

Optima Steamer DMF Becomes Integral Part of Shop's Production



by Autobody News Staff

A second-generation Connecticut shop owner and his wife like to keep the collision repair process clean. They are constantly seeking out the newest, cutting-edge equipment available in the collision industry today. In fact, that's how they acquired an Optima Steamer DMF unit from Steamerics, Inc. two years ago. This powerful, environmentally-friendly steam cleaning machine has quickly become an important part of their production process, as it is used daily to clean every car after it's been repaired, in addition to being used on vehicles brought in just for detailing.

After getting out of the Army in 1956, **Eddie Lupinek, Sr.** opened *Eddie's Auto Body* in an old Chevrolet dealership in East Haddam, CT. Today, his son (also named **Eddie**) runs the shop along with his wife **Carol**, fixing roughly 80 cars every month. With a population of approximately 8,000, *Eddie's Auto Body* has been repairing the same peoples' cars for decades and now they also fix their children's and grandchildren's vehicles too.

In 1985, *Eddie's Auto Body* moved into a new building in the East Haddam Industrial Park. The new building provided numerous expansion opportunities with a new paint booth, an explosion-proof room dedicated to mixing and matching colors, and a second frame-straightening machine. In 1992, Eddie, Sr. gave the keys to the shop to his son and retired. Since then, Ed continued what his father began—a business well-known for being transparent, accountable and forward-thinking.

Ed was poised and prepared for the day when he took over the shop. "My school bus would pick me up at the shop," he said. "I would come in before kindergarten and I thought I was working, but I was really just making a mess. One thing I learned from my dad back then was keep the shop clean and work clean. He wanted things his way, like cleaning the sink after using it and now I am the same way. When customers come here, that's one of the first things they say—wow, this place is clean!"

Since taking over the shop, Ed has quickly learned the intricacies of



Carol and Eddie Lupinek at *Eddie's Auto Body* use the Optima Steamer™ DMF daily to detail cars and it has quickly become a part of their production process.

the industry and found his niche. He served as President of the Auto Body Association of Connecticut (ABAC) and is known both locally and nationally as a top operator.

Part of the business plan at *Eddie's Auto Body* is doing it all, and that's why he includes A/C repairs, car detailing, Paintless Dent Repair and towing as a part of his services. He also has no DRPs, which allows him to retain better control on all of his repairs.

Eddie and Carol Lupinek are thrilled with the performance and versatility of their Optima Steamer DMF, for a wide range of reasons. "Here in East Haddam, we don't have a sewage system, so our waste water has to be stored then trucked out of here. We're obviously concerned about how much water we use on a daily basis," Eddie said. "With this machine, we can detail an entire vehicle using less than one gallon of water per car while, in contrast, a normal wash uses approximately 40 times more water. We're a greener company now by using the Optima Steamer—it's a perfect match for us."

Co-owner Carol Lupinek plays a big role at *Eddie's Auto Body* and she too is very impressed with the Optima Steamer DMF. She manages the office and does the HR and is in the loop on any new piece of equipment the shop acquires, she said. "I believe behind every successful man is a woman. In all honesty, I believe our work ethic and beliefs complement each other. He was already successful when I came into the pic-

ture. We're just better now as a team. Whenever we're considering purchasing equipment for the shop, we always ask ourselves the same question—can it help us be better and more efficient with the job at hand? The answer with the Optima Steamer is yes—definitely yes!"

Carol loves the convenience of the steamer and likes the fact that it's environmentally friendly. Kerosene is used in the steamer, which she finds is cleaner to use and has less of an odor than diesel. "I've always loved cleaning," she said. "In the past, we had to wash cars outside in our lot. We were constantly moving vehicles around and, heaven forbid if it rained or snowed, maintaining consistency was difficult. Now, we've put an addition on the shop and have a dedicated room for detailing. In that same room, separated by a Goff's curtain and sound deadening panels above it, is our estimating bay where customers can also watch our detailing experts at work. It's added a whole new level of value to our services and is beneficial for everyone."

The Optima Steamer™ DMF has quickly become an integral part of the entire production process for body shops nationwide, because the unit saves them water, time and money. To completely detail a vehicle inside and out, including the upholstery, engine compartment, brake-dust removal and compound removal while deodorizing and completely sanitizing the entire car, the Optima Steamer DMF uses only 1-2 gallons to do the job.

Eddie's Auto Body

East Haddam, CT
Telephone: (860) 873-9044
www.eddiesautobody.com

Company At A Glance...

Type: Collision Repair
Facility Employees: 9
In Business Since: 1956
Number of Locations: One
Production Space: 6,000 square feet



Detailer **Arlinda Thaci** appreciates the Optima Steamer™ DMF for its versatility and the fact that it uses so little water.



Eddie's Auto Body is a second-generation shop that has been in existence for nearly six decades.

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