

**Issue:  
November  
2023**



**Wisconsin Collision Repair Professionals**



## *The Body Shop Advocate*

*~ WE ALL DO BETTER TOGETHER ~*

### **FROM THE DESK OF OUR PRESIDENT**

#### **ARE YOU LISTENING?**



Have you been paying attention to the news about insurance companies lately? In August, Farmers Insurance laid off 2,400 employees (11% of it's workforce). Geico announced last week that it has laid off 2,000 employees (see Fender Bender article below , "Geico Lays off 6% of Workforce." Liberty Mutual just announced that they will lay off 850 employees in its second round of job cuts this year, just two months after a previous round of lay-offs affecting 370 employees. Several other companies, including Allstate and AmFam have also announced job cuts. Insurers cite rising accident claims, inflation, parts delays, prolonged turnaround for repairs and rising repair costs as rationale for the lay-offs.

In the collision industry, we are also experiencing the fallout from the insurance industry's woes. We have long been familiar with terms such as, "prevailing rate, we don't pay for that, not a necessary procedure," etc. But now we are seeing many insurance companies becoming more and more difficult to work with and refusing to pay for items that they had previously covered. Several are routinely offering take-it-or-leave-it settlement options with no negotiating. It is clear that they are under pressure to cut corners wherever they can.

In previous issues of The Advocate, we discussed several ideas on how we can counter these tactics. They include communication with customers, writing a complete and thorough repair plan and documenting it with photos, communicating with (think educating) adjusters, and customer co-pays. For more ideas on this, please see the Fender Bender article below by Keith Manich on "How Collision Shops Can Help Customers Tackle Insurance Denials." Also in this issue, there is information on our upcoming WCRP Conference and Trade Show scheduled for April 4 & 5, 2024, where we will be discussing this issue as well as many others. Get your registration in early, and see you there!

Larry Terrien  
President



## How Collision Shops Can Help Customers Tackle Insurance Denials

Sept. 26, 2023

[Keith Manich](#), vice president of Collision Services at [Automotive Training Institute](#), outlines major reasons for customer denials by insurers and steps to take if you find yourself in this position.

Did you know that as a collision repair shop owner, you can play a crucial role in assisting your customers with identifying areas where insurers might take advantage of them? This is especially important in today's world where it has become more common for insurers to push necessary repair expenses back on the customer in order to reduce claim costs.

Being an advocate for your customers builds loyalty and trust among other benefits. By offering guidance, information, and support, you can help them make informed decisions based on the rights identified in their policy.

[Continue reading here.](#)

Upcoming Event

### **SAVE THESE DATES!!**

April 4 & 5, 2024

WCRP will be holding a Conference/Trade show at the [Chula Vista Resort](#) in Wisconsin Dells. A website for the event will be coming soon and more information will follow!

[Check here to keep up on our events!](#)

**"I always like to equate associations to gyms. You can't just join a gym and expect results unless you actually show up and do the work. Associations are very much the same. You have to be part of the solution. Every association benefits from members' involvement. Sure, dues are important. They fund things. But having people who show up makes a big difference. It changes the success factor of the association.**

*-Aaron Schulenburg, executive director for the Society of Collision Repair Specialists*

### **MEMBER BENEFIT!!**

**CARS Cooperative Partnership**

CARS Savings4Members Program: WCRP has established





an alliance with Collision Automotive Repair Services, Inc. (CARS) to bring you great new benefits through this program in the form of CASH BACK REWARDS, DISCOUNTS, and CARS PRICING for materials and supplies that you may already be using or elect to use.

Website: <https://cars.savings4members.com/programs/views/green/super.html>

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## Hillpoint Student, Lora E. Hinz, Receives WATDA Foundation Auto Collision Technician Scholarship

The [Wisconsin Automobile and Truck Dealers Association \(WATDA\) Foundation](#), supported by dealerships and other industry partners, annually awards scholarships to students across the state pursuing their education in automotive, diesel, motorcycle or collision at Wisconsin Technical Colleges.

Among the recipients is Lora E. Hinz of Hillpoint, WI. She will receive a \$1,500 tuition scholarship sponsored by the Wisconsin Collision Repair Professionals (WCRP). In addition to the scholarship, Hinz will receive a tool set valued at \$4,855 from Snap-on Corporation headquartered in Kenosha, WI. Hinz is attending the auto collision program at Southwest Wisconsin Technical College (SWTC) in Fennimore, WI.

The WATDA Foundation has proudly awarded more than 2,300 transportation scholarships since its founding.

[Read the entire press release here.](#)

To view our other 2023 scholarship recipients, for more information, and to apply (deadline for applications is January 15, 2024) for our scholarships please visit our website [here!](#)

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## MEET THE MEMBERS

WCRP has five educational members supporting us. These schools offer collision repair & refinishing classes here in Wisconsin. Their information can be found on our member page [here](#). You can also click on the pictures below to be taken to their websites for more information on these classes.





# RESPONSE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF INSURANCE



Your WCRP lobbyist, Jolene Plautz, secured a meeting with the [WI State Insurance Commissioner, Nathan Houdek](#) on September 21, 2023. Please click on the following links for PDF's of the questions that were presented, and the official response from their office.

