

SPLASH FALL'26



● Get on the Bus: HCA's Land of 10,000 Washes Roadshow Is Coming

● Petit Auto Wash Equipment

● Camp Scent Supply

● New Board Member: Mike Jorgensen

● New Member Benefits

● Women in Carwash:
13th Bi-Annual Conference

● Letter from the Executive Director & Publisher

● ASI Autowash Systems Inc.

● Ver-Tech Labs: More Than Clean Cars

● Carwash Spotlight: Koala Wash

● Gallagher: New Name. Same Commitment.



● HCA Heads to Chicago: The 2027 Product & Equipment Show Is Coming

● How Big John's Car Wash Reduced Operational Distractions with Dekopon AI

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & PUBLISHER

Dear Valued Members of the HCA,

As we head into the fall, I'm excited to share this issue of Splash with you and even more excited about what's ahead for the Heartland Carwash Association.

Since stepping into the role of Executive Director & Publisher in May, I've had the opportunity to look closely at where HCA is today and, more importantly, where we can go from here. We have an incredible foundation, a dedicated Board, engaged members and industry partners who believe in what this association can accomplish. I'm excited to build on that momentum.

And there is plenty to look forward to.

First up is our HCA Carwash Roadshow: Land of 10,000 Washes in October. We've been working hard to put together a day that brings owners, operators and industry partners together for education, networking, facility tours and plenty of time to connect with one another. I'm especially looking forward to experiencing the Roadshow alongside our members and seeing the conversations and relationships that come out of it.

Then, in March, we'll gather for the 46th Annual HCA Product & Equipment Show at the Tinley Park Convention Center near Chicago. Moving the show to a new venue gives us an exciting opportunity to expand the experience, welcome more exhibitors and attendees, and create even more opportunities for education and connection. I'm incredibly excited about what this next chapter means for one of HCA's signature events.

We also have some big news when it comes to the HCA footprint.

HCA has officially expanded from our original nine-state region to 13 states.

That growth is an important step forward for the association. We want HCA to be a strong resource for carwash owners and operators throughout the Midwest—a place to learn, connect, share ideas and have a voice in the industry. As we expand, we're also looking for opportunities to develop state-level connections and cultivate the next generation of HCA leaders.

Growth will be a major focus for us moving forward. We want to welcome more owner/operator members, new vendor and service-provider partners, and more engaged participants across all 13 states. Our industry is constantly changing, and having a strong association where operators and industry partners can learn from one another is more important than ever.

Most importantly, I want HCA to continue to be an association that listens to its members. The best ideas often come directly from the people running carwashes every day and from the companies working alongside them. My goal is to create more opportunities for those voices to be heard and for our members to get real value from being part of HCA.

There is a lot of exciting work ahead, and I'm grateful to be part of it.

Thank you to our Board, our members, our sponsors and all of our industry partners for your continued support. I'm looking forward to serving this association, growing our community and making HCA an even stronger resource for the carwash industry.

I hope to see many of you on the Roadshow in October and in Chicago in March!

Warm regards,

Kristen

Executive Director & Publisher
Heartland Carwash Association
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Phone: 518-635-0375



Get on the Bus: HCA's Land of 10,000 Washes Roadshow Is Coming



OCTOBER 14, 2026



MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA



What do you get when you put carwash owners, operators, industry experts and vendors on a luxury motorcoach for a full day of tours, education, networking and conversation?

THE HCA CARWASH ROADSHOW: LAND OF 10,000 WASHES

On October 14, the Heartland Carwash Association is taking the show on the road for an all-day experience through the Minneapolis area—and this is one event you won't want to miss.

The Roadshow is designed to get carwash professionals **out of the conference room and into the field**. Attendees will tour operating carwashes, visit industry facilities, see equipment and technology in action, and have plenty of opportunities to talk with the people behind the businesses.

And, of course, there will be plenty of time to have some fun along the way.

A DAY BUILT AROUND THE BUSINESS OF CARWASHING

The Roadshow will begin and end at **Mystic Lake Hotel & Casino**, with transportation provided throughout the day on a luxury motorcoach.

