and save money at the same time because you are not paying the same amount for an entry level guy as you are a veteran.”

Mobile and web-based technology is also helping businesses set themselves apart. Having a valuable online presence can keep customers connected to a window film shop so that when they are ready to buy, that company is at the top of their mind.

“Advertising or getting on Facebook and putting together a changeable website were probably

the biggest tools I have used to grow my business,” says Wilke. “I had less work to have more exposure in the end and that has increased business which increases profit.”

Also, bringing technology to the job-site allows shops to appear more modern and well equipped.

“We are using iPads. All of our estimators have them and we use technology like a lot of shops do not,” says Puthoff. “We are creating a mobile version of our website since 60 percent of your searches are done from mobile phones.”

Another non-traditional tool for many installers is education. It may sound simple, but learning new tricks for installation and marketing techniques for a company can be inexpensive and pay off big time at the shop.

“Everybody picks up tips, but

*continued on page 32*

## Toolin' Around

*continued from page 31*

**“One of my installers has a dad that works in a machine shop and so he comes in with the craziest stuff. He ‘Frankensteins’ parts together and creates something new.”**

**—Charlie Arakelien,  
Northeast Tint Co.**



**A heat gun is one tool that has morphed with technological advancements. Nearly every installer uses some version of a heat gun or torch.**

the biggest thing that will grow the window film industry is if all the dealers would go to their dealer meetings,” says Puthoff. “Education is the key. When we go to the national meetings the people who come to the meetings do astronomically better numbers than the people who don’t. I don’t know whether it is the workshops or its sitting at the bar with the other dealers talking about tools and technology—but it makes a difference.”

### Creativity at Work

When many installers run into a situation where none of their existing tools seem to work for the job, some take tool creation into their own hands. Combining tools or taking them apart allows installers to create a completely new tool that will specifically work for them.

“People modify their tools like crazy. I am a large dealer and I am

very confident in what I have, but I will see these guys and it is amazing,” says Puthoff. “Sometimes I thank God they are not in business in my market. You learn so much from the other dealers from marketing to installation to tools.”

“My installers have created their own prototypes of squeegees,” says Arakelien. “They have come up with their own chisels and hard squeegees. One of my installers has a dad that works in a machine shop and so he comes in with the craziest stuff. He ‘Frankensteins’ parts together and creates something new.”

“I have a file folder where I jot down ideas and even sketch ideas for new tools,” says Wilke. “When you are in the midst of doing something you can think if it were done differently or shaped differently it would be easier. For commercial work, suction cups can help shift and move things without damaging anything. That has been

a huge one for me.”

Many installers already know what kind of tools they wish could be invented.

“There are rumors that certain manufacturers have had this, but they have talked about putting hash marks on film,” says Puthoff. “It will tell you the footage in reverse so that when you are pulling out film you can tell exactly how much film you have left. If they can put logos and such on the clear liner you would think they could add hash marks. If they had hash marks giving you the footage on the liner on the roll it would take the whole task out of inventory. You wouldn’t have to worry if you have enough film on a roll before it is too late to order more.”

“I would love to see a push button ladder system that has a remote control,” says Arakelien. “Some of these ladders are very cool. If they could even make a ladder on some kind of hydraulics, lightweight and aluminum and you could throw it in the back of your car.”

Whether it is a classic knife or squeegee that makes an installer’s job easier or something simple like attending a class or chatting with a fellow installer, having the right tools for the job makes a world of difference for tinters.

If you have an idea for a tool that you would like to share email [komara@glass.com](mailto:komara@glass.com). **WF**

**Katie O’Mara is the editor of WINDOW FILM magazine. She can be reached at [komara@glass.com](mailto:komara@glass.com) or follow her on Twitter at @windowfilmmag.**





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# From the Ground Up

## Window Film Shops Share Training Ideas and Solutions

by Katie O'Mara

Every tinter starts off with no knowledge of the industry. At some point he becomes interested, falls into a job at a tint shop or just discovers a natural talent for it. However, a skill like tinting does involve some important training. Improperly installed film can damage vehicles and buildings.

Some window film businesses train their employees in-house by pairing up a new tinter with a veteran to learn the trade. Other businesses pay for employees to attend training through manufacturers. Finding the right teaching techniques can be key to successfully growing and expanding a window film business.

### Teaching the Trade

"I trained new employees to install film with the techniques that I use," says Robert Kersten, president of Quality Glass Tinting Inc. and Infiniteoptiks in St. Louis, Mo. "I was fortunate enough to find people that were hard workers and dedicated. If you really want to train people there is so much information out there that makes it easy to train people yourself."

