

CUSTOMER TESTIMONIAL

D&M Auto Body



D&M Auto Body
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Your *community* bank. Your *opportunity* bank.

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THEIR STORY

Mike Patenaude worked for the same body shop for 17 years, and wanted more control of his future. Searching for more of a challenge, Mike asked his employer if he could buy into the business and take on more of a leadership role. When his employer turned him down, Mike, his wife Lynne, and a third partner decided to open their own body shop.

“I wouldn’t have been completely satisfied working for someone else knowing I wouldn’t be in control of my own future,” Patenaude said. “I wanted to be the best I could be and would have rather gone down trying to succeed, than not try at all.”

THE CHALLENGE

D&M Auto Body was established in August 1992 with a 4200-square foot shop and a small office, but not before Mike and Lynne and their partner were turned down by several other banks.

“We tried a couple of other banks, but no one wanted to take the risk with us,” Patenaude said. “Someone referred us to First National Bank and the rest is history. They were willing to bet on a community business.”

When D&M Auto Body first opened, Mike and his partner were doing all of the body and paint repairs themselves, averaging 3-5 vehicles per week, while their wives managed the front end of the business. Three expansions and 23 years later, D&M has increased its production more than 1,000 percent, servicing an average of 25-30 vehicles a week.

After five years in business, the Patenaudes underwent their first expansion and bought out their partner. Another addition followed seven years later, and in 2014, D&M expanded its building a third time, to the maximum size allowed for the property — more than 18,000 square feet. The future of the business is secure with Mike and Lynne’s children, Melanie and Andrew, in place to succeed them after their retirement.

“We started with one spray booth, and with our latest addition, we’ll have a total of **five spray areas**,” Patenaude said. “We now have a **designated paint department** and **two designated areas for body**.

We have another **area for detail and clean-up**, and we’ve **expanded our estimating bay to three bays**. Now we can assess the damage of three vehicles at the same time instead of just one.”

Environmental requirements for new vehicles have led D&M Auto Body to its latest service line expansion — **a larger dedicated aluminum repair area**.

“Aluminum repair is the future of the auto repair industry,” Patenaude said. “Gas mileage stipulations have led manufacturers to lighten up cars. In 2015,



Ford started using aluminum in the body of its F-150 truck and they’ve shaved off 700 pounds from the vehicle.”

F-150 is a registered product and trademark of Ford Motor Company

“I’m proud to say that I’m associated with First National Bank,” said Mike Patenaude. “We know the bank president, the employees and just about everyone on the board of directors. We feel confident in their decisions to run a good business and we want to align ourselves with other good local businesses.”



Since steel and aluminum cause a corrosive-type process when in contact with one another, all of the tools used to work on these vehicles, down to the sand paper, need to be maintained separately from one another.

“We’ve been repairing aluminum for 15-20 years, but not to the extent that we will be,” Patenaude said. “The growth of aluminum-bodied vehicles necessitated a larger, separate repair area so that we don’t have cross-contamination.”

THE SOLUTION

From the beginning, when the Patenaudes first opened their business, through all of their expansions, the couple has turned to First National Bank.

“First National Bank has been an excellent partner and wonderful to work with,” Patenaude said. “We’ve **established personal relationships** with the people there. We can **put faces with names**, and we know that **we can ask anyone a question and we’ll get an answer**. I could even call the president of the bank and he would take the time to speak with me.”

At one point, the Patenaudes were solicited by a big bank and decided to make the jump.

“It didn’t take us long to figure out that it was the wrong decision for us,” Patenaude said. “Within a short period of time, the business banker who was supposed to take care of us left, and we were assigned to 2-3 different people. We never knew who our banker was and didn’t have confidence that they would take care of us.”

For the Patenaudes, their ideal business banking relationship goes beyond percentage points to include personalized attention from knowledgeable bankers and the ability to obtain quick decisions.

“We went back to local. Some of the things we pride ourselves on as a local business, such as service, integrity and quality, are the same things that are important to First National Bank. We feel much more comfortable with a community bank where we know we’re not just a number. The people at First National Bank actually care about us and the community.”

“Everyone at First National Bank has been great to work with since day one. We love First National Bank and recommend them to anyone we can!”



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