

Convenience&Carwash

JULY/AUGUST 2026

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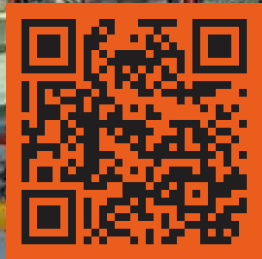
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Swan Lake First Nation Fuels Its Future

The community's new Petro-Canada site is now serving residents and travellers along one of the country's most-travelled corridors.



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October 5–7, 2026
Northeast Regional Carwash Convention
Atlantic City, NJ
nrccshow.com

October 6–9, 2026
NACS Show
Las Vegas, NV
nacsshow.com

October 6–9, 2026
PEI Convention at the NACS Show
Las Vegas, NV
pei.org/convention/

January 19–21, 2027
13th Women in Carwash Conference
B Ocean Resort, Fort Lauderdale, FL
womenincarwash.com

February 16–18, 2027
WPMA Expo
MGM Grand, Las Vegas, NV
wpmaexpo.com

Publisher's Message



Some of you have known Brenda Johnstone for years. Some of you have been with this magazine since it started. I want to be direct about who I am and why I'm sitting in this chair.

My name is Kevin Stobbe. Over the past 25 years I've published, designed, or worked on local, national, and international magazines. I don't come from the carwash or petroleum business. I come from the business of getting a magazine into the right hands, issue after issue, and making it worth the reader's time.

Here's what's not changing. Same coverage of the carwash, petroleum, and convenience store industries you've always gotten. Same distribution to the operators and suppliers who rely on it. What's changing is who's answering the phone.

This magazine has never run on one person. It runs on the operators who write in with stories, the suppliers who send over their latest product, and the readers who tell us what's actually happening at their sites. That's what fills these pages. If you've got news, a product, or a story worth telling, I want to hear it.

Brenda built something real here. Eighteen years is a long run in trade publishing, and it happened because she knew this industry inside and out and the people in it trusted her. That trust doesn't transfer with a bill of sale. I know I have to earn it, and I plan to, as she transitions the magazine to me over the next year.

Thanks for reading. If you've got news, a product launch, or a story worth telling, send it my way at kevin@convenienceandcarwash.com.

Kevin Stobbe

Publisher, Convenience & Carwash Canada

Convenience&Carwash

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PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE OF JOB POSTINGS

BY RENEE BOYDA

New legislation pertaining to job posting requirements has begun to emerge across the provinces. So far, Ontario, British Columbia, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia have enforced salary disclosure in job postings. Newfoundland and Labrador passed legislation, but is not yet in force. Manitoba and Saskatchewan introduced and considered legislation, but did not pass. It is predicted that provincial governments will continue to introduce and make legislative changes that require employer transparency in job postings, signalling to employers that this is becoming a national trend.

Among the provinces, Ontario's job posting legislation changes are the most detailed and significant. Effective January 1, 2026, employers with 25 or more employees must include expected compensation or a reasonably narrow range in their job postings. Additionally, employers must not require Canadian experience and disclose if AI is used in screening. Employers must also state whether the role is for an existing vacancy or a future vacancy,

with the interviewed applicants receiving notice of the hiring outcome within 45 days. Ontario employers must also make job postings accessible, notify applicants that they have an accommodation policy and accommodate the needs of people with disabilities in the hiring process. Non-compliance can lead to orders to fix the posting and monetary penalties, with the risk of much higher fines for repeat or serious violations. Practically, employers recruiting across Canada should assume more provinces may follow Ontario's lead, and it is smart to standardize postings now.

All employers should ensure their job postings fully comply with all existing jurisdictional requirements. But even if job posting legislation doesn't apply to an employer's province, updating recruitment templates and approach can significantly improve hiring outcomes. Strong templates reduce errors, create consistency and ensure that every job posting includes essential elements. By standardizing job postings, employers move faster when vacancies open up and can focus on connecting with qualified candidates rather than rewriting ads from scratch each time. Job postings are not only a compliance document — they are also a powerful marketing tool because they give the first impression many candidates have of your organization. By incorporating some or all of Ontario's job posting requirements into their own posts, employers will appear transparent, credible and attractive to candidates who are actually interested in the role. Plus, adopting these practices earlier can make compliance easier later if similar rules expand to other provinces. Therefore, employers should:

- Include salary ranges or at least the expected compensation. This will help candidates self-select out if they are not interested, reducing wasted time on interviews. Pay transparency also strengthens the employer's brand in competitive labour markets.

- Add a simple disclosure about whether AI is used to screen or assess candidates to build trust and reduce anxiety around automated hiring processes.

- State whether the role is for an existing vacancy or a new position to give some context to the candidates about the urgency of filling the role and the stability of the opportunity.

- Remove any requirements for "Canadian experience" or similar language to open doors to qualified candidates with transferable experience and show support of diversity.



Photo by Christina @ vocintechchat.com

- State whether interviewed candidates will be advised of a hiring outcome and the time frame. This signals that the employer respects candidates' time and that there is a structured hiring process in place.

- Retain a copy of the final ad to help defend against potential discrimination or human rights claims.

- It is also recommended that employers who recruit in multiple provinces should:

- Maintain a master posting template that complies with the strictest applicable rules for the posting, then add province-specific fields before publishing.

- Keep records showing which version of the posting was used in each province.

In conclusion, the evolving landscape of job posting legislation across Canada shows a shift toward greater transparency and accountability in hiring. Non-compliance not only risks legal consequences but also damages credibility with candidates who increasingly value openness and respect in the hiring process. Employers should not wait for regulation. Instead, employers should be proactive by updating and standardizing their recruitment templates and processes. Incorporating key elements from Ontario's model provides an opportunity for employers in other jurisdictions to project a consistent and modern employer brand regardless of location supporting a competitive advantage that builds trust with candidates.

JOB POSTINGS ARE NOT ONLY A COMPLIANCE DOCUMENT, THEY ARE ALSO A POWERFUL MARKETING TOOL BECAUSE THEY GIVE THE FIRST IMPRESSION MANY CANDIDATES HAVE OF YOUR ORGANIZATION.

If you require assistance with this, or any other HR related matter, please contact us at TIPI Legacy HR+. 

Renee Boyda is a human resources consultant with Legacy Bowes. She is a CPHR candidate, received her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from the University of Manitoba, and received both Human Resource Management and Management Development Certificates with Honours from Red River College. She is focused on building HR structures and processes to create consistency and fairness in workplaces across Canada. Renee is a proud Metis, with over 12 years of human resource experience in both union and non-union environments. She can be reached at (204) 947-5525.



BEYOND THE HOT DOG: PREPARED AND PREPACKAGED FOODS DRIVE REVENUE

BY MELINE BEACH

There was a time not long ago when prepared foods at the local convenience store meant a rotating hot dog under a heat lamp and a cellophane-wrapped muffin. Today, grab-and-go and heat-and-eat foods represents one of the most dynamic and profitable categories in the C&G channel.

According to the National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS), foodservice, which includes prepared and prepackaged food, commissary items and dispensed beverages, generated nearly 39 per cent of in-store gross profit dollars in 2025, with prepared food accounting for average gross margins of approximately 55 per cent. In Canada, nearly half of all c-store shoppers bought prepared food at least twice a month, according to the 2024 C-store IQ National Shopper Study. Younger consumers are pushing that number higher with late-night purchases, treating the c-store as a default meal stop.

Food First: A retailer's perspective

While the prepared and prepackaged food category has grown, so have expectations. Consumers expect freshness, quality ingredients, dietary considerations and value.

Rabba Fine Foods has been serving Toronto neighbourhoods since 1967, and quick meal options have been part of its DNA from the start. Rick Rabba, who leads the company, has watched the category evolve. "Prepared food has transitioned from an occasional indulgence to a daily necessity for the modern Canadian consumer," he says. "The boundary between the traditional

grocery store and the quick-service restaurant has largely disappeared."

Rabba Fine Foods operates more than 30 marketplace locations across the GTA and prepares its food directly in-store. While the company sources premium components from trusted suppliers, final assembly and preparation take place inside each store kitchen, a hands-on model that Rabba says is key to its reputation for freshness.