Attendees can expect a full day that includes:

- ✓ Carwash facility tours
- ✓ Industry facility and manufacturing tours
- ✓ Equipment and technology demonstrations
- ✓ Networking with fellow carwash owners and operators
- ✓ Breakfast and lunch
- ✓ Plenty of time to connect with industry
- ✓ An evening **Midwest Social** to wrap up the day

This isn't a traditional conference where you sit in a ballroom all day. The goal is to **see, learn, ask questions and share ideas**—all while experiencing some of the best that the Minnesota carwash market has to offer.

SEE WHAT OTHER OPERATORS ARE DOING

One of the best parts of an event like this is getting to see how other operators approach their businesses.

What equipment are they using? How are they designing their sites? What are they doing differently? What ideas could you take back to your own wash?

Those conversations are often just as valuable as the formal education.

The Roadshow gives operators the opportunity to learn from each other in a relaxed environment—and gives vendors and industry partners a chance to connect with the people actually making decisions in the field.

AND YES, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE SOME FUN

After a full day on the road, we'll return to Mystic Lake for the **Midwest Social**, where attendees can relax, grab a drink, listen to live acoustic music and continue the conversations from throughout the day.

It's a great way to end the day and a reminder that one of the best things about HCA is the community we're building across our 13-state region.

BOOK YOUR SEAT

HCA members attend the Roadshow **FREE**.

Non-members can register for **\$99, which includes a one-year HCA membership**, making this a great opportunity to experience the association while getting a full day of education, networking and industry access.

DON'T FORGET YOUR HOTEL ROOM

Because the Roadshow starts early and wraps up in the evening, we strongly recommend staying at or near **Mystic Lake Hotel & Casino**.

HCA has hotel information and booking links available on the Roadshow page, so you can take care of your accommodations now and have one less thing to worry about as October approaches.

Get details, see the schedule:
www.heartlandcarwash.org/carwash-road-show

TAP THE LINK BELOW TO REGISTER TODAY!



www.heartlandcarwash.org/carwash-road-show

Space on the motorcoach is limited, so don't wait to reserve your seat.



Mystic Lake Hotel & Casino

Bring Your Questions



Bring Your Ideas



Bring Your Curiosity



The HCA Roadshow is about more than visiting a few carwashes. It's about bringing our industry together.

Whether you're a longtime HCA member, a new operator, or someone looking to get more involved in the industry, **Land of 10,000 Washes** is an opportunity to spend a day learning from people who understand the business—and to build relationships that continue long after the bus pulls back into Mystic Lake.

