

Legendary Dealership's Collision Center Embraces BASF Waterborne



by Autobody News Staff

In an industry with an incomparable ratio of males to females, a value chain dominated by women is practically unheard of—but not at Fairlane Ford in Dearborn, MI.

Julie Walker, president of Fairlane Ford, and **Tammie Tietz**, manager of Fairlane Ford, have developed a rare relationship with paint supplier BASF account representative **Brenda Getz**, BASF sales manager **Tonya Boddie**, distributor Micro Auto Paint & Supply CFO **Tammy Packer** and Micro account manager **Becky Giles**. But that was not why Fairlane Ford decided to convert to BASF's R-M Onyx HD paint line.

Personal recommendations and low-VOC options were primary factors that drew Walker to BASF. Fairlane Ford is receiving competitive pricing, high quality, outstanding support and much more through its new relationship with BASF and Micro.

"Our contract expired, so we decided to look at other suppliers and weigh all of our options," Walker said. "At the same time, we hired **Joe Sanfilippo** as our new painter and he gave us a great review of the BASF waterborne product. The timing was ideal, because we were looking for ways to be a greener and more environmentally responsible company. I was skeptical and really wasn't considering BASF initially, but after we sat down with representatives from BASF and Micro, I was convinced. Joe's input was important and one of the main reasons for going with BASF."

As a veteran painter with more than four decades of experience, Sanfilippo has sprayed a lot of different paint—both waterborne and solvent. He gives BASF's Onyx HD line, which can be used as water or solvent, five stars across the board.

"When it comes to the final result, there is no difference between using Onyx as solvent or as waterborne, except for the fact that it's better for the environment," Sanfilippo said. "On occasion, we will need to use our blowers in the booth, but in the end it doesn't take any longer to dry the cars, compared to a solvent-based paint."



From left: Collision Center Manager **Tammie Tietz**, Head Painter **Joe Sanfilippo** and President **Julie Walker** at Fairlane Ford.

Because he paints a lot of aluminum Ford vehicles, Sanfilippo is enamored with BASF's direct-to-metal process.

"Their new system saves us an entire step and allows us to use fewer products. In the past with another paint line, we had to first apply an acid etch primer to the aluminum, but no more," he said. "Thanks to R-M Onyx HD, we have been able to work faster and more efficiently, which is instrumental for any high production shop."

Another benefit of embracing the BASF R-M system is that it doesn't involve a wide assortment of products to achieve great results, Walker said.

"We don't need to use a lot of toners, undercoats, reducers, primers and sealants, which is nice," Walker said. "[Using] fewer products simplifies the process and saves us money. With our former paint company, we had to invest in more than \$20,000 of products to put on the wall, but now with BASF, it's much more affordable and more efficient."

Growing up in car dealerships, Walker was inspired to enter the industry at an early age.

"My father, **Marv**, worked at my uncle's dealership as a GM, so I started going there when I was young. He would work until 9 p.m. most of the time, but when he got home I loved the way his clothes smelled—like motor oil. It was intoxicating. When my father started working for Mr. Ford in 1978, he let me come to work with him over summer

breaks. That's when I began thinking about my future in this industry."

After graduating from college, Walker and her brother, **Joe**, co-managed the family dealership that is now called Fairlane Ford.

"He ran the collision center and the new and used car departments, and I was in charge of the office parts department in service for a decade," she said. "In 2008, I bought my brother out and took 100 percent ownership of the dealership in 2013."

The dealership now has three separate buildings situated on seven acres, but more than 95 years ago when it opened its doors, it was a modest facility.

"It was originally established by Henry Ford's nephew, and he named it R.W. Ford," she said. "In 1951, he passed it on to his son, who re-named the dealership Bob Ford, Ford, Inc. before my family purchased it from Ford in 1983."

Today, the collision center at Fairlane Ford repairs 70–75 vehicles every month with seven employees, which means it's a busy scene. Walker is pleased that Sanfilippo is able to get his job done using less product than before.

"We have only been using BASF products for a short time, but we can already see that we're able to get sufficient coverage on all of the vehicles using only 1.5–2 coats. It's going to equal significant savings over time, so using the BASF R-M Onyx HD line will help us in several ways."

Fairlane Ford Collision Center

Location: Dearborn, MI

(313) 846-5000

www.saveatfairlane.com

Company At A Glance...

Type: Collision Repair

Facility Employees: 76

In Business Since: 1968

Number of Locations: One

Combined Production Space: 10,000 square feet



Fairlane Ford has an entire support team to help during its conversion to BASF. From left: **Tammie Tietz**; **Brenda Getz**, Account Representative, BASF; **Tammy Packer**, CFO, The Micro Group; **Tonya Boddie**, Regional Manager, BASF; **Julie Walker** and **Becky Giles**, Account Manager, Micro Auto Paint.



Julie Walker holds a photo of the original dealership in front of the facility's original sign.

BASF Automotive Refinish

Company Contact:

Mary Ann Short

(Associate Manager, Communications)

(248)-948-2253

maryann.short@basf.com