Its prepared and prepackaged product offerings reflect dietary inclusivity and diverse global flavour profiles of the GTA communities they serve. Hot counters feature

antibiotic- and hormone-free chicken and freshly prepared shawarma, alongside daily selections of fresh sandwiches and sushi. Refrigerated grab-and-go include fresh salads and high-protein snack boxes paired with veggies and hummus or cheese and nuts. Heat-and-eat dinner trays, frozen entrees and shelf-stable snacks ensure options are available at any hour.

"Our packaging is selected entirely for portability, whether it is an easy-to-handle wrap, a secure single-serve salad bowl, or a microwave-ready dinner tray," says Rabba. "We position our pricing to offer a compelling, high-quality alternative to traditional quick-service takeout."

Peak freshness is maintained through operational discipline, including inventory control and product rotation. Clear labelling, precise date coding and allergen declarations are supported by food safety specialists and rigorous internal auditing.

The company's growth strategy is focused on deepening its existing locations rather than expanding square footage, investing in Rabba Kitchen layouts, expanding refrigerated merchandising space and integrating fresh meal options with digital delivery platforms to serve customers around the clock.

"Success in this space belongs to those who can deliver the speed of a drive-thru combined with the care and quality of a home-style kitchen," says Rabba. "That is the standard we hold ourselves to every day."

Supplying the Channel: A manufacturer's perspective

For c-store operators without a kitchen or the ability to prepare food in-house, a good supplier relationship is everything. Turnkey support goes beyond the food itself, covering category management expertise, planogram support and tailored product development.

Classic Group of Companies is a Canadian manufacturer supplying both independent and franchise c-store operators under its own brand and through private label. "The bar for C&G has risen with servicing the highest quality but also providing a shelf-life that accommodates varying demands and requirements across different stores," says Joseph Belcastro, general manager of Classic Group. "Our geographical landscape is so large and, when servicing the masses, we've had to take several factors into consideration when reviewing opportunities."

The company distributes primarily through Core-Mark, with direct-store delivery available where feasible. Its top-selling products for on-the-go eating include egg salad sandwiches, buffalo chicken wraps and assorted subs, with salads and veggie and fruit cups spiking in summer months.

Belcastro notes that product development has had to adapt. "We've had to be much more nimble and less traditional in our approach," he says, adding that menus have changed significantly to accommodate evolving consumer needs.

The company's portfolio spans gluten-free, vegan and halal options, with a menu diverse enough to accommodate shifting consumer demands. Classic Group

regularly reviews products and encourages retail partners to consider less conventional items as a way to reach new consumers.

"We're seeing that quality does matter and there's much more awareness about food through the C&G channel," says Belcastro. "The traditional consumer still exists, but tastes have changed and having a consistent variety of products available helps to keep customers engaged and excited."

Belcastro adds, "We try to view our products through the eyes of the consumer. Quality, presentation, and consistency matter the most to us. The key to build a strong program is maintaining that quality so the transaction becomes repetitive and trusted by the customer. We're always looking at how we can increase our shelf-life and maintain the same quality and consistency that we've been able to provide for years."

On the category management side, Classic Group works directly with category managers to provide support and planogram guidance, or reinvigoration when required. The company also has promos with some supplier partners and can provide digital and print marketing.

What C&G Retailers Need to Know

Grab-and-go is gaining traction. For the first time, the 2024 C-store IQ National Shopper Study shows packaged, refrigerated items outselling made-to-order. The category fits the way busy customers eat, and dedicated grab-and-go space is becoming a baseline expectation for c-store operators.

Price, value and taste all factor into the purchase decision. The 2022 C-store IQ survey found that 46 per cent of Canadian c-store shoppers cited price and value as their top consideration, while 33 per cent prioritized taste. Variety and rotation keep customers coming back.

The prepared and prepackaged foods category is profitable, growing and well matched to meet the way busy consumers eat today. For c-store operators, the opportunity is real. **C**

Meline Beach is a Toronto-based communications practitioner and frequent contributor to Convenience and Carwash Canada. In addition to freelance writing, Meline provides communications and public relations support to businesses across Canada. She can be reached at www.mlbcomms.ca.

**"PREPARED FOOD
HAS TRANSITIONED
FROM AN
OCCASIONAL
INDULGENCE TO A
DAILY NECESSITY
FOR THE MODERN
CANADIAN
CONSUMER."**





DON'T GET LEFT IN THE DARK: 5 STEPS TO WEATHERPROOF YOUR C-STORE

BY ELIE Y. KATZ

This past season, the continent has been battered by severe, unpredictable weather. From deep freezes to heavy storms, floods, and wind-stoked wildfires, communities have been heavily impacted. During these events, your convenience store isn't just a business — it becomes a vital lifeline for your neighbourhood.

When big box supermarkets close or lose power, locals rely on you. But to be there for them, you have to ensure your store remains operational. Here are five actionable steps to weatherproof your c-store and use your point-of-sale (POS) system to stay open when others cannot.

1. Follow the Weather Prognosis Far Ahead

Don't wait for a severe weather warning to hit your phone. Make it a habit to check extended weather forecasts daily. Tracking weather patterns a week or two in advance gives you a crucial head start. Use this time to check your POS system's historical sales reports.

WHEN BIG BOX SUPERMARKETS CLOSE OR LOSE POWER, LOCALS RELY ON YOU. BUT TO BE THERE FOR THEM, YOU HAVE TO ENSURE YOUR STORE REMAINS OPERATIONAL.

A STORM DOESN'T
HAVE TO KNOCK
OUT THE POWER
GRID TO HURT
YOUR BUSINESS;
SIMPLY LOSING
YOUR INTERNET
CONNECTION WILL
TAKE DOWN YOUR
POS SYSTEM.

By looking back at what sold out during the last major storm, you know exactly what to order from suppliers before the panic-buying begins.

2. Strategize for Holiday Weekend Storms

Severe weather is challenging, but a storm hitting on a busy holiday weekend is a perfect storm for retail chaos. Customers will be rushing to buy both holiday supplies and emergency rations. Use your POS system's peak-hour tracking to optimize staff scheduling and call in extra help exactly when the rush hits. Furthermore, ensure your cashiers are equipped with reliable hardware and lightning-fast barcode scanners to keep checkout lines moving smoothly and safely without system crashes.

3. Stock Up Based on the Specific Forecast

"Stocking up" means different things depending on the type of weather approaching. Tailor your inventory to the threat:

- Winter Storms and Blizzards: Prioritize rock salt, windshield wiper fluid, snow shovels, hot cocoa, and canned soups.
- Heavy Rain & Flooding: Stock up on bottled water, batteries, flashlights, tarps, and non-perishable snacks.

Instead of guessing, let your POS system do the heavy lifting with smart inventory management and automated low-stock alerts. You can set minimum thresholds for these emergency items so the system notifies you to reorder long before you run out.

4. Keep Processing with a Failover Router

A storm doesn't have to knock out the power grid to hurt your business; simply losing your internet connection will take down your POS system. You can't afford to be a cash-only business during an emergency. Investing in a failover router ensures that if your primary internet provider goes down, your system automatically switches to a cellular network. This keeps your credit card processing up and running without missing a beat.

5. Leverage the My NRS Store App

If the worst happens and your physical store is inaccessible or your main registers fail critically, you need a reliable backup. By using the *My NRS Store app*, you can manage your store right from your mobile device. Whether you need to check inventory levels on the fly, adjust pricing, or monitor transactions while managing floor traffic, the app ensures you are never truly left in the dark.

Stay Prepared, Stay Open

Severe weather is inevitable, but losing business to it is not. By planning ahead, stocking smartly, and utilizing NRS technology to safeguard your operations, your c-store can weather any storm.

To learn more about how the NRS POS can help your store thrive in any weather, visit nrsplus.com or call 888-541-1073 to speak with a specialist today. 

Elie Y. Katz is the president and CEO of National Retail Solutions (NRS), which operates thousands of point-of-sale terminals across the United States and Canada, offering NRS Pay credit card processing and business cash advance funding to small and mid-sized independent retailers. For more information, visit nrsplus.com or call (888) 541-1073.



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BACK-TO-SCHOOL BRINGS BIG OPPORTUNITY TO C-STORES

BY ANGELA ALTASS

When a new school season begins, the challenge of packing healthy, nutritious and tasty lunches and snacks influences food purchases for Canadian families.

