

NEW JERSEY

auto retailer

Issue 3 | 2021



**Legislation
in the Final Months
of an Election Year**

Page 27

Official Publication of **njcar**

NEW JERSEY COALITION
OF AUTOMOTIVE RETAILERS

YOU CAN HAVE THE BEST INCOME DEVELOPMENT

**AND THE BEST
REINSURANCE.**



No Compromise and No Excuses for Your F&I Program.

Resources Management Group's F&I specialists will impact your dealership's profitability by implementing positive methods to change and adapt to any market conditions. Executing at every critical dealership component: Recruiting, Training, Compliance, Disruption Strategies & Digital F&I Technology.

RMG delivers world-class income development AND the most dealer-centric reinsurance structure in the industry.

- Dealer Directs Investments and chooses financial institution.
- Ability to borrow up to 75% of unearned reinsurance premiums.
- Guaranteed Service Retention: dealership claims tie-back.
- Proven process for driving more profits into your dealership and reinsurance company.
- True Transparency – No Hidden Fees – Total Accountability.
- Over 2.1 Billion Dollars of Assets Created for more than 1,700 U.S. Auto Dealers.

Contact us today for a confidential dealership & reinsurance analysis.
800.761.4546 | info@corprmg.com



REPRESENTING
NEW JERSEY'S AUTO DEALERSHIPS

Consumer Affairs



Labor and Employment Law



**Commercial and
Insurance Litigation**



Newark, NJ
973.533.0777

Jersey City, NJ
201.469.0100

Tinton Falls, NJ
732.758.6595

Camden, NJ
856.968.0680

New York, NY
212.566.7188

Philadelphia, PA
215.564.0444

Basking Ridge, NJ
973-387-7800

www.genovaburns.com
Genova Burns LLC • Attorneys-At-Law

NEW JERSEY

auto retailer

MEMBERS OF THE NJ CAR BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2020-2021

Judith A. Schumacher-Tilton	Chairwoman
Michael F. DiFeo	Vice Chairman
James Curley, III	Secretary
Eric Nielsen	Treasurer
Michael P. DeSilva	Regional Vice President (Northern Region I)
Andy Shapiro	Regional Vice President (Northern Region II)
Richard Malouf, Jr.	Regional Vice President (Central Region)
Ronald E. Baus, Jr.	Regional Vice President (Southern Region)
Robert Sickel	Budget Chairman
Michael McGuire	NJ CAR Insurance Co. Ltd. Chairman
Richard A. DeSilva, Sr.	NJ CAR Services, Inc. President NADA Director for New Jersey
Frank M. Pezzola	Truck Committee Chairman
Charles S. Miller	CAR-PAC President
James B. Appleton	President

NJ CAR BOARD OF TRUSTEES BY REGION

NORTHERN REGION I (Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Passaic, Sussex)

James Agresto, Jr.
Timothy Allocca
John Fette
Tom Hlavenka (Alt.)
Guy Johnson
Brian Lam
Renee P. McGuire
James Russomano
Richard Selman (Alt.)
Todd Van Duren

NORTHERN REGION II (Hunterdon, Morris, Somerset, Union, Warren)

Scott Barna (Alt.)
Bridget Beyer
David Ferraez
John Johnson, Jr.
Sean Lyons (Alt.)
Mark Montenero
Michael Salerno
Thomas Stark (Alt.)
William L. Strauss, III
Steven Tilton

CENTRAL REGION (Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean)

Robert Ciasulli
Gary Foltz
Elizabeth Giglio (Alt.)
Adam Kraushaar
Melissa Longo
Shari Sandige
Steven Schmelz
Anton Semprivivo
David Wintrode, Sr. (Alt.)
Jordan Wright

SOUTHERN REGION (Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Mercer, Salem)

Ed J. Barlow, III (Alt.)
Jason Elkins
Scott T. Harvey
William Kassner
Steven Kindle
Judith Krupnick
Peter Lanzavecchia
Marcy Maguire
Jim McCormick
Robert D. McCormick
Tina Wright



