

Making smart business decisions, like switching to Car-O-Liner®, helps Texas collision repair leader expand

CAR-O-LINER®

by **Autobody News Staff**

Frank McClosky of *Frank's Collision Repair* in Baytown, Texas, turned one location into six in under 20 years, partly by keeping up with the latest technology. This helps explain why, about a year ago, he switched all of Frank's Collision Repair frame machines to Car-O-Liner.

Also, with business partner **Ben Kasper** taking over the day-to-day functions, Frank can concentrate on finding ways to improve operations.

"Without that, I might not have found Car-O-Liner," said McClosky. "I'd have been in the weeds every day trying to run a body shop."

Besides keeping employee turnover low and repeat business high, McClosky said he strives to have a collaborative, and not an adversarial, relationship with his customers and insurance partners. "We're all trying to solve the same problem, and keeping that in mind, helps things go more smoothly."

Growing up as a mechanic's son, McClosky, 51, spent a lot of time around cars as a kid, though he thought he'd go a different route himself.

"I have always liked cars. I like all kinds. Fast, slow, big, small. I grew up working on cars with my dad, but I wanted to go to college and get a nice white-collar job. That seemed like more fun," he said.

McClosky worked at body shops while earning his bachelor's degree in business and learned to communicate equally well with technicians and owners. This brought him to the attention of an industry leader.

"I was recruited by (paint manufacturer) PPG, and I did that for six years," he said. "After that, I went back to the last place I worked in the collision industry and the owner was ready to step aside."

So, he bought the shop and the company.

"**Martha Barnett** didn't want to be the owner anymore," said McClosky. "She enjoyed the industry but didn't like the rest of it. She still works for me 18 years later. I worked for her and now she works for me."

He now runs shops in Crosby, Dayton, LaPorte and Webster, and a second, larger shop in Baytown will function as the Complex Repair Center. Most of his approximately 100 employees are local and long-term.



Frank's Collision Repair unveiled its New Complex Repair Center in Baytown, TX, on Opening Day, June 17. This is the centralized location where all the extensive repairs needed—for clients in all locations—will be done.

"I don't know what it is, but, for some reason, I like fixing things up. I feel this way about dilapidated buildings and cars," said McClosky. "I like the changing technology and adapting and learning."

He said he plans to teach his children how to run a business and then let them follow their own passions, whether that leads to running a body shop or somewhere else, entirely.

McClosky credits outside sales calls with helping him exponentially grow Frank's Collision Repair. Keeping up with the latest industry innovations, like Car-O-Liner, is also a major contributor to his success.

"Keeping up with the times is critical in a changing industry," McClosky said.

"Vehicles aren't going to get less complex; they're going to get more complex," he said. "We had to up our game; get better at identifying damage and doing the structural repair and do a higher quality job so all the parts fit correctly and the safety options function correctly."

Car-O-Liner, a brand of Snap-on Equipment, is a 40-year-old global provider of high-quality, technologically advanced collision repair and training solutions for automotive body shops and OEMs, the company website says. Created in 1973, "the world's most advanced alignment bench systems" now include a "range of benches to meet any collision repair workshop's needs – from heavy-duty to quick and flexible," it says.

"My interest in the paint side of the business led me to make the switch to Car-O-Liner," he said. "I did some research for the best

equipment and theirs was by far the best. We can do a much better job now with the Car-O-Liner equipment. We got all their frame machines installed in-ground, all their electronic measuring, spot welders, rivet guns. With our industry being under heavy consolidation, our niche is to do all extensive repairs in one place, in the Complex Repair Center. That's what sets us apart and that is our goal and our mission at this site."

McClosky said he changed out the equipment at all his locations to create consistency.

"I followed the repair process with other equipment and with Car-O-Liner, and the other system seemed antiquated and I wanted to make sure our customers have the same level of service at all of our locations," he said. "I attended a national peer group meeting, and many other owner-operators that I respect, specifically **Jim Guthrie** of Car Crafters in Albuquerque, recommended it, and I went out there and took a look, and that made me know I had to get my hands on it."

With Car-O-Liner, Frank's Collision Repair technicians are better able "to identify any structural damage to the vehicle and then repair it better," he said. "Their clamping system and rack enables us to fix damage faster and the measuring system is more accurate."

Car-O-Liner has also made sure Frank's Collision Repair employees received the training and support they needed.

"So far, it's been an excellent company to work with," McClosky concluded.

Frank's Collision Repair

Location: Baytown, TX

(281) 427-8508

www.franksr.com

Company At A Glance...

Type: Collision Repair

Facility Employees: 95 to 100

In Business Since: 2003

Number of Locations: Six

DRP Programs: 2003

Combined Production Space:

125,687 square feet



A Car-O-Liner machine at the Complex Repair Center in Baytown is set up to take measurements of the frame.



Frank's Collision Repair owner **Frank McClosky** in front of the new shop, the Complex Repair Center, in Baytown, where the most serious repairs will be done in a one-stop shop.

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