"It's good to teach them from scratch because it can eliminate all the bad habits up front," says Ross Kehl, president of Tintingpro.com in Sedona, Ariz.

In addition, new tinters can help maintain the shop and do some of the ground level work as they per-

fect their craft and expertise.

"We do train a lot of people and we make no bones about it—you are bottom level so when we are not busy we expect all of these other things to be done around the shop like cleaning up and organizing," says Brad Campbell, president of Campbell Window Film in Huntington Beach, Calif. "If they are ambitious and get through the first cut we take them to the next level. We don't really waste a lot of time. We try to get them installing film right away."

There are other things to consider when hiring a new tinter. Many commercial and residential jobs involve equipment or credentials to access job sites and if an



employee has background or training in those areas they are hired it can save time and money in the long run.

"There are a lot more restrictions now on the type of people you can send out to jobsites," says Kersten. "Today about 50 percent of our work requires someone with safety training. They are wearing a hard hat on a commercial site and using lifts, boom cranes and sky jacks. To have people like that you may need them to have security clearances."

## Work the Program

For a busy shop owner, finding the time to educate a new employee can seem daunting. There are window film manufacturers and distributors that offer training in sessions. There are also some select companies that specialize in training and offer workshops and hands-on experience to those in need. These programs have come a long way since their initial inception.

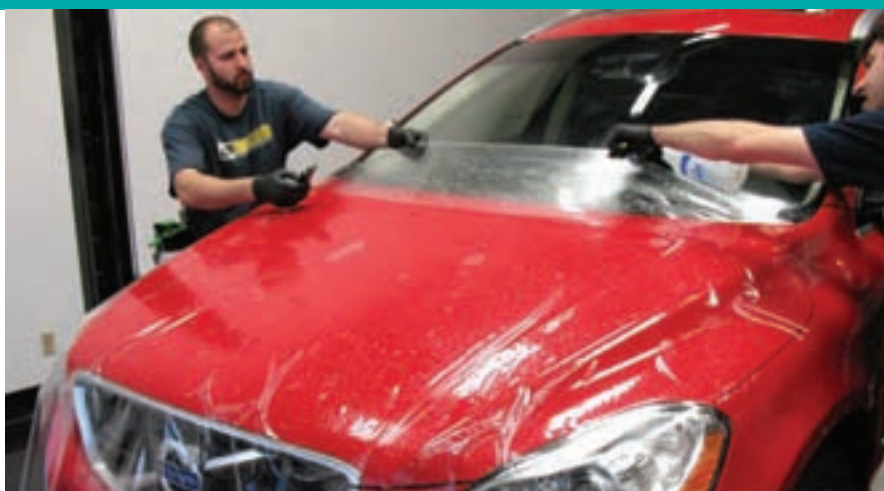
"It was tough to try and learn how to install film back in the day," says Campbell. "I tried a few training programs and I know I had a couple people that took advantage of me. There are some programs that will charge a lot of money for a one day course. They have some pretty good one-day programs now though."

Formal training programs also offer an opportunity for trainers and installers to share ideas and techniques in an open format.

"Many years ago I participated in a training course," says Kersten. "Right after September 11, Madico was bringing up their Safety Shield program and a guy was going around the country training. We actually helped him learn some better techniques for some things he was training others on."

However, some within the industry believe that formal training programs cannot be a replacement for hands-on, everyday training within the shop.

"I think all those training courses



**Training with an experienced staff member can help new employees learn the tricks of the trade.**

do is alleviate the business owner of the responsibility of the initial orientation of what window film is and if it is something you are cut out to do," says Campbell. "A business owner might want to hire someone to mop the floors and if the employee is interested long-term then they can send them to the course. It takes years of doing it to become good at it. Be at work every day and surround yourself with it in order to be good at it."

"There are some independent flat glass schools as well as automotive schools. Some of the film distributors offer film classes," says Kehl. "Really, the bottom line is if they want to open a window film tinting business they need to work for someone else first and get the training before they branch out on their own. There are some train-

ing schools that you can go to now, but there is not a substitute for hands-on training. There is a lot to it, even though it sounds like it is just installing film."

## Food for Thought

At the end of the day, a shop's image rests with its employees and their abilities. Investing in training for the shop's staff can impact the success of a business and patiently training new staff can pay off later on. Using care and consideration when training and hiring can make the difference between a successful business year and a wasted investment.