©2021 New Jersey Coalition of Automotive Retailers | The newsLINK Group, LLC. All rights reserved. The New Jersey Auto Retailer is published four times each year by The newsLINK Group, LLC for the New Jersey Coalition of Automotive Retailers (NJCAR) and is the official publication for this association. The information contained in this publication is intended to provide general information for review, consideration and dealer education. The contents do not constitute legal advice and should not be relied on as such. If you need legal advice or assistance, it is strongly recommended that you contact an attorney as to your circumstances. The statements and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the views of NJ CAR, its board of directors, or the publisher. Likewise, the appearance of advertisements within this publication does not constitute an endorsement or recommendation of any product or service advertised. The New Jersey Auto Retailer is a collective work, and as such, some articles are submitted by authors who are independent of NJ CAR. While NJ CAR encourages a first-print policy, in cases where this is not possible, every effort has been made to comply with any known reprint guidelines or restrictions. Content may not be reproduced or reprinted without prior written permission. For further information, please contact the publisher at 855.747.4003.

CONTENTS

6 Chairwoman's Message
JUDITH A. SCHUMACHER-TILTON

8 2021 New Jersey Governor's Race –
A Few Words With Governor Phil Murphy,
Democratic Candidate For Governor

10 2021 New Jersey Governor's Race –
A Few Words With Jack Ciattarelli, Republican
Candidate For Governor

12 5 Questions With...

18 Importance of Measuring the Customer
Experience & Engagement for Online Shoppers
DURRAN CAGE

22 An Update On The Charge Up New Jersey EV
Incentive Program
MAGDALENA PADILLA

26 Franchised New Car Dealerships Partner with
New Jersey State Police
MAGDALENA PADILLA

27 Legislation in the Final Months of an
Election Year
MAGDALENA PADILLA

28 The Race to Digital Retailing: How to Win in a
Competitive Landscape
KERRY WISE

29 What's New With NJ CAR Services? New Website
Launches & New Electronic Forms Available

Official Publication of **njcar**

EDITOR: BRIAN HUGHES
PUBLISHED BY THE NEWSLINK GROUP, LLC
855.747.4003

Can Your Family Wealth Management Plan Pass the 360° Stress Test?

Kevin Ellman CFP, CEO and Paul D. Miller are proud to announce the publication of their latest book.

Critical to the success of a Wealth Preservation and Succession Plan, is having a 360° Family Wealth Manager oversee and coordinate the diverse cast of professionals responsible for implementing a plan's complex elements and techniques to achieve the desired results.

Can your Family Wealth Management plan pass the 360° Stress Test?



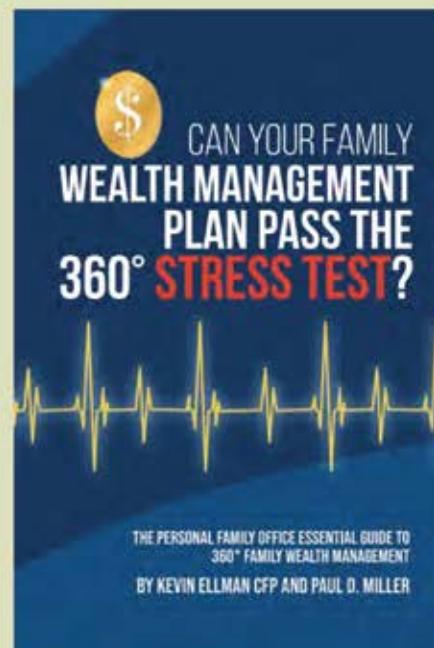
Paul D. Miller
President



Kevin Ellman
CFP and CEO



Elizabeth D'Aleo
Director of Family Offices



**Text WEALTH to 88799
to receive a complimentary copy
of our new book.**

Contact Kevin Ellman CFP
Tel: 201.632.2022
Email: kellman@wpsllc.net

Wealth Preservation Solutions, LLC.
45 Eisenhower Drive, Suite 550
Paramus, New Jersey 07652
wealthpreservationsolutions.com

Securities offered through Kestra Investment Services, LLC (Kestra IS), member FINRA/SIPC. Investment Advisory Services offered through Kestra Advisory Services, LLC (Kestra AS), an affiliate of Kestra IS. Wealth Preservation Solutions, LLC is not affiliated with Kestra IS or Kestra AS.