C-stores have a huge opportunity to become the quick stop snack solution for families, says Rhonda Goldberg, president Oh! Naturals.

"A great school snack should be easy to pack, not too messy, and enjoyable enough that it does not come home untouched," says Goldberg. "Parents want snacks that their children will actually eat but they also want to feel good about putting them in the lunchbox. Convenience is huge as busy mornings mean parents need snacks that are easy to grab, pack, and trust."

Parents want balance with a snack that feels fun for the children but still makes sense for school, saying Goldberg, who suggests that parents are looking for the following snack attributes:

- Tasty and kid approved.
- Easy to pack in lunches.
- Less messy.
- Suitable for school environments.
- Made with recognizable ingredients.
- A better alternative to candy or traditional salty snacks.



PARENTS ARE INCREASINGLY PRIORITIZING SNACKS THAT ARE BOTH NUTRITIOUS AND CONVENIENT, WITH A STRONG EMPHASIS ON CLEAN INGREDIENTS AND RECOGNIZABLE FOODS.



"At Oh! Naturals, we are focused on making snacks that children actually want to eat, and parents feel good about packing," says Goldberg. "Our Banana Chips are available in natural, chocolate, and strawberry flavours, with natural being our top seller. Our goal is simple: Make better snacking feel fun, not forced."

Parents and students are looking for more than just candy and pop, says Goldberg.

"They want grab-and-go snacks that feel convenient, affordable, and better-for-you," she states. "Parents need options that make mornings easier and keep kids happy throughout the day. At Oh! Naturals we believe snacks should bring a little joy into the lunchbox. Children want flavour and fun. Parents want convenience and peace of

mind. Retailers want products that stand out on the shelf."

Parents are increasingly prioritizing snacks that are both nutritious and convenient, with a strong emphasis on clean ingredients and recognizable foods, says Elysia Vandenhurk, co-founder and chief brand and innovation officer, Three Farmers Foods Inc.

"Parents need to balance health with taste, ensuring kids will actually enjoy eating them," says Vandenhurk. "At Three Farmers, we continue to see strong demand for our high protein and fibre snacks with simple ingredients. It is tough to find protein and fibre solutions that are not full of sugar or bad ingredients and are nut free and safe for school. Our core lineup of roasted fava beans, chickpeas and

>>



**SCHOOL-FRIENDLY SNACKS
SHOULD BE PORTABLE,
MESS-FREE, AND MADE
WITH WHOLESOME
INGREDIENTS THAT PROVIDE
SUSTAINED ENERGY
THROUGHOUT THE DAY.**

our new protein snack mix offer a natural crunchy, nut-free option that fits well into school environments.”

School-friendly snacks should be portable, mess-free, and made with wholesome ingredients that provide sustained energy throughout the day, says Vandenhurk.

“Convenience stores can differentiate themselves by offering better-for-you snack options that align with modern health trends, including plant-based, high-protein, and minimally processed products,” says Vandenhurk. “Made in Canada brands are also a bonus. Grab-and-go packaging and clearly labeled allergen-friendly options are especially important for busy families.”

Affordable, convenient snacks that are readily available and easy to pack will get the attention of parents, says Leen Alsaffarini, marketing and social media manager, Big Chief Meat Snacks.

“Parents also appreciate products that are lower in sugar and carbs, require no refrigeration, and can be easily carried in lunch bags or backpacks,” says Alsaffarini. “Pre-packaged snacks are always popular because they are convenient and portion controlled. Parents are also looking for products made with simple ingredients, fewer artificial additives, and no artificial colours.”

Offering a wide variety of snack options is important and convenience stores can stand out by featuring products from local companies whose products can be competitively priced compared to imported alternatives, says Alsaffarini.

“Flavour is a major factor for older students,” notes Alsaffarini. “This age group is often more willing to explore new and unique flavours rather than sticking to traditional or mild options. They also tend to look for convenient, high-protein snacks that fit their active lifestyles.”

Consumers are looking for healthy snacking options, says Krista Anderson, founder and CEO, Healthy On The Go.

“An added bonus is if these products with simple ingredients also contain more protein and fibre for the satiation and energizing capabilities,” says Anderson. “What’s important to note is that there are a lot of products that are coming out with a great amount of protein but they’re filled with ultra-processed ingredients and because of that, they become an immediate turn off for a lot of consumers today.”

After school snacks should be easy, energizing and enjoyable, adds Goldberg, noting that after school is when children are hungry, tired and usually looking for something fast.





"It is not just about filling a stomach; it is about helping kids reset after a long day," says Goldberg. "This is the perfect time for snacks that feel satisfying but do not spoil dinner."

Snacks for after school should provide a balance of protein and carbohydrates to help students refuel and sustain energy until the next meal, says Vandenhurk. "Portability and ease of preparation are key as families are often looking for quick solutions during busy afternoons. Older students are often looking for snacks that deliver both functionality and flavour, including options that are high in protein and made with simple, transparent ingredients. There is also a growing interest in plant-based foods, as well as bold, globally inspired flavours."

Older students are looking for snacks that

fit their lifestyle: Portable, flavourful, affordable, shareable, and satisfying, says Goldberg, adding that high school or post-secondary students are often seeking snacks with the following features:

- Plant-based ingredients.
- Gluten-free or nut-free.
- Vegan-friendly.
- Protein or energy support.
- Bold flavours.
- Resealable or easy-to-carry packaging.
- Snacks that feel fun but are still better-for-you.

"High school and post-secondary students are also very influenced by convenience and flavour," says Goldberg. "If a snack tastes good, looks good, and fits into a busy day, it has a much better chance of becoming a regular purchase."

Post-secondary students are looking for tasty but cleaner snacking options, says Anderson.

"A lot of vending machines at schools today offer ultra processed candies, chips, and beverages, which makes focusing a lot harder for students with the spikes and crashes in energy that come with it," says Anderson. "It affects mental health."

Back-to-school remains a key seasonal need where both retailers and brands can support families with convenient, nutritious options, states Vandenhurk.

"There is a strong opportunity to educate consumers on the benefits of plant-based snacking, particularly options that are naturally allergen-friendly and minimally processed," she says. "Ultimately, success in this category comes from delivering snacks that meet the needs of both parents and kids: Nutrition, taste, and convenience." 

Angela Altass is an experienced writer and editor based in Ontario. She has covered a variety of topics and industries throughout her career. She can be reached by email at altassangela@gmail.com.

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THE OPERATOR'S GUIDE TO MAXIMIZING EQUIPMENT VALUE

BY KAYLIE LONG

Many operators assume new equipment is automatically the smarter financial decision. In reality, the smartest equipment decision isn't always the newest one. It's the one that creates the most value. The end of a warranty period or OEM support does not signal the end of an asset's useful life. The smartest operators maximize equipment value by making deliberate decisions that keep costs low, performance high, cash flow available and options open. This creates a more resilient operation.

Obsolete Doesn't Mean Useless

When you receive an obsolete notice from the OEM communicating an end-of-life date for support on a part you have in service, there is no immediate need to panic. This is not a notice of failure, nor is it a reason to rush out and replace equipment with

new. In many cases, this is simply a manufacturer decision that it no longer makes financial sense to continue supporting a product line. It is not an indication that the equipment has stopped performing. Unsupported doesn't necessarily mean unusable to the operator. The question isn't whether support has ended. The question is whether the equipment is still creating value. Smart operators don't replace equipment because they're afraid. They replace equipment because it makes financial and operational sense.

The Smartest Operators Don't Choose Sides

This is not a debate between new and remanufactured equipment. The goal is to understand when each option creates the most value. New equipment makes sense when new technology creates meaningful value for your customer, improves operational efficiency, or when a piece of equipment has become unreliable on a widespread basis. Remanufactured equipment makes sense when performance remains strong, costs can be significantly reduced, known failure points can be addressed, and equipment still has useful life remaining. Smart operators use the right tools for the right situation and do not choose the same answer every time.

WHEN YOU RECEIVE AN OBSOLETE NOTICE FROM THE OEM COMMUNICATING AN END-OF-LIFE DATE FOR SUPPORT ON A PART YOU HAVE IN SERVICE, THERE IS NO IMMEDIATE NEED TO PANIC.