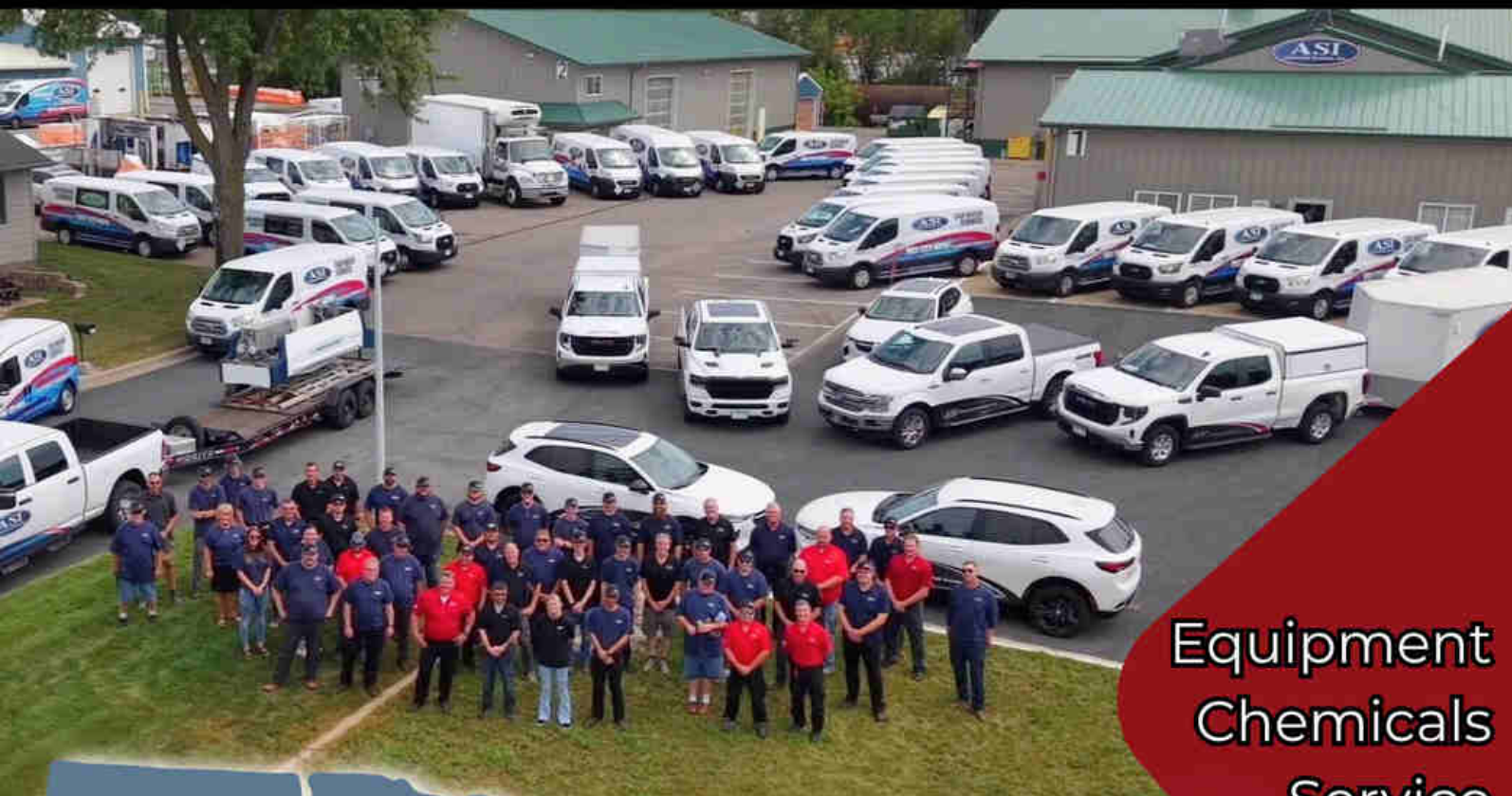
So, what are you waiting for? Book your seat. Book your hotel room. Get on the bus.

We'll see you in Minnesota on October 14!

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HCA Heads to Chicago: The 2027 Product & Equipment Show Is Coming

MARCH 23–24, 2027 | TINLEY PARK CONVENTION CENTER | TINLEY PARK, ILLINOIS

Something big is happening in the Heartland...

On March 23–24, 2027, the Heartland Carwash Association will bring its **46th Annual Product & Equipment Show to the Tinley Park Convention Center in Tinley Park, Illinois**, just outside Chicago.

This marks an exciting new chapter for the HCA Product Show. After years of bringing operators and industry partners together across the Heartland, we're taking the show to one of the country's largest and most active carwash markets—and creating an opportunity to make the event bigger, more accessible and more valuable for the industry we serve.

DRIVING THE FUTURE OF CAR WASHING

The theme for the 2027 show is *"Driving the Future of Car Washing,"* built around three core pillars:



Those three ideas represent where the industry is headed—and what operators are thinking about every day.

How can technology make a wash smarter?
How can equipment and processes improve efficiency and consistency?
How do operators create experiences that keep customers coming back?

The Product Show will bring those conversations together under one roof.

More Room.
More Industry.
More Connections.

The move to Tinley Park gives HCA the opportunity to expand the show floor and welcome a larger group of exhibitors and attendees.

Operators will have the chance to walk the floor, see the latest equipment, chemicals, technology and services, and talk directly with the companies behind the products they're considering for their businesses.

But the Product Show has always been about more than products.

Some of the most valuable conversations happen between sessions, in the aisles and over a cup of coffee—when one operator tells another how they solved a problem, or a vendor introduces a new idea that sparks a conversation about what's possible.

That's what we want to preserve and build upon.



EDUCATION DESIGNED FOR OPERATORS

The 2027 Product Show will feature educational opportunities focused on real-world issues facing today's carwash operators.

Our goal isn't to fill the schedule with sales pitches. It's to provide information that operators can take home and actually use.

From technology and equipment to operations, customer experience and business growth, we're building an education program around the questions operators are asking right now.

A SHOW BUILT FOR THE HEARTLAND

HCA has expanded its reach from its original nine-state region to **13 states**, and the 2027 Product Show is an opportunity to bring that growing community together.