Investor Disclosures

Chairwoman's MESSAGE | By Judith A. Schumacher-Tilton

Dealerships are Masters of Adaptation



NJ CAR and its dealer members

are used to adapting to unexpected challenges, but, as always, we remain focused on our core mission of advocacy, education, training, and member service. As I wrap up my tenure as Chairwoman, I'd like to look back at some of the issues that have shaped the automotive retail business this year and take a peek at some of the things Incoming Chairman Michael DiFeo will have on his plate.

COVID

The COVID pandemic has lasted far longer than any of us expected. Closures and shutdowns at the beginning of the pandemic eventually led to mandated precautions and sanitization requirements when the Governor finally allowed New Jersey dealerships to reopen for in-person sales in May 2020. Soon after, the Coalition launched the NJ CAR Clean program, designed to keep dealership employees and customers safe and demonstrate to public policymakers that we could operate without risk to public health. The ongoing vaccination of the public continues, but the ongoing threat of a resurgent, mutated version of the virus is a real possibility. NJ CAR Clean is the one thing dealers can do to push back against another possible shutdown.

Electric Vehicles

While vehicle inventories shrunk due to pandemic-related shutdowns, microchip shortages and other unforeseen challenges, New Jersey rolled out a generous cash-on-the-hood incentive for qualified electric vehicles. In July, the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) launched Phase 2 of the Charge Up New Jersey EV incentive program. Ten weeks later, the program abruptly stopped, again, as consumers grabbed another \$23 million of incentive money. The State appears ready to throw another \$20 million into the program. NJ CAR is encouraging the BPU to work with stakeholders to analyze where the first \$60 million of



incentive money has gone during the first two years of the program to identify the most efficient way to modify the program and make it successful for the long-term. Anyone with even a little business experience knows it makes no sense to offer incentives when demand is high and supply is low. Incentives drive the market when supply is high and demand begins to wane.

Direct Factory Sales

EV manufacturers Tesla, Rivian, Lucid and others continue to push the direct-sales model, but New Jersey franchise laws stand as a legal obstacle for good reason. I believe automakers will eventually see their franchised dealers as a strategic advantage over the direct sales model. In time, consumers and public policymakers will realize that the franchise model best serves the public interest. We can't stop fighting to defend the franchise system, but we can't rely on the State House or the Court House. We must win in the marketplace. Customers who come looking for an EV have very different needs than your typical customer, which is why NJ CAR partnered with Plug-In America to create the PlugStar program. This program will train and certify our employees to ensure EV customers get the answers they need.

Workforce Development

NJ CAR was awarded a \$900,000 state Workforce Development grant in 2019 to create an auto technician apprenticeship

program. We made great progress in standing up a program for recruiting and training a new generation of auto techs, but then COVID hit, and we were forced to "pause." We're working on picking up where we left off and hope the State of New Jersey will continue to fund the effort. Even if they don't, I still believe NJ CAR has a pivotal role to play in recruiting and training auto techs.

Legislative Issues

NJ CAR helped pass legislation to allow dealers to better serve customers, requiring the Motor Vehicle Commission to accept e-signatures on certain transaction documents and allowing only licensed new car dealers more freedom to conduct remote and online sales. The legislation, which sits on the Governor's desk, awaiting his signature, also tightens restrictions on unlicensed businesses selling new and used cars online, particularly online brokers.

The Coalition has also organized a committee of dealers and lawyers to look at potential new legislation to upgrade and clarify certain key provisions in New Jersey's Franchise Practices Act.