[PDF of the presentation to the WI State Insurance Commissioner](#)

[PDF of the response from the Commissioners office](#)



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## GUEST EDITORIAL

You'll soon see promotions for the upcoming Conference/Trade show at [Chula Vista](#). Bring your technicians! Bring the kids! The discounted room rate **includes the water park!** Enjoy.

Yet, with all that fun let's not forget the importance and urgency of gathering our



resources, networking with each other and addressing some industry issues. The challenges we face cannot be overcome individually. The shop across town is not your adversary, they never were. More often the problems are self-imposed. AKA “*you do it to yourself*” as often quoted by my wife. Many issues we face are just outside of our control because we don’t take control.

Imagine if you will, the improvements of addressing just two issues collectively:

- 1) If all shops insisted on a proper, complete as possible initial estimation, blueprint, or repair plan, that alone would minimize horrible inefficiencies and headaches for this industry including the motoring public.
- 2) If all shops were educated on their cost of doing business and applied that knowledge, perhaps we’d have technicians in line. This industry offers some fantastic employment opportunities and much needed services. We owe society our best efforts and a qualified staff.

**When you can, please register early!** (More information is soon to follow) Your board of directors have selected some great topics for Thursday’s managerial sessions. The Friday classes offer a great day for all your staff. Then they can stay the weekend. Think of what that will do for morale come Monday.

See you there!

Steve Humblet  
Vice President, WCRP

### CHULA VISTA RESORT IN WISCONSIN DELLS

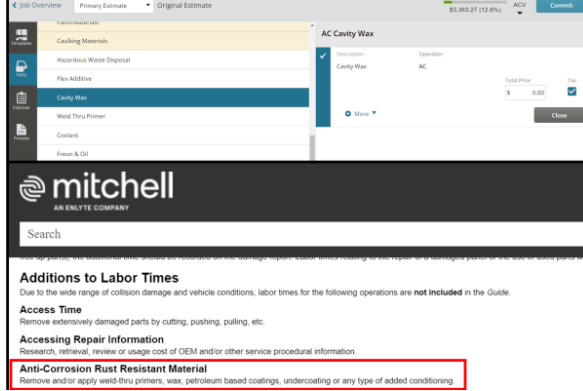


### Estimating Tip – Mitchell- Cavity Wax Labor

The [Mitchell Collision Estimating Guide \(CEG, P-Pages\)](#) identifies that labor and materials for Cavity Wax are both NOT INCLUDED. When selecting Cavity Wax from the “Additional Cost & Materials” section, entering labor is not available in



Mitchel Cloud Estimating. End users can create a manual entry for labor when Cavity Wax materials are being considered on their repair plan.



Which of the following are you giving away?

- 1) Clean and re-tape moldings/emblems
- 2) Seam Sealer / Caulking
- 3) Locate & Drill Park Sensor Holes



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## STEVE'S RANT

### Oh BULLS&!!+ !

The following article about Geico's current business plan simply needs to be called out for what it is. You lay off 6% of your workforce in order to serve your customers better? There's a managerial twist I never thought of...but then, I'm not a smart man and I don't make \$13,600,000 a year...Todd Combs' salary, CEO of Geico. (That's \$37,260 A DAY,

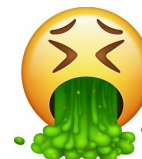


including Sundays.) Geico also spent **\$1.62 billion** in advertising in 2019 as a side note.

Frankly, fewer Geico staff members won't make that company any worse to deal with. It might even make it better! Ahaaa! That's it! That's it! Service will get better. Now I see why Todd can command that kind of salary.

I understand it all now.  
Steve

### \*\*\*Equally disgusting



Equally disgusting are the results from [CRASH Network's](#) labor rate survey. [Click here for the results.](#) Despite some percentage gains, our industry continues to hang out at the bottom of the trades. In spite of the complexity and importance of what we do!

This I do not understand. Actually, I do understand this problem, the part I don't understand is how we allow it to continue. (And don't go pointing, it's not them its us.)

The above content was contributed by Steve Humblet, a shop owner in northern WI. This rant is not intended to reflect the position of WCRP on this topic or any other topic he picks to rant about.

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**Insurance**BUSINESS

## **GEICO Lays off 6% of Workforce, Prioritizes Return to Office**

By [Jen Frost](#)  
Oct 19, 2023

Auto insurance giant GEICO will lay off 2,000 staff, or 6% of its workforce, and has issued a return to office mandate, the insurance company's CEO Todd Combs said in a letter to employees sent this morning.

Staff affected by layoffs will be contacted today, Combs outlined in a company-wide email that was shared with Insurance Business by GEICO. "To better position ourselves for long-term profitability and growth, and after a thorough evaluation across all lines of business, we are reducing our workforce by roughly 2,000 associates, or 6% of our total workforce," Combs wrote to staff. "This will allow us to become more dynamic, agile, and streamline our processes while still serving our customers."

[Continue reading here.](#)

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