



Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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First SCRS Affiliate Leadership Conference Lays Promising Groundwork for Industry Success

Associations join together for two days to exchange information, build camaraderie and discuss ways to assist their members and improve their organizations.

Prosser, Washington, October 25, 2006 — Representatives from thirteen affiliate associations, the National Auto Body Council (NABC) and numerous other industry professionals came together on September 27 and 28, 2006 to participate in the first annual Society of Collision Repair Specialists (SCRS) Affiliate Leadership Conference. The event took place at the I-CAR World Headquarters in Hoffman Estates, Illinois, and provided a promising start to what is expected to evolve into an annual forum.

As proposed, the mission of the Affiliate Leadership Conference is to spotlight and support the needs of SCRS affiliate associations, making it a gathering unique to the industry. “There are many worthwhile collision repair-related events, but nothing quite like this,” notes Steve Regan, Communications Consultant for the Massachusetts Auto Body Association. “Affiliate representatives came away with real, tangible suggestions specifically to the improvement of their organizations, something you can’t get just anywhere. From that perspective, the conference was an unqualified success.”

The format of the meeting was simple but effective. With SCRS Executive Director Dan Risley moderating, each attending association gave an overview of their group’s history and focus, a summary of issues in their local area, and in many cases, a synopsis of the strategies they used to handle specific challenges. Discussion and feedback was generated as a result.

“I was exposed to a lot of new and useful ideas, some that really opened my eyes,” says Torchy Chandler, President of the Washington Metropolitan Auto Body Association (WMABA). “WMABA is interested in finding new, effective ways to fundraise and provide additional member benefits. The information shared at the meeting is a great start.”

Those who shared ideas with others, gained their own sense of fulfillment. For example, Executive Director Judell Anderson of the Alliance of Automotive Service Providers of Minnesota (AASP-MN) reviewed what her association went through to get two state bills passed; one that excludes the cost of repairing air bag systems from the calculation of the salvage threshold, and a second that revises statutory language in the insurers’ claims-related documentation, making it clear that the policyholder

has the right to choose a repair shop. “Lobbying for legislation is important, but difficult,” she says. “If our experience can make the process easier for other collision repair associations, it strengthens the entire industry.”

The conference also featured a schedule of guest speakers. Tom McGee and Ron Ray discussed the latest developments at I-CAR and the I-CAR Education Foundation, respectively. Attorney Patrick McGuire helped explain the differences between first-party and third-party insurance claims, and their possible impact on collision repairers and the vehicle owner.

Representatives from three automotive parts manufacturers—Dave Gruskos, President of Reliable Automotive Equipment, Inc.; Bob Hartman, Insurance Industry Relations Liaison for General Motors and Karl Krug, Senior Western Collision Parts Administrator for Toyota, U.S.A.—each gave insight into current and future automotive parts composition and reparability. This included a review of key repair procedures, necessary tool requirements, and how attendees could access the latest reparability information.

“The attendees seemed really engaged,” says Gruskos. “Sometimes collision repairers don’t know where to find the data they need to perform safe, quality repairs on the newer substrates such as ultra high strength steel. SCRS provided their affiliate associations a great service by bringing together, under one roof, this kind of parts and service expertise.”

The majority of those in attendance agreed that the accomplishments of the meeting went beyond fact-finding and information exchange to something more intangible, but no less valued. “Getting together with our peers reminded us that we aren’t isolated and that others face what we face on a daily basis,” states Ray Fisher, Vice President of ASA Michigan. “The structure allowed us to identify problems nationally, set goals, determine strategies and figure out how to successfully execute those strategies. I look forward to attending next year.”

In the upcoming weeks, SCRS will assemble a document that covers the “hot button” issues discussed at the forum and distribute it to members. “The conference may be over, but SCRS’ work is not. The SCRS Board intends on identifying several of the key issues the affiliates share and begin formulating an action plan,” explains SCRS Chairman Tom Moreland. “One of the main purposes of this event was to determine how we, as a national association, could be more responsive to our members. That makes commitment to this kind of follow-up essential—the next phase of ‘Working Together Is the Most Important Work We Do’.”

Through its direct members and 31 affiliate associations, SCRS is comprised of 5,000 collision repair businesses and 58,500 specialized professionals who work with consumers and insurance companies to repair collision-damaged vehicles. Additional information about SCRS including other news releases is available at the SCRS web site: www.scrs.com. You can e-mail SCRS at the following address: info@scrs.com.

Association Role Call

The following is a list of associations who attended the conference:

AASP Minnesota

ASA of Michigan

Georgia Collision Industry Association

Indiana Auto Body Association

Iowa Collision Repair Association

Jacksonville Collision Repair Educational
Foundation

Massachusetts Auto Body Association

Missouri/Kansas Chapter, SCRS

Montana Collision Repair Specialists

Northwest Automotive Trade Association

Oklahoma Auto Body Association

Washington Metropolitan Auto Body Association

Wisconsin Auto Collision Technicians
Association Ltd.

National Auto Body Council*

* Not an SCRS affiliate.