The Most Valuable Equipment May Already Be in Your Wash

Sometimes the most valuable equipment in your wash isn't the newest. It's the equipment that's already paid for itself. Every equipment decision is ultimately a capital allocation decision. Once equipment has paid for itself, every additional year of reliable operation improves its return on investment. Reliability and performance matter more than the age of your equipment. Customers aren't privy to whether your equipment or parts are new or remanufactured. What they care about is getting a quality wash and pulling away with a clean car. They only know whether the wash delivers the experience they expect. Customers aren't choosing your wash because a board was manufactured last month. They're choosing it because the wash works, the experience is consistent, and they leave with a clean car. Don't assume new equipment automatically creates customer satisfaction. If there are no meaningful performance advantages visible to the customer, they will drive away with a clean car either way. The money saved through a smart repair or remanufacturing decision doesn't simply disappear. It stays in your pocket until you decide where it can create the most value. Operators don't win by spending the least amount of money. They win by getting the most value from every dollar they spend. That money remains available for marketing, site improvements, employee investments, future expansion, or cash reserves.

Build Your Inventory Before You Need It

Though I've been careful to communicate that there is no clear winner between remanufactured and new equipment, I will tell you the worst decision you can make is waiting for a critical failure before making one. Keeping spares available is incredibly important in maintaining a consistent customer experience. The last thing you want is to have a wash down on a busy July weekend. My advice is to evaluate failed equipment for remanufacturing before assuming replacement is the only option. Even if you're only keeping the remanufactured part as a spare, you'll have

something ready for immediate installation when a problem arises. Problems don't discriminate on holiday weekends. Many operators have shelves full of failed or retired electronics they consider junk. In reality, those assets may still hold value. Selling retired equipment into the remanufacturing stream can generate cash while helping extend the useful life of equipment for the next operator. There may be value sitting on the shelf that many operators overlook. What looks like junk today may become tomorrow's spare, core credit, or emergency replacement. The worst time to make a major equipment decision is when your back is against the wall and you're forced to make it. >>





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Why Remanufacturing Deserves a Second Look

True remanufacturing goes beyond repair. The product is evaluated and restored at the component level rather than simply replacing the failed part. Common

failures are proactively addressed, so the remanufacturing process isn't just isolating the issue. It is creating a stronger product by replacing known failure points that have been identified repeatedly through years of field experience. In some cases, remanufacturing doesn't just restore functionality. It addresses known failure points before they happen again. Trusted remanufacturers also live test and simulate real-world operating conditions for quality control, ensuring the product performs exactly as it will in the field before it ships. Reliability, performance and testing matter more than the perception of "reman." Your balance sheet will know the difference, but your customers will not.

The Bottom Line

The most valuable equipment in your wash may not be the newest. It may be the

equipment that has already paid for itself and is still creating value every day. Smart operators don't make equipment decisions based on age, perception, or fear. They make them based on performance, value, and return on investment. The goal isn't to own the newest equipment. The goal is to build the most resilient operation. **CE**

Kaylie Long is the marketing director at RDM Industrial Electronics, a family-owned company providing remanufactured electronics, repair services, and new replacement parts to the petroleum and carwash industries. Her focus is helping operators and service companies make informed equipment decisions that maximize value, improve reliability, reduce downtime, and support long-term operational success.



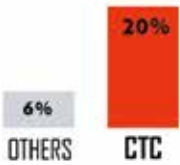
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Swan Lake First Nation Fuels Its Future

BY MELINE BEACH

Opening a fuel station from scratch takes more than a business plan. It takes the right partners, the right brand, and a clear sense of what you're building toward. For Swan Lake First Nation, the answer to all three came together in Headingley, Man., where the community's new Petro-Canada site is now serving residents and travellers along one of the country's most-travelled corridors.

The urban reserve land straddling the Trans-Canada highway in Headingley represents a platform for economic growth and marks a significant milestone for Swan Lake First Nation in its journey toward building a >>



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ENVISIONED FOR THE
FUTURE OF SWAN
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healthy, prosperous and self-sufficient community for future generations. “The location serves as a foundational building block to achieve strong economic growth envisioned for the future of Swan Lake First Nation,” says Bailey Glennon, general manager, petroleum, at Petro-Canada Headingley. “The long-term goal is that once economic growth is achieved for this location, we utilize the revenue generated towards future projects that will be developed for Swan Lake First Nation.”

The choice to go with Petro-Canada was deliberate. “When Swan Lake First Nation decided to open a brand-new gas station, we felt that the brand Petro-Canada was the best fit,” says Glennon. “The brand was not only a good fit for the First Nation, but for the community of Headingley, based on their brand standards, core values and what they have to offer.” It’s a relationship Petro-Canada has cultivated across more than 70 stations and wholesale marketing arrangements with Indigenous communities across Canada.

The site offers a full fuel mix, including regular, mid-grade, premium and diesel, alongside tobacco, lottery, a

coffee bar, confectionery items, automotive products, and an air station. A seating area and coin-operated amusement add a fun touch. Full service is available from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., with pre-pay available overnight. In terms of future expansion, an on-site restaurant is to be determined.

Behind that offering is a team built with intention. A mix of First Nations and non-First Nations employees work at the station, with one Swan Lake First Nation member serving as full-time supervisor. This role was central to training new staff and establishing consistent service standards from day one.

Getting the site open and keeping it running also required a strong network of supplier and vendor partners. The business launched with an established roster including Sobeys, Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Frito-Lay, Old Dutch, Red Bull, Arctic Beverages, Complete Distribution, and Pratt’s Wholesale. On the operational side, key industry partners played important roles in bringing the site to life — from the brand on the canopy to the fuel in the tanks and the technology at the till.



Branded from the Ground Up

Pattison ID was responsible for all exterior brand implementation at the Swan Lake Petro-Canada, covering the canopy, pylon signage, and convenience store signage — from design coordination and production through to installation.

“Because Petro-Canada has well-established national brand standards, maintaining brand integrity was a key priority,” says Jonathan McKercher, account director at Pattison ID. “We balanced those standards by adhering to their design specifications, materials, colours, illumination requirements and placement guidelines, while also accommodating the site’s unique layout and construction requirements.”

According to McKercher, the biggest challenge was Winnipeg’s winter conditions. “Cold temperatures and unpredictable weather required flexibility in scheduling and close coordination with

the installation team.” By planning around weather windows and maintaining tight communication with the site team, Pattison ID was able to complete the work safely and to brand standards.

Fuel Supply Behind the Scenes

Trimac Transportation handled fuel delivery for the Swan Lake Petro-Canada location, a role that began well before opening day. “The site was still under construction, but loads still needed to be delivered so the tanks would be ready for opening day,” says Shawna Salahub, terminal manager, Manitoba at Trimac. “Our safety specialist worked directly with the local construction team on site to help facilitate the initial loads safely, while our dispatchers planned the correct product type and volume for each delivery.”

From there, Trimac developed a practical inventory management approach with the site team, allowing for better demand forecasting and more efficient delivery timing. “We believe this approach helps streamline operations for the site team by limiting the number of tank readings they need to provide each day, giving them more time to focus on other areas of their business,” says Salahub.

The learning curve on fuel supply is steeper than most new operators anticipate, says Salahub. “One of the biggest misconceptions is that fuel supply is as simple as placing an order. In reality, a lot is happening behind the scenes, including coordinating terminals, drivers, equipment, product availability and delivery timing to ensure fuel arrives safely and when it is needed.” >>



GETTING THE SITE OPEN AND KEEPING IT RUNNING ALSO REQUIRED A STRONG NETWORK OF SUPPLIER AND VENDOR PARTNERS.





FOR OTHER FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES CONSIDERING A SIMILAR PATH, GLENNON EMPHASIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLABORATION.



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POS Technology Built for the Site

POS Systems, an authorized distributor and reseller of Logivision, handled point-of-sale installation at the Swan Lake Petro-Canada, integrating fuel control, inventory management and back-office reporting through the Logivision LBOSS platform alongside the site's pump hardware. One of the most operationally significant features is the handling of tax exemptions at the point of sale, a meaningful part of the site's value to status First Nations customers who are eligible for tax-exempt purchases with appropriate government-issued identification.