Tinley Park puts the show within easy reach of operators throughout Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky and beyond.

Whether you operate one wash or multiple locations, whether you've been in the industry for decades or you're just getting started, this is an opportunity to learn, connect and see what's next.



Vendors: This Is Your Opportunity

For our industry partners, the 2027 show represents an opportunity to put your products and services directly in front of operators and decision-makers.

Exhibitor space is available, and sponsorship opportunities will provide additional ways for companies to increase their visibility before, during and after the show.

Want to exhibit or sponsor? Don't wait.
Space and premium opportunities are limited.

RESERVE A BOOTH AND SPONSOR:

BUY TICKETS HERE:
heartlandcarwash.org/2027-product-show

Mark Your Calendar!

 **March 23–24, 2027**

 **Tinley Park Convention Center**
Tinley Park, Illinois

We're working now to build an event worthy of the HCA's 46-year history—and of the future we're building together. Registration and the full education schedule will be announced as details are finalized, but there's no reason to wait to put the dates on your calendar.

The Heartland is heading to Chicago. We'll see you in Tinley Park!



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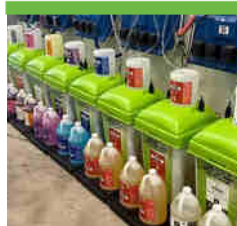
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Carwash Spotlight



Koala Wash – Omaha, Nebraska

SECOND STOP ON THE 2026 HCA PRODUCT SHOW CARWASH BUS TOUR

HCA Product & Equipment Show attendees pulled into **Koala Wash in Omaha, Nebraska**, they had a chance to visit a newly constructed carwash.

Opened in **August 2025**, Koala Wash is a newly constructed, three-bay automatic wash designed from the ground up around today's customer, today's technology and today's expectations.

Located at **13131 Fort Street in Omaha**, the wash is owned by **Axel Foley**, an industry veteran who brought his experience working with carwash operators into his own operation.



Koala Wash was one of the featured carwash tours during the 2026 HCA Product & Equipment Show, giving attendees the opportunity to get inside a relatively new facility and see how a variety of equipment, payment, chemical, water-treatment and customer-experience technologies come together in one operation.

THREE BAYS, MULTIPLE WASH EXPERIENCES

At the heart of Koala Wash are three automatic wash bays.

Two bays feature **Wash World Double Barrel** units, while the third features a **Mark VII Choice Wash**.

That gives Koala Wash an interesting mix of equipment while providing customers with different wash experiences.

Each bay is equipped with **G&G color wash lighting**, adding a visual component to the wash experience, along with powerful **70-horsepower Premier drying systems** featuring elephant-trunk side nozzles.

For operators, the equipment itself is only part of the story. The facility demonstrates how multiple systems can be integrated into a new-build site with the customer experience in mind.

MAKING THE PAYMENT EXPERIENCE SIMPLE

Koala Wash also takes a modern approach to the payment process.

Customers use **Dencar EP13 cashless pay stations**, positioned under Premier double-leg canopies with LED signage.

The facility extends that cashless approach into the vacuum area with **Dencar Virtual Pay Stations** serving the four vacuum stations.

For today's customers, convenience is increasingly part of the product. The wash isn't simply selling a cleaning service; every interaction—from payment through the wash and finishing touches—contributes to the overall experience.

THE DETAILS MATTER

The vacuum area features **Premier three-motor vacuums**, complete with stanchions and canopies.

The facility also incorporates **Airlift XRS interior mount doors**, while water quality is managed through a **Diamond H2O water treatment system** that includes both softener and reverse osmosis capabilities.

For an operator planning a new facility, these behind-the-scenes systems are just as important as what the customer sees from the pay station.

Water quality, equipment configuration, drying performance, payment technology and site design all play a role in delivering a consistent wash.

CHEMISTRY DESIGNED FOR THE FINISH

Koala Wash uses the full **McClellan Solutions chemical line**, including Ceramic and Graphene offerings.

That gives the operation another opportunity to focus on something today's customers increasingly notice: the finish.

Protective and appearance-enhancing products have become an important part of the carwash value proposition, and Koala Wash incorporates those offerings into its wash program.



The facility isn't finished evolving, either.

A future enhancement planned for Koala Wash is an **ABC Wash Systems Ultimate Detail and Towel Station**, adding another level of finishing and customer service to the operation.