Our ability to protect the franchise system, fend off bad legislation and promote good bills depends on our ability to get our message across, and CAR-PAC, the Coalition's political action committee, is critical to our success. We expect to raise and spend more than \$300,000 this election cycle to support our friends in the Legislature up for reelection this November.

It has been an honor serving as NJ CAR Chairwoman. Thank you to everyone who helped us reach our \$500,000 goal with The Valerie Fund. Finally, join me in wishing Mike DiFeo every success leading the Coalition in the coming year.

njcar



The Dealer's Cloud-Native DMS



BREAK FREE

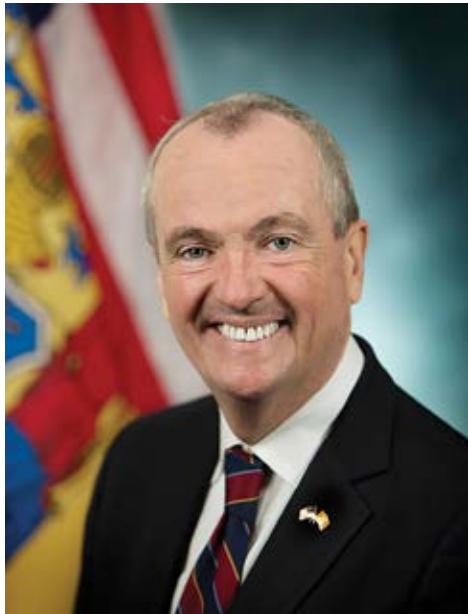
With A Cloud-Native DMS

Built on decades of experience serving dealerships, the new cloud-native VUE DMS provides the security, flexibility, and efficiency that dealers need to deliver a superior experience, reduce costs and take back control of your business.

Visit VUEDMS.com/NJCAR or call **877.421.1040** to learn how you can break free with a dealer-focused DMS.

The 2021 New Jersey Governor's Race

A Few Words With Governor Phil Murphy, Democratic Candidate For Governor



New Jersey's economy rides on the work of our state's new car and truck dealerships and organizations like NJ CAR. Automotive retail makes up nearly 15% of the state's largest economic sector, provides direct and indirect jobs for nearly 70,000 workers and over \$1.73 billion in annual state and local taxes.

Your dealerships play vital roles in

your communities, and I deeply admire your many charitable and community service contributions.

Over the past three-plus years, we've focused on ensuring that our state's economy works for the middle-class – your largest consumer base – and medium-sized firms like your own.

Whether you are working with our Motor Vehicle Commission to identify unlicensed brokers or helping our Division of Consumer Affairs update their advertising regulations to reflect how businesses operate in 2021, we have valued the chance to hear your feedback.

We also look forward to working with you on two issues close to my heart and key to my administration's agenda: clean vehicles and workforce training. We know that demand is increasing for electric vehicles, and we are grateful for your guidance on cutting obstacles to sales.

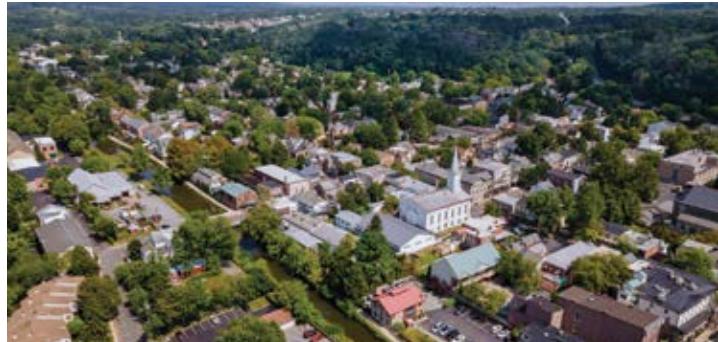
We aim to get over 300,000 zero-emission vehicles on the road by 2030, and we will not be able to do that without you.

Our administration will also make sure that businesses like yours have the workers they need – especially in the technical and mechanical fields. We are investing heavily to improve and expand state apprenticeship programs and support our public schools.