"When a customer presents their status card, the cashier enters the number directly into the system at the point of sale," says Terri MacKenzie, president of POS Systems. "The system validates it and removes the applicable taxes before the transaction is completed, so the exemption is applied in the same motion as any other sale. For the customer, it's a quick, familiar step; for the cashier, it's part of the normal flow."

POS Systems has been installing and supporting Logivision systems at First Nations-owned and operated sites for over 20 years. "Technology doesn't stand still, and staying current means paying close attention to the network side of things just as much as the software up front," says MacKenzie. "We've leaned into building stronger in-house networking and managed services support over the years, so we can be there when sites need us, not just at install."

Looking Ahead

Swan Lake First Nation's expansion into the convenience and retail petroleum sector is a practical demonstration of what is possible when everything aligns, with a community holding a clear development vision, a brand built for growth, and vendor partners who understand that a successful opening is just the beginning. The first few months of any new operation are an adjustment. "Patience and understanding during this time were key," says Glennon, reflecting on the work required to stabilize staffing, service standards and daily operations in the early weeks.

For other First Nations communities considering a similar path, Glennon emphasizes the importance of collaboration. "Each First Nation is unique in its community vision and values. It's important to collaborate with a partner who shares the same core values as your community to build a strong foundation for your new business."

If the early response is any indication, Swan Lake Petro-Canada is off to a strong start. "The community has responded very positively with consistent five-star Google Reviews," says Glennon. 

Meline Beach is a Toronto-based communications practitioner and frequent contributor to Convenience and Carwash Canada. In addition to freelance writing, Meline provides communications and public relations support to businesses across Canada. She can be reached at www.mlbcmmms.ca.



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CANADIAN CARWASH INDUSTRY TRENDS: 2026 AND BEYOND

BY MATT VERITY

The Canadian carwash industry is entering a new phase of evolution. While the past decade was largely defined by the rapid expansion of express conveyor tunnels and subscription-based wash clubs, the industry is now experiencing a broader diversification of formats, technologies and investment strategies.

Rising construction costs, increasing market saturation in some regions,

changing consumer expectations and advancements in equipment technology are reshaping how operators approach development and growth.

As the industry moves through 2026 and beyond, several key trends are emerging that will influence both new developments and existing operators across Canada.

Next-Generation Carwash Architecture

Historically, carwash design focused primarily on functionality. Buildings were often simple industrial structures designed to maximize throughput while minimizing construction costs. Today, however, operators increasingly recognize that architecture has become a competitive advantage.

Modern consumers expect facilities that are clean, attractive and professionally branded. Contemporary developments feature extensive glass, premium exterior finishes, enhanced landscaping, architectural lighting and strong branding elements that create a memorable customer experience. These “destination-style” washes often resemble modern retail developments rather than traditional carwashes.



CASHLESS PAYMENTS, MOBILE PAYMENT OPTIONS, LOYALTY PROGRAMS, REMOTE MONITORING, AND DIGITAL CUSTOMER SUPPORT ARE BECOMING STANDARD FEATURES.



As competition increases, curb appeal is becoming a critical factor in attracting customers and supporting premium pricing. Consumers increasingly associate a facility's appearance with the quality of the wash experience itself.

The Resurgence of Self-Serve and In-Bay Automatic Washes

One of the most notable industry shifts is the renewed interest in self-serve and in-bay automatic (IBA) formats.

For years, investors focused primarily on express tunnel washes. However, self-serve and IBA facilities are experiencing a resurgence for several reasons. First, tunnel construction costs have risen dramatically, often exceeding \$8 million to \$12 million in many Canadian markets. Second, many secondary and tertiary markets lack the traffic volumes needed to support large tunnel operations. Finally, self-serve and IBA facilities continue to serve customers with lifted trucks, trailers, RVs, boats, work vehicles and heavily soiled equipment that may not be ideal tunnel customers.

Rather than disappearing, these segments have adapted and evolved to meet changing consumer expectations.

Modernizing the Self-Serve Experience

Today's self-serve washes bear little resemblance to the coin-operated facilities of the past.

Cashless payments, mobile payment options, loyalty programs, remote monitoring and digital customer support are becoming standard features. Operators are also expanding service offerings with premium chemicals, graphene and ceramic protectants, undercarriage cleaning tools, windshield washer refill stations, mat cleaning systems and detailing amenities.

Customers increasingly expect self-serve facilities to provide the same convenience, cleanliness and professionalism as automated formats. As a result, operators are placing greater emphasis on facility presentation, equipment reliability and customer communication.

The Evolution of In-Bay Automatics

The IBA segment is also undergoing significant modernization.

Advancements in chemistry, vehicle sensing, wash package design and drying systems have dramatically improved wash quality. Modern IBAs are increasingly competing on customer experience rather than simply being viewed as a lower-cost alternative to tunnels.

Many operators are also developing hybrid sites that combine multiple IBAs with self-serve bays, creating flexible facilities that offer strong profitability while requiring less labour and capital than large conveyor tunnels. For many smaller Canadian communities, this model is proving particularly attractive.

Trends Within the Tunnel Segment

Express conveyor tunnels remain a dominant force in the industry, but operators are facing new challenges.

As membership programs mature, many markets >>



are experiencing increased competition and subscription saturation. The focus is shifting from acquiring members to retaining them and maximizing revenue per customer.

At the same time, inflation continues to pressure margins through rising labour, utility, chemical, insurance and maintenance costs. Technology is increasingly being used to offset these challenges through artificial intelligence, predictive maintenance, license plate recognition, digital marketing automation and advanced customer analytics.

Another emerging trend is the development of mini-tunnels and compact conveyor systems, which allow operators to enter markets with lower land requirements and reduced capital investment.

Consolidation and Mergers and Acquisitions

Perhaps the most significant long-term trend is continued consolidation.

Private equity groups and large strategic operators have spent years acquiring carwashes across North America, and industry experts anticipate a strong rebound in merger and acquisition activity through 2026 and beyond.

Canada remains particularly attractive because the market is still highly fragmented compared to the United States. Many facilities remain independently owned, creating acquisition opportunities for expanding regional and national operators.

Buyers are becoming increasingly selective, focusing on facilities with strong operational performance, modern equipment, professional branding and opportunities for future growth. For independent operators, this creates both competitive pressure and attractive exit opportunities.

Conclusion

The Canadian carwash industry in 2026 is far more diverse than many predicted just a few years ago. While tunnel washes remain an important segment, the resurgence of self-serve and in-bay automatic formats

demonstrates that multiple business models can succeed when aligned with local market conditions.

The industry's future will be defined by attractive facility design, technology integration, operational efficiency, customer experience and strategic capital deployment. Operators who embrace modernization while remaining focused on the specific needs of their market will be best positioned to thrive.

Rather than a single dominant format emerging, the next decade is likely to be characterized by a balanced ecosystem of tunnels, IBAs and self-serve facilities — each serving distinct customer needs and market opportunities across Canada's evolving automotive landscape. **■**

Matt Verity is the owner and founder of Rocky Mountain Washes, operating in Alberta. He previously founded Great White Car & Truck Washes and has been involved in the planning, development and operation of carwash facilities across Canada and the United States. Matt also provides consulting services within the carwash and self-storage industries and is passionate about helping advance both sectors through innovation, operational excellence and industry collaboration.

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PETROLEUM REMOTE TECHNOLOGY: CHANGING FUEL SITE MAINTENANCE

BY JOSH LIVELY

The Cost of Not Knowing There's a Problem

Gas stations and fuel sites can lose business long before anyone realizes there is a problem. A dispenser slows down, a payment terminal stops responding, or a device like a screen or card reader goes offline. Typically, those issues trigger a familiar chain reaction: a store call, a dispatch, a site visit, troubleshooting on arrival, and sometimes a second trip if the right parts are not on the truck. That process costs time, labour, and often sales.

Increasingly, remote technology is changing that model by helping fuel site owners and operators move from reactive maintenance to connected, data-driven support.