[A CHANCE TO SEE WHAT'S NEXT](#)

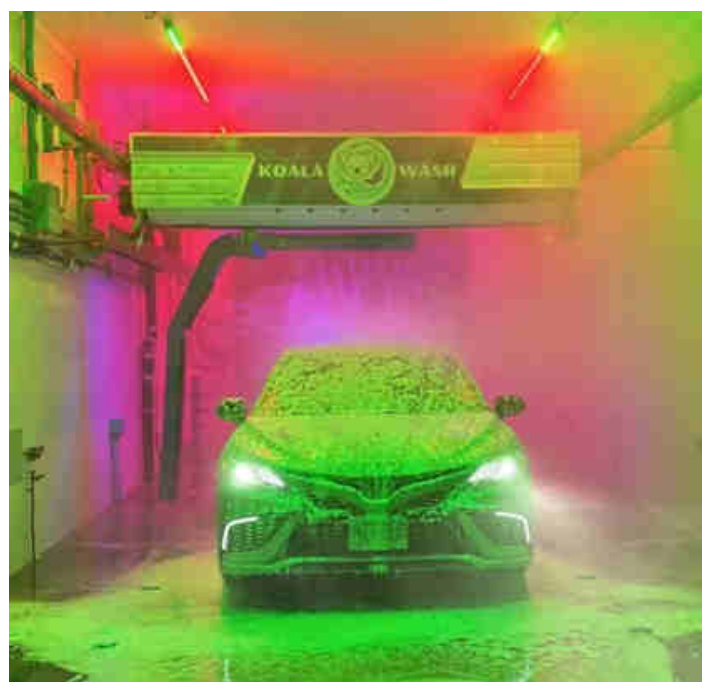
One of the most valuable aspects of an HCA carwash tour is the opportunity to see equipment and technology in an actual operating environment.

Product literature can explain what a piece of equipment does. A presentation can explain how a system works. But standing in the wash, looking at the layout and seeing how everything comes together gives operators a different perspective.

That's exactly what made Koala Wash an interesting stop for the 2026 Product Show.

Attendees were able to look at a new-build operation and consider the decisions that went into it—from equipment selection and water treatment to payment technology, chemical programs and customer experience.

Representatives from **Dencar** and **McClean Solutions** were also on hand during the tour to answer questions and discuss the current features of the systems installed at Koala Wash, as well as future innovations.



[FROM INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE TO OWNERSHIP](#)

Behind all of those systems is owner **Axel Foley**.

Axel's experience in the carwash industry gave him a unique perspective when developing Koala Wash. Rather than simply purchasing equipment and opening the doors, the new facility represents the opportunity to apply years of industry knowledge to a wash built specifically for today's market.

That makes Koala Wash particularly relevant to operators considering their own next steps.

Whether you're building a new site, remodeling an existing wash or simply evaluating where technology is headed, seeing how another operator puts those pieces together can spark ideas.

And that's one of the things HCA's Product & Equipment Show tours are designed to do.

[MORE THAN A TOUR](#)

The Koala Wash visit was more than a chance to walk through a new carwash.

It was an opportunity for operators to ask questions, compare ideas and see how equipment from multiple manufacturers and suppliers can work together within one facility.

That's the value of bringing the industry out of the exhibit hall and into the field.

*The equipment is important.
The technology matters.
But seeing how another operator brings it all together
—that's where the real learning happens.*