**Katie O'Mara is the editor of WINDOW FILM magazine. She can be reached at [komara@glass.com](mailto:komara@glass.com) or follow her on Twitter at @windowfilmmag.**

# Back to School

## IWFA Accreditation

The International Window Film Association (IWFA) offers accreditation in solar control, advanced solar control, safety and security and automotive (\$100 for IWFA members, \$300 for non-IWFA members). Manuals are also offered in solar control (\$29.95), advanced solar control (\$39.95), safety and security (\$29.95) and automotive (\$5.00). Testing is available online at testing centers and at some industry events. For more information visit [www.iwfa.com](http://www.iwfa.com).

## Manufacturers and Distributors

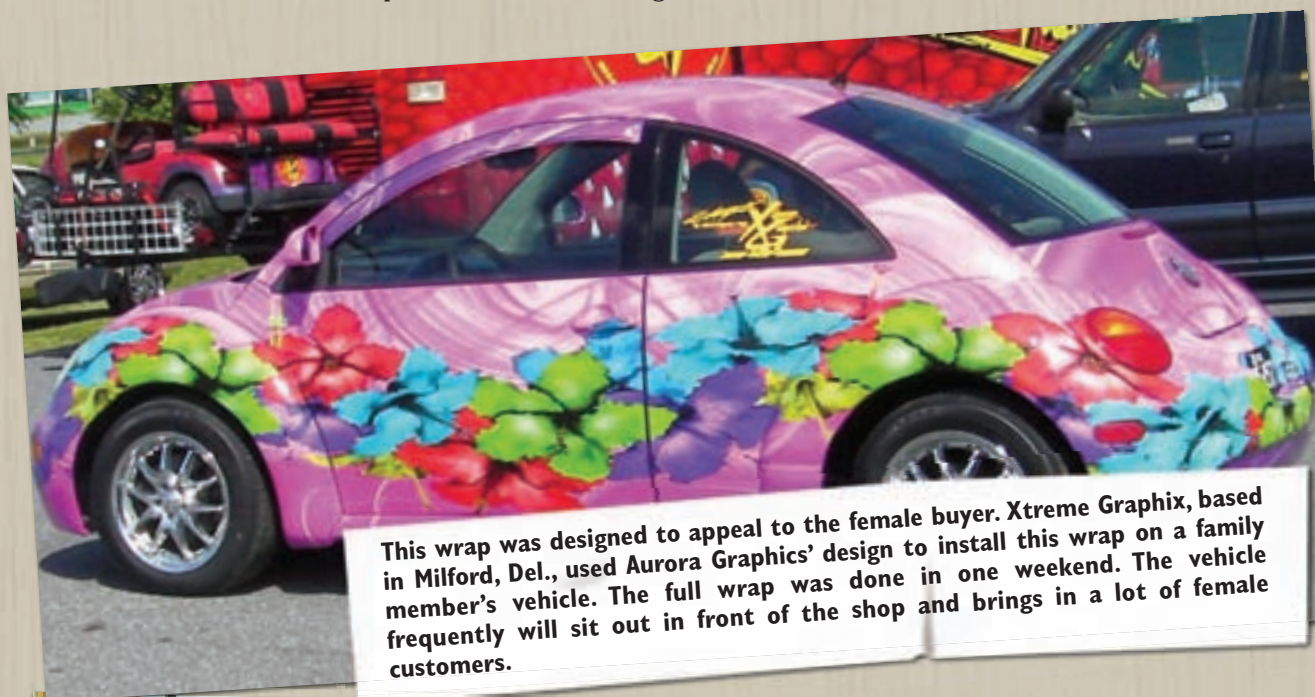
Many window film manufacturers and distributors also offer training, both at their locations and on the road. Many of them provide it at a low cost and in conjunction with a discount on film. For more information and to see if your manufacturer or distributor offers training visit their website or contact your representative.

**WF**

# Wrap-Off

## Check Out the Stylings of Wrappers From Around the Industry

Vehicle wraps have continued to become a more prominent way for local companies to advertise their services. For some of these companies finding a unique design is key to a successful installation. Wraps are extending beyond just vehicles now. Companies are wrapping the windows of their commercial buildings and consumers are using vinyl on everything from four-wheelers to caskets in order to obtain a more personalized appearance. If you have a favorite project that your shop has completed email [komara@glass.com](mailto:komara@glass.com) and tells us about it.







The owner of this Scion XB wanted a design for his vehicle that would draw a lot of attention. Perfect Appearance of Pueblo, Colo., used art from Aurora Graphics, as well as some in-house artwork, to wrap the vehicle. The company used Avery Dennison 1005EZ-RS cast wrap vinyl and laminated with Avery's matching cast laminate DOL1000. Owner Mike Duran and designer Roger Bernal completed the wrap together.



