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## Shop Performance Through Leadership

PPG's MVP Business Solutions team will hold a conference for collision center owners and managers, September 13-15 at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville, TN. The conference will center on the theme of Accelerating Performance and will focus on the use of leadership skills to implement change and maximize business performance.

"Past MVP conferences have focused on the challenges brought forth by the current business climate and the changes that are needed in order to stay competitive," said Randy Dewing, senior manager, PPG Business Solutions. "At this conference, we've put together an exceptional combination of speakers and seminars to address leadership and execution skills that are so vital to future shop success."

This conference reflects the commitment that PPG MVP Business Solutions has "to utilize every minute that we get with a customer in a way that will help them enhance their business performance," said Jim Berkey, director, PPG Business Solutions.

"Every event on the conference agenda is geared toward taking the leadership skills of key collision shop personnel to the highest level," said Norm Angrove, senior manager, PPG Value Added Programs.

The conference will consist of management training, keynote speakers, breakout seminars and peer-to-peer discussion groups. Attendance at the conference is open to owners and managers of collision centers using PPG Refinish products. For more information, contact Ron Stazzoni at 677-8640.

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## Agent Networking At It Is Best 144 At A Time



On a perfect day, Tuesday June 16th, the Omaha Certified First Group of Auto Body Shops sponsored it's 8th insurance agent golf outing. Pacific Springs Golf Course was the home of this year's event. A full field of 144 insurance agents showed up and had a great time.

Each shop sets up on one of the 18 tee boxes and networks with all 144 agents throughout the day. Shops give away koozie's, golf towels, umbrellas, or any other type of marketing tool that helps get their name out. Agents routinely say that this is the most fun golf event that they play all year. Shops tell us that they get great results from the golf outing. Many shops have built relationships with agents on the course that they otherwise wouldn't have had. These relationships add up to increased business.

Mary Jepsen, marketing manager for the Certified First group, say's "the agents are asking about this event all summer. They also talk about their appreciation and the fact that they support Certified First shops every time they get the chance."

This was the first of five events that the Omaha Certified First Group will be sponsoring this year. In 2009 there will be 2 golf outings, 2 beer tasting nights, and 1 Ladies Night. This calendar will offer more exposure than ever before

If you would like see what Certified First can do for you and your shop, contact your supplying D&R location and power point presentation can be sent to you.

## Government Confirms Significant Drop in Car Accidents in 2008

There were over 200,000 less automobile accidents across the country in 2008 than in the previous year according to the latest data released last week by National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

In addition, the number of traffic fatalities in 2008 reached its lowest level since 1961. NHTSA's 2008 Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) uncovered a decline of 3,998 fatalities in 2008, making it the largest annual reduction in terms of both number and percentage since 1982.

As its name implies, the FARS system is chiefly concerned with fatal accidents but collects and publishes information it collects from all accidents including crashes resulting in property damage only.

In 2008, there were 5.81 million accidents of all types in the US, down 213,0000 from the 6.02 million crashes in 2007. The percentage decline in the total number of crashes was 3.5 percent from 2007 to 2008. Interestingly, this figure closely matches the 3.4 percent decline in overall Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as reported in the most recent estimates from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Overall 2008 VMT decreased to 2,925,503 million from 3,029,822 million miles in 2007.

A group called the Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates) believes that the recent reduction in fatalities is only a temporary phenomenon stemming from the reduced driving caused by the current economic recession and higher gas prices.

Judith Lee Stone, President of the Advocates said, "In previous recessions - the early 1980s and early 1990s - a similar dramatic drop in car crash fatalities was evident, due to greatly reduced exposure and many fewer discretionary trips taken by motorists.

Advocates is dedicated to achieving more permanent, substantial reductions in the number of deaths and injuries by adopting key policy improvements at the federal and state levels such as graduated licensing laws, primary enforcement of seat belt laws, electronic on-board recorders for commercial vehicles, and mandatory ignition interlock devices for first-offense drivers convicted of drunk driving.

### Words to Live By

Those who say it can't be done  
Shouldn't interfere with those who are doing it!