The Everyday Challenges Fuel Operators Face

For many operators, the pain points are easy to recognize. Fueling equipment is spread across one site or many, and every outage matters because uptime directly affects

throughput and customer experience. At the same time, labour pressures have changed the role of store teams. Industry sources from *Convenience & Carwash Canada* note that site staff are often focused on foodservice, merchandising, and customer service, while Authorized Service Providers are typically the ones called to diagnose issues and restore equipment to operation.

Some of the most common challenges operators face include:

- Equipment downtime that affects fuel sales
- Limited visibility into what is happening at the dispenser
- Pressure to reduce maintenance costs and unnecessary truck rolls
- Payment compliance and security concerns
- Fuel theft, tampering, or suspicious device activity
- Managing multiple sites with limited internal resources

Remote Monitoring vs. Remote Management

This is where the distinction between remote monitoring and remote management becomes important.

Remote monitoring delivers visibility. It tells an operator when something is wrong, such as:

- A tank alarm
- Unusual flow behaviour
- An alert tied to a payment device
- A device or dispenser going offline

Remote management goes a step further. It is awareness plus action. As described by both Convenience & Carwash Canada and Invenco, connected systems can help authorized service partners:

- Restart a dispenser remotely
- Review logs before dispatch
- Adjust supported settings
- Deploy approved software updates
- Prepare for a site visit with better diagnostic information

That means a petroleum service technician can often understand more about the issue before ever leaving the shop.

Why This Shift Matters

This shift matters because many service events are not complex mechanical failures. A portion of common pump issues can be corrected quickly through remote access, including warm restarts, remote troubleshooting, flow-rate analysis, and software deployment. These capabilities can reduce overall operating costs and improve uptime.

>>



MAINTENANCE AT THE FORECOURT IS BECOMING MORE CONNECTED, MORE CENTRALIZED, AND MORE PROACTIVE.

For owners and operators, that can mean the difference between:

- Same-day recovery
 - A dispenser sitting idle for hours or even days
- That difference has a direct impact on customer experience and lost sales.

The Technology Behind Connected Maintenance

The technology behind this is becoming more sophisticated. Cloud-based dashboards can now centralize dispenser data such as device status, alarms, flow rates, software versions, and event logs into one view. Connected forecourt hardware can also support remote configuration and approved updates across multiple locations.

For example, Gilbarco Veeder-Root's Pump Control Node 5 (PCN5) is positioned as the bridge that enables remote settings management, scheduled updates, and certain anti-theft controls for compatible dispensers, while Gilbarco's Forecourt is described as the cloud layer that centralizes access, control, and configuration.

In simple terms, these tools help operators and service providers see more, know more, and act faster.

Where Operators See the Real Value

From an operator's point of view, the true value is operational efficiency. Remote tools can help service teams identify whether a problem appears to be related to:

- Software
- Communications
- Flow performance
- Configuration
- A hardware issue

If a remote reset resolves the issue, a truck roll may be avoided entirely. When a technician is still required to go on-site, that technician can arrive with better context and a better chance of having the right part on board. That kind of preparation can help compress the service cycle and reduce repeat visits, which is especially important for operators managing large territories or high-volume sites where downtime is expensive.

Security and Loss Prevention

Security is another major reason remote technology is gaining attention. Modern fueling sites face risks that go beyond ordinary wear and tear, including dispenser tampering, payment fraud, and fuel theft. Capabilities such as real-time alerts, dispenser door monitoring, remote security settings, and configurable responses to suspicious activity are all ways owners and operators can strengthen site security.

The goal is not only to record an event after the fact, but to shorten the time between detection and response. That can help:

- Protect wet stock
- Reduce losses
- Improve site security
- Support a safer forecourt environment for customers and employees

Building a More Proactive Maintenance Strategy

"What drives the most value to me is a preventative maintenance strategy that we can work on with a customer," says Stephen Hill, technical trainer and product support at Petro Service Limited.

Remote monitoring also supports a more proactive maintenance strategy. Connected equipment makes it easier to spot slower flow rates, recurring alarms, or patterns that suggest a developing issue before it turns into an outage. Service technicians are able to recognize these patterns and act on them. An

example, identifying when a dispenser may need a filter change to optimize flow rate.

Instead of treating maintenance as a series of emergency calls, operators can use connected data to build a more predictive approach around site health.

This is where service providers can work with operators to incorporate remote tools into a broader maintenance plan. That may include:

- Monitoring dispenser or payment-device health
- Remotely resetting supported equipment
- Reviewing logs before dispatch
- Confirming likely parts needs
- Deploying approved software updates in a controlled way

"We've always judged our success on the success of our customers," says Josh Ferguson, director of sales and marketing at Petro Service Limited. "With that comes continuous improvement. We're always looking at ways to make our service team more informed, and remote connectivity at the site level plays a role in that."

Remote technology helps make service technicians more informed, more efficient, and better prepared.

A More Connected Future for Fuel Site Maintenance

The broader takeaway is simple. Maintenance at the forecourt is becoming more connected, more centralized, and more proactive. The sites that benefit most will not necessarily be the ones with the most technology, but the ones that use that connected visibility to make better decisions.

In a business where uptime, security, and customer experience all matter, petroleum remote technology is helping operators spend less time reacting and more time staying ahead. 

Josh Lively, CM is a Marketing Associate at Petro Service Limited specializing in brand marketing, digital content, and customer-focused campaigns. With experience in both corporate and nonprofit marketing, he combines creative storytelling with marketing analytics to ensure Petro Service Limited consistently delivers on its brand promise. PetroService is a maintenance, distribution, and construction company servicing the retail and convenience landscape including Forecourt, Backcourt, Point-of-Sale, EV, and Carwash equipment across Canada.

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CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN EQUIPMENT METRICS AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

By and large, convenience store operators are overlooking a business-critical reality: broken fueling system equipment and disruptive fueling system maintenance drive away customers who value speed, comfort and convenience above all else.

BY STEVE STEWART

While a dirty bathroom or bad coffee is an obvious turn-off, the industry continues to underestimate the damage that broken fueling equipment can do to brand loyalty. In reality, an out-of-service dispenser or a bagged nozzle can be just as off-putting, perhaps even more so. Crucially, down or poorly maintained and improperly operating equipment gives customers an immediate reason to bypass a location altogether.

Consider this: According to NACS research, store preference is even more important than saving a few cents off the price of gas:

- 90 per cent of customers prioritize getting in and out of the station quickly
- 74 per cent of drivers will drive 5 minutes out of their way to go to the store they prefer
- Only 64 per cent of drivers will drive 5 minutes out of their way to save 5 cents per gallon

Even seemingly small fueling system components can have a major impact on the customer experience. The customer's interaction with the dispenser nozzle is a prime example:

- Nozzle hold-open latch failures require excessive customer force to operate, or worse, fail to shut off when released
- Single-plane swivels require customers to fight against the natural bend of the hose, making them feel heavy and cumbersome to use
- A nozzle with weak flow control won't allow customers to easily and precisely stop the flow of fuel

When large components fail, though, the customer's experience doesn't just suffer — it stops entirely. Whether it's a check valve failure on a submersible turbine pump, water in the tank sump or an entry boot

**EVEN SEEMINGLY
SMALL FUELING
SYSTEM COMPONENTS
CAN HAVE A
MAJOR IMPACT ON
THE CUSTOMER
EXPERIENCE.**

failure on a dispenser sump, part failures at this scale require time and technical proficiency to repair. Fortunately, the digital era equips convenience operators with the information they need to minimize fueling system component failures and reduce maintenance disruptions.

Leveraging Maintenance Metrics for Forecourt Efficiency

Maintenance data and equipment metrics have been the primary measures of regulatory compliance for decades, but now they can also be used to drive operational efficiency and brand equity. No longer merely reactive indicators of failure, equipment performance data enable operators to proactively assess component reliability over a part's lifetime. Using this information, operators can

implement fueling system products that improve system performance and help ensure a seamless customer experience.