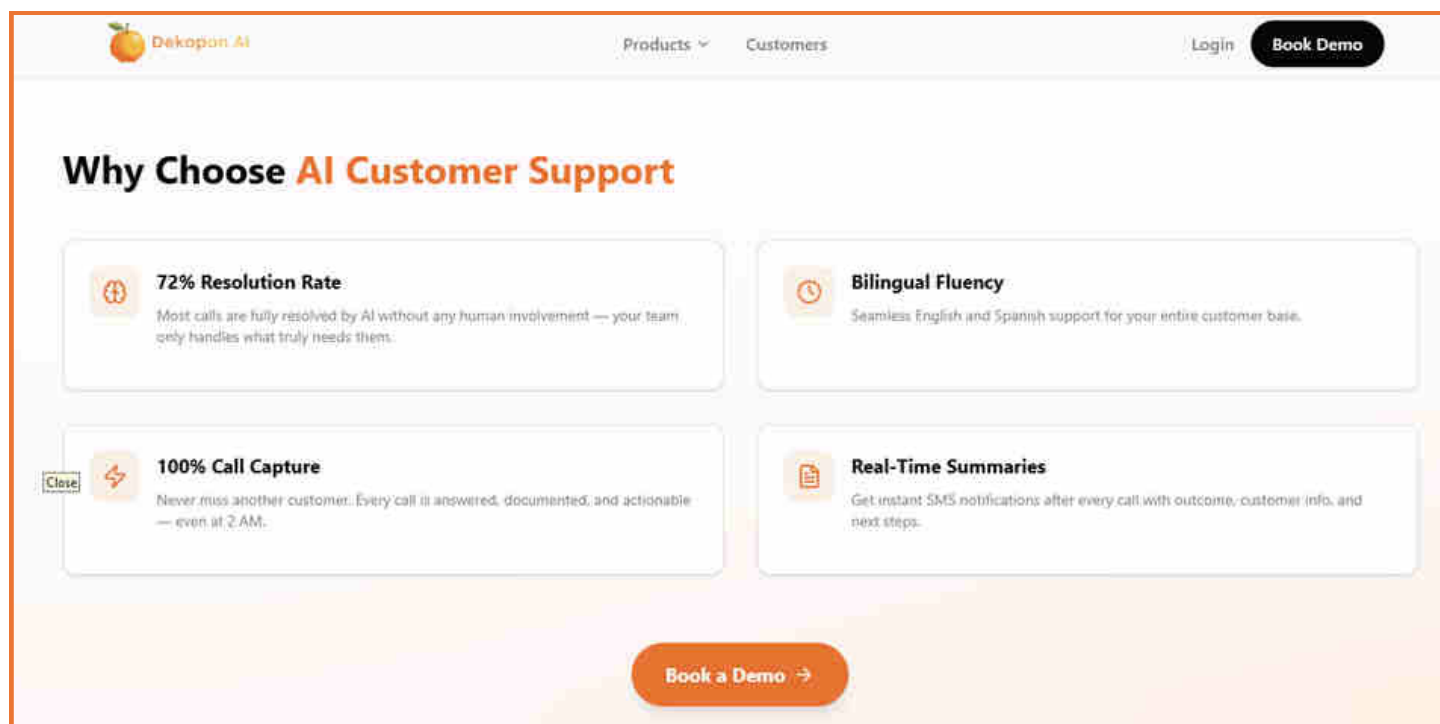
A special thank you goes to **Dencar** and **WashForce** for sponsoring the Koala Wash tour and helping make this experience possible for HCA Product Show attendees.

CASE STUDY:

How Big John's Car Wash Reduced Operational Distractions with Dekopon AI



Dekopon AI



As part of a new partnership benefit available to Heartland Carwash Association members, Dekopon AI is helping operators rethink customer communication through AI-powered phone support designed specifically for the carwash industry.

For Pat Shannon, owner of Big John's Car Wash and President of the Heartland Carwash Association, the technology quickly proved its value in day-to-day operations.

THE CHALLENGE

Like many operators, Big John's Car Wash was dealing with a steady flow of incoming customer calls throughout the day. Questions related to memberships, wash options, hours, account issues, and general customer service requests often interrupted staff during busy operational periods.

In addition, nuisance and scam calls had become an increasing frustration, taking valuable time away from both management and employees.

"At some point, you realize how many interruptions are happening throughout the day," said Shannon. "Even when calls are legitimate, it still pulls staff away from customers and operations."

THE SOLUTION

Big John's implemented Dekopon AI's intelligent customer service phone platform to help automate and streamline incoming calls.

Designed specifically for carwash operators, the system provides:

- 24/7 AI-powered customer call answering
- Membership and wash club support
- General customer service responses
- Scam and spam call filtering
- Call routing and escalation when needed

Unlike a traditional answering service, Dekopon AI is built around real carwash workflows and customer questions.

SCROLL DOWN TO SEE THE RESULTS



THE RESULTS

Since implementation, Big John's Car Wash has seen immediate operational improvements.

