

# STATE-OF-THE-ART RECONDITIONING CENTER

## UP AND RUNNING AT MANHEIM AUTO AUCTION

BY RICHARD GREENE  
EDITOR

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— Keith Williams, Manheim Auto Auction



MANHEIM, Pa. — To handle current and expected future volume growth and to provide even greater service and value for its customers, the Manheim Auto Auction opened a new \$38 million state-of-the-art, two-story, environmentally sensitive reconditioning facility in mid-April that can handle the entire process under one roof, company executives announced.

About 250 invited guests, representing a cross section of community officials, industry leaders, and dealer and institutional customers, were wowed as they toured the high-tech, 200,000-square-foot facility during its April 19 grand unveiling. General manager Keith Williams said the facility was eight years in the making and took two years to build.

"It's the largest, most awesome facility you have ever seen," Williams told *Auto Remarketing NewsMagazine*. "Our employees and I are extremely proud to have this incredible facility at our site, and we believe it will afford us wonderful opportunities to provide an efficient, value-driven, one-stop-shop experience for our customers."

Because of explosive growth in leasing and factory sales in the mid-1990s and to plan for even greater anticipated growth well into the future, auction officials

began in 1996 to explore the idea of replacing their 48,000-square-foot reconditioning center that was built in 1994, Williams pointed out. To handle the expanding volume growth, Williams said some of the reconditioning services had to be performed off-site.

The general manager acknowledged that the approval and land-acquisition process took some time to complete. A 273-acre parcel of land was purchased to house the facility, Williams said, and groundbreaking finally took place in May 2005.

The wait was well worth it, Williams proudly said. "You should see our employees who will operate in this magnificent facility. They're all smiles because they know they can continue to set all-time production records in a building constructed with the highest quality in mind," he noted. "And we'll be able to do all of this in a timely manner."

Bryan Allison, assistant general manager in charge of the mammoth structure, added, "We now have our entire reconditioning operations all on one site. We're able to run a much more efficient operation and can give our customers a higher level of quality service."

With the respect to the former reconditioning facility, it will continue to be

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Manheim Auto Auction

used as a certification center for Audi and Volkswagen, and Mercedes and BMW will use it for make-ready as well, Manheim officials said. In addition, Dent Wizard will be providing its services to these accounts in this building.

Williams pointed to an extensive array of features and services that can be provided. These include:

- 19 mechanical bays — 10 for domestic vehicles and 9 for imports.
- Four individual 3-car primer booths and four 5-car paint booths.
- 14 lanes of detailing and washing vacuums with 8 commercial wash machines, soap room, quick water, state-of-the-art vacuum systems and a laundry room with a chemical storage room and water-treatment plant onsite.
- Detailing operations that can handle about 3,500 details each week and roughly 68 cars painted a week.
- Dent Wizard and Chip Wizard capabilities to output about 160 cars a day.
- 20,000-square-foot upstairs area dedicated to training employees and customers.
- Some 112 employees and another 70 auto body repair mechanics. This is compared to about 80 employees previously.

"We're also excited that this is one of the few facilities in the world where all of the condition reports can be written inside a well-lit, heated building," Williams pointed out.

And the building features numerous "green" attributes, Williams added. "What makes this facility top-notch is that it was built to be environmentally sensitive," he said. "Our discharges are not only timed but also monitored in order to comply and be accepted by our local municipalities."

Williams cited several examples to prove his point. "The fact that we use water-borne paints, where you have very low VOCs, we minimize the release of pollutants into the air," he said.

"Another example is that we prime our vehicles within a closed booth, so our employees are virtually kept extremely healthy because of this advanced and superior technology," Williams added.

At the same time, according to Williams, the facility uses Manheim's most advanced wastewater treatment system. It produces 42,000 gallons of reusable water per day and was designed to drive the operating location's new detail operation, which has a 750-vehicle capacity per eight-hour shift.

"Water is continuously recycled, so we are able to reduce our well-water demand by 60 percent," noted Charles McClung, Manheim's engineering director. "That means the detail shop also reduces the water going into the city treatment plant by 60 percent."

Williams said he was most excited, though, by the added value the new reconditioning center brings to the auction's customers.

"We sold about 300,000 vehicles last year through our auction, and we experienced huge growth on the technology side, with about 500 cars a week sold through Simulcast, cinema and OVE.com sales. But we anticipate that growing to 1,500 units per week in 2007," Williams explained. "But whether they be through brick-and-mortar or online sales, if we can't service those vehicles and get them prepared to be sold in an efficient and timely fashion, then our process is hindered and we can't provide what our customers expect and demand."

"But we believe this new reconditioning center enables us to do just that, and that means we provide critical value for our customers," he continued.

"It's great to say you can sell an automobile, but it's greater to say you can repair it and get the customer more money for it," Williams concluded. ■



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