While some stations rely on internal resources to track maintenance statistics, service companies offer full maintenance tracking and reporting, including:

- Call response times
- Type and style of equipment where challenges occur
- Average mean time between failures
- Downtime metrics
- Uptime metrics
- Cost per service call
- Predictive analytics
- Ensuring maximum warranty coverage is honored

Analyzing these metrics for key performance trends is the vital first step toward delivering the most frictionless fueling experience possible. >>



**BY ACTIVELY ELIMINATING
COMMON POINTS OF FAILURE
AND CHOOSING EQUIPMENT
THAT SIMPLIFIES MAINTENANCE
OVERALL, THE FORECOURT IS
PRIMED FOR MAXIMUM UPTIME
AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION.**

Is the data showing service calls tied to water ingress? Ask your fueling system equipment distributor about water-resistant parts:

- Water-resistant composite manhole covers
- Pre-plumbed dispenser sumps with advanced composite technology and a watertight seal
- Flexible, watertight sump entry boots for conduit and pipe
- Multi-port manhole water shroud systems
- Watertight sealable spill container covers

Is system complexity driving up maintenance costs? Inquire about fueling system products that are shipped pre-plumbed or reduce the number of parts in the system:

- OPW Retail Fueling hose kits that include factory-assembled nozzle, swivel, breakaway, whip hose and curb hose
- Swivel-breakaway combos that eliminate the need for a whip hose
- Emergency shut-off valves that include a hermetically sealed shear section
- Pre-plumbed dispenser sumps that arrive with the dispenser top, entry fittings, stabilizer bars, emergency shear valves, flex connectors or rigid risers, elbows and tees already installed
- Flexible piping that eliminates underground buried fittings and joints, preventing potential underground leak points

Are inspection and testing contributing to excessive downtime? Install parts that can be tested "in place":

- The ISC-3112D EDGE™ Double-Wall Sealable Cover Spill Container from OPW Retail Fueling, which can be vacuum-tested to confirm its integrity and upgraded from single- to double-wall if code requirements change. Also, if the spill bucket is damaged, it can be replaced at grade level without breaking ground.
- Overfill prevention valves that are testable from the surface, reducing the time needed to validate proper functionality to 1 minute

- Emergency shut-off valves with integral test ports that allow the piping system to be air-tested without breaking any piping connections
- Multi-ports with easy-access inspection ports

By actively eliminating common points of failure and choosing equipment that simplifies maintenance overall, the forecourt is primed for maximum uptime and customer satisfaction.

Embracing the Meerkat Mindset

At first glance, equipment metrics showing that a component is wearing out might not feel like "good news." But consider the alternative: waiting for a customer to alert staff to a broken nozzle is the ultimate brand failure. By the time a driver walks inside to complain (and you hope they do, but how many don't?), their loyalty has already vanished and the store has broadcast exactly what kind of customer experience it deems acceptable.

Top-performing fuel retailers don't wait for complaints. They embrace their equipment metrics regardless of the data, empowering themselves to optimize existing assets and

properly configure new sites from day one. By tying equipment performance to maintenance costs, they build an undeniable business case for investing in higher-quality fueling system components.

It comes down to a choice of operational survival and, with that, ensuring the delivery of the highest level of customer satisfaction that drives loyal and repeat business relationships. The proverbial ostrich buries its head in the sand to avoid facing unpleasant realities and impending problems. A meerkat stands tall, eyes wide open, actively scanning the horizon for any hint of trouble. Market-leading convenience operations adopt the meerkat mindset when it comes to their fueling equipment. They spot the friction before the customer does, ensuring their forecourt remains fast and competitive. 

Steve Stewart is the senior Canadian and Caribbean sales manager for OPW Retail Fueling, based in Smithfield, NC, USA. He can be reached at steve.stewart@opwglobal.com. For more information on OPW Retail Fueling, go to opwretailfueling.com.

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BEHIND THE SHINE: DESIGNING A SAFER, SMARTER BACKROOM

BY ALICIA BAKER

Do you ever find yourself thinking... why does the backroom matter? Customers never even see it. You're right, a customer should never set foot in this space. In my experience you can have the best tunnel, the best marketing and the best team — but if the backroom isn't right, it will show in the customer experience. >>



"INVESTING IN A QUALITY CHEMICAL DELIVERY SYSTEM, WITH CLEAR LABELLING AND CONCENTRATED PRODUCTS, CREATES A SMALLER FOOTPRINT AND MAKES IT EASIER TO WORK IN THE BACKROOM."

Backroom Matters

Operators spend a lot of time focused on the front of the business, membership sales, training, customer service and wash quality. All important. But the backroom is what supports it all. You should be able to walk into your backroom and immediately see that everything is working no second-guessing.

As Brandon Berry, owner/operator of Titus Express Car Wash, puts it: "If the backroom is working — the tunnel is too."

Details Matter

Now, let's be honest, we've all seen backrooms that looked like a disaster. Hoses on the ground, leaks that have clearly been there for a while. Chemicals are not labelled properly. Tools and parts thrown wherever they fit. It doesn't just look bad; it slows everything down. Disorganization leads to lost time. Poor labelling leads to mistakes. Unnoticed leaks lead to wasted product and unnecessary costs. And most of the time, all of it was preventable.

Process Matters

Every tank, barrel, and piece of backroom equipment should be wiped down daily. Not just for appearance and longevity—but so you can catch problems early. Your team walks through that space every day. If something starts to look "normal," it's easy to ignore. Chemical containers should be organized, labelled and easy to access. Boxes on shelves, clearly marked. Barrels lined up against the wall with labels facing forward and ideally in order of the wash process. These small changes save time when something needs to be fixed quickly.

As Emily Roberts, product sales rep at Sonny's Car Wash Services of Texas, explains: "Investing in a quality chemical delivery system, with clear labelling and concentrated products, creates a smaller footprint and makes it easier to work in the backroom."

Design Matters

Making it easier to work in the backroom is bigger than it sounds. Because a good backroom isn't just clean, it's designed with maintenance in mind. There needs to be space between equipment so your team can get in, work on it, and fix things quickly. If everything is packed too tightly just to make it fit, you'll pay for it later in longer and more difficult repair times. A well-designed backroom should allow someone to walk in, identify a problem and get to it immediately without moving three things just to access one.

Jeff Worthy, regional chemical specialist at Clearwater/Bluewave, emphasizes this: "If you cut corners and use the cheapest equipment to just get by you will suffer on maintenance and repair costs. This will also cause performance issues on chemical applications directly resulting in customer dissatisfaction. Best equipment, best chemical, best results."

Flow Matters

As operators, we need to be proactive not reactive. When everything has a place and is easy to access, your team doesn't have to stop and think they just act. Chemical and water systems should be as close as possible to keep consistent pressure. Technically, one air compressor can do the job. But I always recommend having two. That way, you always have a



backup ready to go. Because if you lose air, your entire wash is down. That's not a risk worth taking.

Tools and spare parts should be organized and in the same area. Tools should be clean, and ready to go. Because when something breaks, it's never at a convenient time — you will end up wasting precious time searching for the right tools or parts to do the repair. Electrical rooms should be separate, temperature controlled, and completely away from water and chemical exposure. A well-designed backroom isn't just organized, it's intentional. Everything has a place, and everything is placed for a reason.

Water Matters

Water is one of the most important parts of the wash process, but it's often overlooked in backroom setup. Your chemicals will only perform as well as the water they're mixed with. Soft water allows chemicals to work more effectively, improves cleaning abilities, and helps deliver a better-quality wash. That's why a water softener isn't optional, it's necessary. At the same time, water is expensive and only getting more expensive as the years go on.

Reclaim and reverse osmosis (RO) systems can help reduce those costs. And when you're saving money on water, it frees up budget for other important parts of your wash — better equipment, better chemicals and better maintenance practices.

It all connects.

Safety Matters

Backrooms can be one of the most dangerous areas in a wash. You're dealing with chemicals, water, high pressure, and moving equipment all in one space. Small oversights can turn into serious injuries quickly. There needs to be a dedicated space for PPE, and it must be used. No questions. That includes Safety Data Sheets (SDS), spill kits, first aid kit, eyewash stations, gloves, safety glasses and ear protection. And, safety isn't just having the equipment, it's making sure your team understands it.

At the end of the day, a great wash doesn't start in the tunnel. It starts in the backroom.

It's the part of the operation no one sees but it affects everything. Your consistency. Your safety. Your efficiency. Your customer experience. And most of the time, the difference between a good operation and a great one comes down to discipline in the small things.

Because most problems aren't big failures. They're small things that got ignored. 