According to Shannon:

- Nearly two-thirds of nuisance and spam calls are now filtered automatically
- Staff interruptions related to phone calls have been significantly reduced
- Customers are receiving faster responses, including after-hours support
- Employees are able to remain more focused on wash operations and customer experience
- ~100 calls handled monthly
- 15+ hours saved per month

"It's allowed our team to stay focused on customers at the wash instead of constantly stopping to answer routine calls," said Shannon. "The AI handles the repetitive questions, filters out the junk calls, and keeps things moving."



WHY IT MATTERS FOR OPERATORS

As labor challenges continue and customer expectations for fast communication increase, many operators are searching for ways to improve responsiveness without adding staffing costs.

AI-powered customer communication tools are becoming an increasingly practical operational solution for both tunnel and self-serve operators alike.

For tunnel washes, the platform can support higher call volumes and membership management. For self-serve operators, it offers a simplified and affordable way to ensure customers always receive answers—even when staff are unavailable.

"Our goal with HCA members like Pat is simple: make sure no customer call ever goes unanswered, and no owner ever loses their day to the phone. Big John's is exactly the kind of operator we built this for — the AI quietly handles the routine questions and keeps customers happy, so the team can stay focused on the wash," said Shihan Tao, owner at Dekopon AI.

ABOUT DEKOPON AI

Dekopon AI is an AI-powered customer communication platform built specifically for the carwash industry. The system helps operators automate customer service calls, support membership programs, reduce nuisance calls, and improve operational efficiency.

As an official HCA Member Benefit Partner, Dekopon AI now offers exclusive discounted pricing to Heartland Carwash Association members.

To learn more about Dekopon AI, HCA member discounts, or to schedule a demo, visit...

BECOME AN HCA MEMBER HERE

www.heartlandcarwash.org/about#MembershipValue

or scan this QR code to Join HCA:

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HCA Welcomes **Mike Jorgensen** to the Board of Directors

The Heartland Carwash Association is pleased to welcome Mike Jorgensen, Sales Manager for Autowash Systems & XpresWash Systems, to the HCA Board of Directors. Mike's homebase is New Prague, MN.

With more than 25 years of experience in the petroleum and carwash industries, Mike brings valuable insight from both the operator and supplier sides of the business. His career includes 18 years in the petroleum industry, including 10 years with Holiday Station Stores (now Circle K Northern Tier) as Car Wash Category Manager and eight years with SuperAmerica/Speedway.

Mike's diverse industry experience and passion for serving others make him a valuable addition to the HCA leadership team. He looks forward to supporting carwash professionals, strengthening industry connections, and helping advance the mission of HCA across the Heartland.

Mike can be reached at:



Phone: 952-223-4076



Email: Mikej@autowashsystems.com



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MORE THAN A MEMBERSHIP

Real Benefits. Real Connections. Real Value.



Running a carwash is a lot of work. Equipment needs attention. Employees need training. Customers have questions. Expenses keep rising. Technology is changing faster than ever. And somehow, you're still expected to keep the wash moving and the customers happy.

That's why the Heartland Carwash Association exists.

HCA membership is designed to give carwash owners and operators practical resources, valuable connections, cost-saving opportunities, and access to the people and ideas helping shape the future of our industry.

And with Heartland now representing operators and industry partners across a **13-state region**, there are more opportunities than ever to connect, learn and grow.

Scroll more to see what your HCA Membership includes...

YOUR HCA MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES:

EDUCATION THAT YOU CAN PUT TO WORK

Stay current without having to figure everything out on your own.

Members have access to:

- Educational webinars featuring industry experts and experienced operators
- Practical business and operational insights
- Industry trends, technology updates and best practices
- The quarterly **SPLASH!** magazine
- Resources designed specifically for carwash professionals

From improving operations and managing employees to marketing, customer retention, technology and profitability, HCA education is focused on information you can actually take back to your wash.

EVENTS THAT BRING THE INDUSTRY TO YOU

HCA events are about more than sitting in a room and listening to presentations.

Members get opportunities to meet operators, tour car washes, see equipment in action, talk directly with suppliers and build relationships with people who understand the business.

Your membership includes access to HCA events and member opportunities, including:

- **HCA Product & Equipment Show**
- **HCA Carwash Roadshow**
- Member meetings and networking opportunities
- Educational programs and webinars
- Carwash facility tours
- Industry networking with operators and trusted partners

And in 2027, we're taking the HCA Product & Equipment Show to **Tinley Park, Illinois**, bringing our biggest show yet to the Chicago market.