Xtreme Graphix wrapped this former potato chip truck to use as one of their business vehicles. The design was built from a few different downloads and took about a week to install. The truck was challenging due to the amount of rivets on it. The installers had to take their time and go around each rivet carefully.



This vehicle, wrapped by Quality Glass Tinting Inc., in St. Louis, Mo., took one installer four hours to install the wrap, half the time it took to print, laminate and plot the creation. The company also did a second vehicle for Magic House using the same image.

continued on page 38



## Wrap-Off

continued from page 37

This architectural wrap, created and installed by Quality Glass Tinting Inc., was designed using a theme installed on five vehicles for the company already. A boom was rented to install the second-story wrap featuring clouds, blue sky and treetops. Two installers completed the installation over a total of five hours.

WF

This "mudder" was wrapped to appear reptile-like by Xtreme Graphix. The wrap design was put together in-house and applied in a week on to the one-of-a-kind vehicle. Avery Dennison film was used to wrap the mudder and a matching go-cart was made for the owner's son afterwards.







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A DIRECTORY OF INDUSTRY SUPPLIERS

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## FILM INSTALLATION SERVICES



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www.3m.com/window

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## ON THE HORIZON

INDUSTRY EVENTS

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**April 6-15, 2012**

New York International Auto Show  
Organized by the Greater New York  
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Jacob Javits Center  
New York, N.Y.  
Contact: [www.autoshowny.com](http://www.autoshowny.com)

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Send your events to  
editor Katie O'Mara at  
[komara@glass.com](mailto:komara@glass.com).

**October 30-November 2, 2012**

SEMA Show 2012  
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Equipment Market Association  
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Contact: [www.semashow.com](http://www.semashow.com)

### ARCHITECTURAL FILM EVENTS

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**May 17-19, 2012**

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Contact: [www.aia.org](http://www.aia.org)

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## FILM STARS<sup>™</sup>

INSTALLER PROFILES

# Dedicated to Film

Woody Richartz, Express Tinting, Virginia Beach, Va.

**Y**ou'll find Woody Richartz at Express Tinting working late into the night seven days a week. This owner spends his waking hours installing automotive, residential, commercial, vehicle wraps, paint protection and marine projects. However, Richartz started out small doing work for friends.



**Woody Richartz**

"I got started doing backyard automotive jobs for friends," says Richartz. "I applied for a job in 1995 at a tint shop in Virginia Beach. I thought I knew how to tint, but I didn't. They taught me the right way to do it."

Now, over 16 years later Richartz still finds enjoyment in his work.

"Your project ends quickly and you can see the results of what you have created usually in less than a day," says Richartz. "It's not like you are on a project for six months. I think I would get bored quickly with something like that."

The reason that Richartz stands out is his dedication to his customers. He is not satisfied until and unless his customer is satisfied with the end result.

"I just try to be fair and I don't try to get rich overnight," says Richartz. "I tell my customers that we have a 100 percent satisfaction guarantee. If the job isn't done to the customer's specs I will pay them



**Richartz and his company, Express Tinting, completed a job with black-out film on windows at the Norfolk International Airport.**

to go get it done somewhere else as long as it comes back looking better. The customer's satisfaction is our ultimate goal. We give scratch warranties in case they scratch a window or if they get a window broken out we will tint it for free."

Hector Cavazos is the manager of Express Tinting Hampton location. He nominated Richartz as a Film Star<sup>™</sup> because of his respect for his employer.

"He is worthy of being a Film Star because he delivers nothing but premier window film installations in Hampton Roads and gets the job done right with over 16 years experience," says Cavazos. "He is truly an expert in commercial, residential, automotive and marine."

Richartz is constantly working on a variety of projects. He has already



worked on some of his favorite cars and been able to install film on some impressive buildings.

"I have pretty much done it all. I did an Oldsmobile 88 and one piece back window last year for the first time. I've done 3 or 4 Berettas in one piece. I have done 30 story buildings and I've also done just one window jobs. I don't know of anything I haven't done," says Richartz. "Flat glass is probably my favorite. You get to see different houses and buildings. I can get a lot of work done in a short period of time—5,000 square feet in one day. One of my favorite projects was working on the USAA insurance building. We did all exterior work on 1,000 skylights." **WF**

Do you know someone who is a star among window film tinters? Then we want to hear from you with your nominations for "Film Stars." Email Katie O'Mara at [komara@glass.com](mailto:komara@glass.com) your nominations.



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