We may not always agree on every issue, but you will always know where I stand, and my door will always be open. Our state faces many challenges, but working together with civility

and understanding should not be one of them. New Jersey succeeds as one state.

Together, we will keep building an economy that prepares our auto industry for another successful century. Together, we'll shift New Jersey's economy into another gear. **njcar**



AUTOMOTIVE ADVISORS

Our team has over 30 years of extensive knowledge and experience with the automotive industry. Our firm provides individual attention to each client, helping to maximize their bottom line.

- Financial Reporting
- Tax Planning
- LIFO Inventory Application
- Performance Benchmarking

Please contact one of our partners.

Daniel J. Ferrari, CPA
Amy M. Dillon, CPA
John J. Entz, CPA

2755 Philmont Avenue, Ste 210 | 215-914-1400
 Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006 | www.danferrari.com

PROFESSIONALISM • QUALITY • RESPONSIVENESS



“We cover all the bases.”

Accountants & Management Advisors to the Auto Industry since 1954



Financial Reporting & Projections/Forecasts

Lifo Inventory Applications ■ Tax & Estate Planning & Reporting

Cash Management & Budgeting ■ Performance Evaluation

Cost Analysis ■ Buy/Sell Agreements & Succession Planning

Mergers & Acquisitions ■ Internal Control Design

**VOYNOW BAYARD WHYTE
AND COMPANY, LLP**
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

**The Northbrook Corporate Center • 1210 Northbrook Dr., Suite 140, Trevose PA 19053
Contact Hugh Whyte, Randall E. Franzen, Kenneth Mann, Robert P. Seibel or Robert S. Kirkhope:**

215-355-8000 ■ voynowbayard.com

The 2021 New Jersey Governor's Race

A Few Words With Jack Ciattarelli, Republican Candidate For Governor



When Henry Ford perfected the assembly line and the Model T, American life and transportation changed forever. The automobile suddenly became the backbone of the American economy and central to our way of life. Around that same time, my family was immigrating to the United States in search of their own American Dream.

New Jersey is home to nearly one million small businesses across a broad spectrum of industries. The franchised auto retail industry represents a unique and diverse sector employing nearly 36,000 men and women across the state in locally-owned and operated small businesses. These businesses, in turn, support an additional 33,500 jobs and more than \$34.6 billion in economic activity for their communities.

Unfortunately, over the last four years here in New Jersey, the effects of Governor Murphy's failed policies have been felt by everyday consumers, the auto industry, and the thousands of New Jersey businesses that could not exist without men and women like you.

This is why I am running to be your next governor. Under Governor Murphy, our way of life has become broken. Wherever you look, New Jersey ranks near the bottom or last for businesses. Today,

New Jersey's 7.3% unemployment rate is one of the highest in the nation. We hold the highest business tax rate, and our economy has ranked among the slowest growing economies in the United States. As a result of bad policies coming out of Trenton, inflation is on the rise, food is more expensive, gas is nearing 10-year highs, and it's simply more challenging to run your business than ever before.

New car dealerships in New Jersey generated \$1.44 billion in sales taxes last year and more than \$1.73 billion in combined state and local taxes. Yet, just before jetting off for a 10-day Italian vacation, Governor Murphy announced a decision to increase the cost of unemployment benefits by nearly 20% on already overburdened New Jersey businesses.

Lawmakers from both sides of the aisle have urged Governor Murphy to follow the precedent set by other states to use part of the \$6.2 billion New Jersey received in federal aid from the American Rescue Plan to avert this business tax hike.

Yet their pleas have fallen on deaf ears. I earned my MBA/CPA and ran two small businesses right here in New Jersey. I know taxes affect business decisions, including job creation, location and competitiveness, and these costs are passed to consumers AND employees through lower wages or fewer jobs.

So, it makes sense when you read story after story about businesses leaving New Jersey. The latest victims of Governor Murphy's job-killing policies are the 600 workers from Nabisco, following the announcement the Fair Lawn plant would be shutting down. I would argue that one of the reasons we've seen so many businesses leaving New Jersey is the string of new taxes on businesses. Since Phil Murphy became governor, he has enacted billions in new tax increases, including a rain tax.

