

New Location Means a Change to Axalta for Shannon's Auto Body



by Autobody News Staff

Offering collision repair in addition to mechanical repair and snowplow sales services, *Shannon's Auto Body's* two locations in Brainerd, MN, stay busy all the time. In July, they added a new, modern and upgraded location. At the same time, they switched to Axalta for their paint and accessories. The business has been using Spies Hecker Permahyd Hi-TEC for more than a year and couldn't be more pleased with the results.

It's an exciting time for owner **Shannon Christian** and his 40-plus employees. He built his "dream shop" and needs to fill it with techs, estimators and support employees. "We have 43 people here now, but by the time we are fully staffed, we'll have more than 50 people working for us," Christian said. "We've come a long way from working out of a single-stall garage in 1996. This new 40,000-square-foot facility shows how far we've come."

With windows everywhere, customers can see their vehicles getting repaired if they desire.

"We are all about full transparency," he said. "Customers get to see us blueprinting and painting, with our paint booth in the middle of the shop floor. We made sure to install huge windows, so that they can see it all—calibrations, repair planning and paint application—it's an educational tool for us. We're running the paint production on a track system, with all taping and prepping happening outside the booth. It has been a big change and a real plus for our overall production."

Christian received his initial education about the collision repair industry when he attended a local trade school, and hit the ground running.

"I was working for a shop while still attending school," he said. "A car dealership hired me and I did everything I could to learn as much as possible. Four years later, I decided to start my own shop, so I took a leap and put everything on the line. We started with 2,000 square feet and expanded three times. Work was spread out between three buildings with a combined 17,000 square feet of workspace.

"The location wasn't great; we were out of town without any drive-by traffic—we were known as



Axalta Coating Systems is helping Shannon's Auto Body grow and provide a consistently excellent product while saving time and money.

a 'destination' location. We kept the facility for mechanical repairs and snowplow sales and repairs. We also plan to use that space to expand our marine and RV repairs."

Today, Shannon's Auto Body is serving second-generation customers and developing a healthy mix of consumer and car dealership business.

"Quality work and customer service are key, and we've made it a priority since the very first day," Christian said. "Our dealership customers rely on us to get their vehicles back and in top-notch condition, and we work hard to achieve it."

Shannon's Auto Body features ASE-certified and Platinum I-CAR technicians; Christian said he is proud to be an I-CAR Gold Class Shop. The business is also proud to use waterborne paint to reduce the impact on the environment, and are active members of the Society of Collision Repair Specialists (SCRS) and the Alliance of Automotive Service Providers Minnesota (AASP-MN).

In July 2022, Shannon's Auto Body signed on the dotted line with their jobber, Blue Rock Refinishing Solutions, which was a big part of the reason for changing paint lines.

"We weren't looking for a new paint vendor, but the people from Blue Rock came to us and we liked what they were saying," Christian said. "They have played a major role in every aspect of the design we went with. They showed us what they had to offer and wowed us. The Spies Hecker Permahyd Hi-TEC line is a great product, but what is truly important is Axalta's support and

knowledge. We trust the people at Blue Rock and our employees feel the same."

Christian is enamored with the finished product and the process of using Axalta's waterborne paint. "The Spies Hecker Permahyd Hi-TEC basecoat is fast and we have definitely increased our productivity since we began spraying it," he said. "The color matches have been excellent and the cars are coming out of the booth looking perfect. We have also succeeded by referrals and word of mouth, and Axalta's quality gives us a finished product that we can all stand behind."

With one painter and two backup painters who can step in when needed, the training for applying the products was easy and drama-free. "First, we went to the Axalta Customer Experience Center in North Carolina to demo the product, and then about two months later, I sent my painter there for training," Christian said. "He was up and running from day one and he has gotten even better over the course of the year. Our Blue Rock representatives come to the shop all the time for ongoing training, and that has helped us a lot as well."

Operating out of a brand new facility with Axalta onboard and performing beautifully, Christian is psyched about the future at Shannon's Auto Body. "To be successful, we need to align with companies like Axalta Coating Systems and Blue Rock Refinishing Solutions. They will help us grow and provide a consistently excellent product while saving us time and money."

Shannon's Auto Body

Brainerd, MN
218-829-6764
shannonsautobody.com

Company At A Glance...

Type: Collision Repair
Facility Employees: 43
In Business Since: 1996
Number of Locations: Two
Combined Production Space: 57,000 square feet



Shannon Christian, owner of Shannon's Auto Body, and the Axalta team touring the new facility.



At Shannon's Auto Body's new 40,000-square-foot facility, quality work and customer service are key.

Axalta Coating Systems

1-855-6-AXALTA
axalta.us
Facebook: @AxaltaNarefinish
Twitter: @axalta
Instagram: @axaltarefinish
LinkedIn: @axalta
YouTube: @axalta