## Farmers Insurance Completes Acquisition of AIG / 21st Century Auto

The Farmers Insurance Group of Companies completed the acquisition of 100 percent of AIG's U.S. Personal Auto Group, which includes 21st Century Insurance. In addition to 21st Century Insurance, the acquisition includes the former AIG Direct business and Agency Auto business. The purchase price amounts to approximately \$1.9 billion.

The deal created the nation's third largest private passenger auto insurer according to the latest figures published by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC).

According to the NAIC, Farmers parent company Zurich was the fifth largest private passenger insurer in the country in 2008 with a total market share of 5.41 percent. When combined with AIG's 2.71 percent share of the business, the resulting insurance giant controls over 8.1 percent of all US private passenger auto insurance premium dollars.

The deal also places nearly 52 percent of all private passenger auto insurance business in the hands of just five insurers.

The largest US auto insurer, State Farm, controlled 18.3 percent of the nation's business in 2008 and number two Allstate controlled 10.77 percent. GEICO and Progressive round out the top five with 7.62 and 7.11 percent respectively.

This acquisition also positions Farmers as the largest auto insurer in several states, including California, the biggest collision repair market in the country by a wide margin. (See related story below)

RANK	Top 10 U.S. Private Passenger Auto	Company Market Share %	Cumulative Market Share %
1	STATE FARM GRP	18.30	18.30
2	ALLSTATE INS GRP	10.77	29.07
3	<b>Zurich (Farmers) / AIG (21st Century) 2009</b>	8.12	37.19
4	BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY GRP (GEICO)	7.62	44.81
5	PROGRESSIVE GRP	7.11	51.92
6	NATIONWIDE CORP GRP	4.62	56.54
7	LIBERTY MUTUAL GRP (Includes SAFECO) 2008	4.40	60.94
8	UNITED SERV AUTOMOBILE ASSN GRP	3.81	64.75
9	Hartford / Travelers 2009	3.67	68.42
10	AMERICAN FAMILY INS GRP	2.09	70.51

Based on 2008 data from the National Association of Insurance Commissioners

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**(Continuing Farmers Insurance Completes  
Acquisition of AIG / 21st Century Auto from page 2)**

Under the acquisition agreement, AIG's U.S. personal auto insurance business is being sold to Farmers Group, Inc., a Los Angeles-based subsidiary of Zurich Financial Services Group. Farmers Group, Inc. will sell the underlying insurance entities to the Farmers Exchanges, which Farmers Group, Inc. manages but does not own, for approximately \$1.4 billion.

The acquired companies operate in 49 states and Washington, D.C.; have more than 2.4 million customers; and insure more than 4 million vehicles in the US.

Farmers Group, Inc. CEO F. Robert Woudstra described the acquisition as a "positive and historic milestone for Farmers, 21st Century, Farmers agents, and, most importantly, insurance consumers across the United States."

The deal was paid with \$1.7 billion in cash and \$200 million in face amount of subordinated, Euro-denominated capital notes backed by Zurich Insurance Company and Farmers also assumed 21st Century's outstanding debt of \$100 million.

Farmers acquired the Bristol West Insurance Group in 2007 and the Foremost Insurance Group in 2000.

**It's Summer  
Choose Your  
Solvents  
Carefully  
Slower Can Be  
Faster**



Temperatures are now in the HOT range as summer is here. It is this time when we start to see those heat related product problems happen. Solvent pop, die back, and believe it or not, soft paint film. The most common mistake in hot temperatures is not choosing a solvent that is slow enough.

High temperatures, especially in a high flow or down draft booth, will "skin" the top of the paint film very quickly. If this happens too soon, the remaining solvent is trapped below this "skin". The solvent then stays in the film evaporating over days and weeks rather than hours. This is why a paint job can die back or stay soft long after the car is delivered.

The cure is to go as slow as you can. Choose the hottest solvent your paint manufacturer would recommend. This will help keep a "skin" from forming and let the solvent evaporate at a normal rate. The heat will still make this whole process fast.

The result will be a job that levels better and holds its gloss. The paint film will also be stronger as the solvent will be out allowing full curing. If you have any questions about solvent selection, please contact your supplying D&R Auto Paint and Supply location.