Though no one should be surprised, Governor Murphy's mantra has been if taxes are an issue, then New Jersey isn't

for you. This is a worrisome indication that there are yet more taxes to come.

Something that troubles many New Jerseyans is the lack of leadership with the Motor Vehicle Commission, a necessary service that isn't working efficiently for the people of our state. What most do not see is the negative impact it has on your industry. Not only is the MVC obviously responsible for providing services that dealers need, but it also regulates them. The MVC is in dire need of great reform, and I will bring that as your next Governor.

Governor Murphy's poor governance and mishandling of COVID-19 have collided calamitously, resulting in one out of every three of New Jersey's one million small businesses closing their doors forever. He has squandered every advantage New Jersey provides, including a highly educated workforce and competitive location. Governor Murphy's consistent blend of poor policy choices, high taxes and crippling red tape has been pushing businesses out of New Jersey throughout his first, and hopefully only, term.

Come November 2, you and other registered voters in New Jersey have an opportunity to make real change. As your next Governor, the lessons I learned on Main Street will be brought to State Street. Trenton needs an executive who understands what it means to sign the front of a paycheck. With Jack Ciattarelli as your next governor, we will roll back needless red tape, promote entrepreneurship, and bring down the overall cost of living and running a business here in New Jersey.

New Jersey doesn't need to continue being the most expensive state in the nation for living and running a business. New Jersey is broken, but together we can fix it. Every one of us has our New Jersey story, and I will work every day to ensure your children and your grandchildren have the opportunity to write their own.

njcar



Proud Recipient of Three Dealers' Choice Awards



The Leader in Post-Sale Vehicle Service Contract Marketing

For over 20 years APC has been helping dealers earn more profits.

- ✓ Capture Post-Sales VSC Sales
- ✓ Leverage proprietary data analytics and predictive modeling
- ✓ Promote your Service Drive
- ✓ No Cost, Zero Risk Program
- ✓ Target existing customers and new prospects
- ✓ Drive in-store traffic and sales

Contact Jeff Liebler, Regional Director at APC to
learn more 201.953.6912 | jliebler@apcisg.com

SCAN
HERE



www.apcisg.com



Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin



What inspired you to run for office and become a legislator?

On election night in 1968, I remember asking my mother why we supported Democratic candidate Hubert Humphrey, and she said, "Because he supported people like us." As a lifelong resident of Middlesex County, instilled with my mother's passion for public service, I wanted to do everything I could to help my community. I wanted to improve the lives of all New Jerseyans,

particularly our seniors and the most vulnerable. I knew that having a seat in the General Assembly would allow me to positively impact and be a voice in the room as important policy was being debated. Today, I continue the work of standing up for my constituents and the more than nine million people who call New Jersey home.

Name your greatest achievement and greatest disappointment as a legislator. If you could change one thing in Trenton, what would it be?

As a legislator, getting any bill you sponsor across the finish line and signed into law is a great achievement. Sometimes it takes time to build support and to get people behind a particular policy approach or solution. Raising the minimum wage was that kind of policy accomplishment I was proud to champion. I'd also say that our agility, perseverance, and willingness to come together as a State and Legislature to help people throughout the Covid-19 pandemic has been another source of great pride. There will always be problems for us to solve, and as hard as we try, we can't solve every problem all at once. That can be tough, but it's also what keeps us going. I would encourage us to focus on negotiating across our differences and keep working together toward consensus.

What are the legislative priorities, issues or areas of concern on which you would like to focus your attention?

New Jersey is made up of hard-working communities. Economic growth, jobs, pay equity, access to affordable and quality education, health care and controlling taxes are critically important. In the Assembly, we are constantly working on issues to improve the quality of life for New Jerseyans. Looking ahead at infrastructure projects and investments that generate transformative change and high-paying jobs is where I would like to focus our work.