MEMBER SAVINGS THAT CAN PAY FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Membership shouldn't just be something you have—it should give something back.

HCA continues to build partnerships with companies that offer valuable products and services to carwash businesses. Current member savings opportunities include programs for:

- Credit and debit card processing
- Carwash-focused insurance
- Employee management, scheduling and communication
- Website and marketing services
- AI-powered customer communication
- Other business services and industry resources

Some of these programs can save an individual location hundreds or even thousands of dollars each year.

NEW MEMBER BENEFIT: DEKOPON AI



What happens when your phone rings and nobody has time to answer?

You could lose a customer, a membership or a sales opportunity.

HCA is proud to partner with **Dekopon AI**, bringing members exclusive pricing on AI-powered customer communication built specifically for the carwash industry.

Dekopon's AI support agent can answer customer calls **24/7**, handle routine questions about hours, pricing and memberships, capture leads and provide your team with information from the call. It can also provide bilingual customer support, helping operators serve more of their customers without pulling employees away from the wash.

For busy operators, the goal is simple:

Don't miss the call. Don't miss the customer. Don't miss the opportunity.

SEE WHAT DEKOPON AI CAN DO

Scan the QR Code to learn more or request a demo.
HCA members receive exclusive pricing through the HCA member benefit program.



NEW MEMBER BENEFIT: CONNECTTEAM

MAKE MANAGING YOUR TEAM EASIER

Managing employees across one or multiple carwash locations can be a full-time job. Scheduling, communication, time tracking, training and keeping everyone on the same page can quickly become overwhelming.

Through the HCA member benefits program, members can save **up to \$900 per year** on Connectteam, an all-in-one employee management platform designed to help businesses simplify the way they manage their teams.

Connectteam brings essential employee tools together in one place, including:

- Employee scheduling and shift management
- Time tracking and timesheets
- Team communication
- Training and onboarding
- Task management and checklists
- Employee engagement and recognition
- Mobile access for employees working in the field or across multiple locations

For carwash operators, that means less time chasing down schedules, texts and paperwork—and more time focused on running the business.

One platform. One place for your team. Less administrative work for you.

EXPLORE CONNECTTEAM

[Click here to learn more and access your HCA member savings](#)



HCA members receive exclusive savings through the HCA member benefit program.

A STRONGER VOICE FOR THE INDUSTRY

When you join Heartland, you're not operating in isolation.

HCA works to strengthen the carwash industry through advocacy, education, collaboration and industry support. We monitor issues that affect operators and work to keep members informed about important regulatory, tax and business developments.

Your voice is stronger when you're part of a larger industry community.

GET FOUND. GET CONNECTED.

HCA membership also gives your business opportunities for visibility within the Heartland network.

Depending on your membership type, benefits can include:

- Business or company listing on the HCA website
- Vendor directory exposure
- Advertising opportunities
- Free classified listings
- Opportunities to participate in HCA education and events
- Connections with operators and industry professionals throughout the 13-state region

Whether you're looking for a vendor, hiring an employee, selling equipment, looking for your next business opportunity or simply trying to learn from other operators, **Heartland is a place to make the connection.**

THE BENEFIT YOU CAN'T PUT A PRICE ON: YOUR NETWORK

Some of the best ideas in the carwash business don't come from a brochure.

They come from another operator saying:

"Here's what worked for us."

Or:

"We had the same problem. Here's how we solved it."

Or:

"You should talk to this company."

That's what makes an association valuable.

Heartland brings together independent operators, multi-site operators, manufacturers, suppliers, service providers, technology companies and other professionals who understand the business.

**Learn from each other.
Share what works.
Discover what's next.**



ARE YOU READY TO JOIN HEARTLAND?

For **\$175 per year**, an HCA operator membership gives you access to a growing network of resources, education, events, savings and industry connections.

If you're serious about running a better car wash—and helping build a stronger carwash industry—there's a place for you at Heartland.

HEARTLAND CARWASH ASSOCIATION

13 States. One Industry. Stronger Together.

VISIT [HEARTLANDCARWASH.ORG](https://heartlandcarwash.org)

to learn more about membership, upcoming events, education and member benefits.



JOIN THE HEARTLAND

Scan the QR code to become an HCA member today.