Alicia Baker is the Chemical Field Supervisor for Diamond Shine Chemical Sales & Service at Sonny's CarWash Services of Texas. She works with carwash operators across Houston and Rio Grand Valley to optimize chemical performance, improve wash quality, and deliver exceptional customer service through hands-on field support and training. She can be reached at Alicia.baker@sonnysdirect.com.

AT THE END OF THE DAY, A GREAT WASH DOESN'T START IN THE TUNNEL. IT STARTS IN THE BACKROOM.



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ANNOUNCEMENTS



DeanHouston Releases 2026 Sales and Marketing Trend Report: Delivers Critical Insights for Industrial and Technical B2B Companies

Covington, KY, May 19, 2026 – DeanHouston, a business-first marketing firm specializing in growth strategies for industrial and technical brands, today announced the release of its 2026 Sales + Marketing Trend Report, a

comprehensive look at how B2B organizations are navigating an increasingly complex commercial landscape.

Built on insights from sales, marketing and C-suite leaders across industrial and technical markets — including oil and gas, pharmaceutical, food and beverage, automotive and other manufacturing sectors — the report reveals a clear picture: companies are investing in data, digital tools and AI, but many are still struggling to translate that investment into meaningful growth.

“We’re seeing a consistent pattern across industries,” said Colton Stombaugh, EVP of Products and Services at DeanHouston. “Organizations have more tools, more data and more access than ever before, but there’s a disconnect between what they have and how they’re actually using it to drive decisions and revenue.”

The 2026 Sales + Marketing Trend Report uncovers several critical challenges facing B2B companies today:

- A persistent gap between revenue projections and actual performance
- High confidence in data paired with low utilization in decisions-making

- Misalignment between sales and marketing teams that slows momentum
- Uneven adoption of AI, with uncertainty around where it creates real value

In addition to surfacing key trends, the report delivers practical takeaways that help organizations better use data to guide strategy, strengthen alignment between commercial teams, identify where digital tools and AI can drive the greatest impact, and build more consistent, predictable paths to growth.

“The report gives leaders a clear view of where their organizations stand today while equipping them with the insight and direction needed to make smarter, more confident decisions and drive growth moving forward,” added Stombaugh.

The 2026 Sales + Marketing Trend Report is now available for download here: deanhouston.com/voice-of-the-industry-study-report-2026.

To learn more about DeanHouston, please visit deanhouston.com.

Contact: Eric Hirth, Vice President of Content
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National Carwash Solutions Announces Launch of Armor All Professional Furious Wet Tire Shine

Grimes, IA – National Carwash Solutions (NCS) has announced the launch of Armor All Professional Furious Wet Tire Shine, marking the first time the product has been adapted for the professional vehicle wash market.

Developed in partnership with Energizer Holdings, the professional formulation brings Armor All's highest shine to carwash operators, enabling them to deliver a bold, high-gloss tire finish at scale.

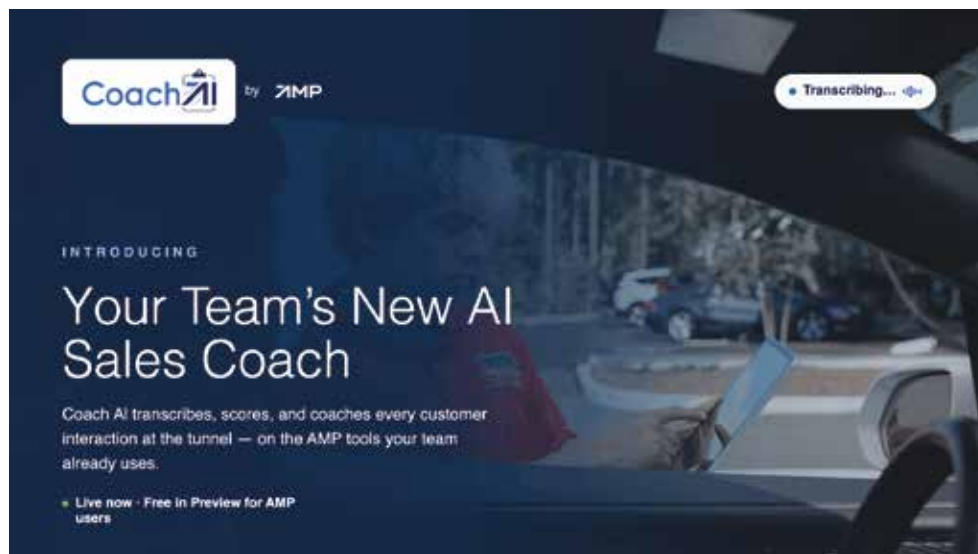
The solvent-based, high-silicone formula is engineered for professional systems, delivering a rich, wet-look shine across a wide range of tire conditions while integrating seamlessly into existing wash setups.

Operators can apply Armor All Furious Wet Tire Shine through multiple configurations – including existing applications, hand application or optimized delivery via NCS chemistry systems – providing flexibility to meet site-specific needs and performance goals.

"Operators are looking for ways to stand out and increase perceived value at the end of the wash," said Travis Feller, vice president of chemistry at NCS. "Furious delivers an immediately noticeable shine, and our application technology ensures consistent, efficient results."

The product will officially debut at The Car Wash Show in May 2026, where NCS will showcase it as part of its broader Connected Carwash Platform.

With the introduction of Armor All Furious Wet Tire Shine, NCS continues to expand its chemistry portfolio with solutions designed to enhance wash quality, improve consistency, and elevate the customer experience.



AMP Introduces Coach AI, an AI Sales Coach Built Into the AMP Clarity Platform

Atlanta GA — July 2, 2026 — AMP today announced AMP Coach AI, an AI-powered sales coaching platform built directly into AMP Clarity, the company's point-of-sale and membership system. Rather than adding another disconnected tool, Coach AI works inside the same tablet-based sales flow attendants already use — scoring customer interactions, surfacing what's working, and coaching every attendant automatically.

For most operators, sales coaching happens after the fact, if it happens at all. Managers can't stand at every lane, and generic training tools sit outside the systems attendants use every shift. The result is inconsistent selling and coaching that never reaches the moment it matters.

Because Coach AI is native to AMP Clarity, it draws on the same customer, membership, and transaction data that already runs the business — connecting each sales conversation directly to its outcome. It scores interactions across greeting, discovery, upsell, membership pitch, and closing, then delivers personalized coaching, recovery lines, and weekly recaps to every attendant. Managers get performance rollups across sites and regions, plus

an AI-generated executive summary that points straight to where to focus — with no new hardware, no separate login, and no disconnected data.

"Great coaching shouldn't require another system bolted onto the side of your business," said Adam Trien, CEO and CTO of AMP. "Coach AI is powerful because it's built into AMP Clarity and the sales flow attendants already use. It connects the conversation at the point of sale to the customer and membership data behind it — so every operator can see what's working and coach the rest, automatically."

AMP Coach AI is available now in Preview to AMP Clarity customers, rolling out within the AMP platform. Operators can request access or contact AMP to learn more.

AMP is the AI-powered platform redefining how carwash operators run their business. By combining memberships, point-of-sale, marketing automation, and data intelligence in one connected ecosystem, AMP helps operators streamline service, elevate customer experiences, and drive growth across every site. Learn more at ampmemberships.com.

Contact: Andrew Clark — aclark@ncswash.com



Washworld, Inc. Announces New Distributor

DE PERE, Wisconsin: Washworld is proud to announce that they have recently added Servwash as a new member to their distributor network. Servwash will be selling and servicing Washworld vehicle wash systems throughout Quebec, Canada. Specializing in delivering turnkey products, handling

equipment maintenance and repairs, and providing replacement parts and chemical products, Servwash is an ideal partner to represent Washworld and their products. For more information, visit www.servwash.com.

Washworld, Inc. proudly manufactures touch-free carwash systems (Razor®, Razor® Double Barrel, Razor® HyperForce and Razor®

XR-7), soft touch carwash systems (Profile® MAX, Profile® ST and Profile® LXR) and hybrid carwash systems - Profile® Apex which gives you the best of both worlds by giving you the freedom to offer a totally touch-free experience, an entirely soft touch experience or a seamless combination of both. For more information, please visit www.washworldinc.com.

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