Coming out of the pandemic, what are the lessons you've learned, and how do you think those lessons should guide public policymakers going forward?

We learned a number of lessons. We learned how adaptable we could be. We learned that certain communities face serious

inequalities. We learned that there's an alarming mistrust of government and even science, and we realized that we are resilient in the face of significant challenges. Most importantly, though, we learned that we are stronger together.

By carrying forward the spirit of unity that made us effective in our pandemic response, we can continue to ensure government works for the people. What that means for us as policymakers are coming to the table with a genuine interest to hear everyone and a willingness to bridge our divides to find meaningful solutions.

What was the make and model of the vehicle in which you learned how to drive? Also, what was the first (new or used) vehicle you owned?

I first learned to drive in a green 1972 Chevy Impala and later went on to own a used red Chevy Vega.

Assembly Coughlin's Bio:

Assemblyman Coughlin has been in the General Assembly since 2010, representing District 19. He has served in the legislative leadership role of Assembly Speaker since 2018, before being elevated to Assembly Speaker, he was the Parliamentarian from 2016 to 2017 and the Deputy Parliamentarian from 2014 to 2016. A graduate of St. John's University and St. John's University School of Law in Queens, New York, he is a practicing attorney in private practice in New Jersey.



Assemblyman Eric Houghtaling

What inspired you to run for office and become a legislator?

I was born and raised in Neptune, became Mayor, and have had the privilege of serving on the Neptune Township Committee for four years. I have also served as a representative to the Monmouth and Ocean Counties

Central Labor Council. I am a career electrician and a proud, 40-year member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 400. I have always strived to give back to the community I raised my family in, so I decided to run for Assembly to continue helping people the best way I know how.

Name your greatest achievement and greatest disappointment as a legislator. If you could change one thing in Trenton, what would it be?

Greatest achievement: I am proud to help make our roads safer in New Jersey. Last legislative session, I strengthened the "Move-Over Law" in New Jersey, requiring drivers to slow down and move over a lane away from workers whenever

possible or face a ticket and fine. Drivers would also have points added to their records if they violated the law three times.

Greatest Disappointment: Assemblywoman Downey and I agree that sometimes it takes too long to get common-sense bills signed into law. To help the residents of New Jersey, I will always advocate to make the legislative process move with the speed a bill deserves.

Changing something in Trenton: I would love to see more communication between legislators creating laws and the groups or people the bills would impact. If we can have a clear, honest conversation with each other, we will be able to enact common-sense laws that will make an impact on their lives, as opposed to surface-level legislation that may or may not be harmful to the very group it is supposed to help.

What are the legislative priorities, issues or areas of concern on which you would like to focus your attention?

By being a member of the Labor Committee, I am always looking for ways to get New Jerseyans back on their feet after being laid off due to this pandemic. The labor force needs help, and I fully understand the predicament people are facing when it comes to paying rent, buying food for family members, and just overall trying to make it to the next month.

Coming out of the pandemic, what are the lessons you've learned, and how do you think those lessons should guide public policymakers going forward?

In a time of public emergency, it is more important than ever to listen to constituents. We want to be a trusted source of information during confusing and troubling times. Each and every individual who contacted us with a concern, a request, or a question, was answered as quickly as possible. Communication with constituents is always key. It is a legislator's job to value every opinion that comes to us. Because we had constant contact with the community throughout the pandemic, constituents were able to give our office incredible ideas on how we could help serve more and more people. Even in a virtual world, we could see every day how our community was coming together in a time of need helping out fellow neighbors. Moving forward, we will only continue to build on those relationships within the community and keep listening to concerns, questions and requests to help New Jersey to the best of our ability here in the 11th Legislative District.

What was the make and model of the vehicle in which you learned how to drive? Also, what was the first (new or used) vehicle you owned?

Buick Bonneville, 1966 Pontiac Lemans



Assemblyman Houghtaling's Bio:

Assemblyman Eric Houghtaling has represented New Jersey's 11th Legislative District since 2016. He serves as the Deputy Majority Leader, as well as Chair of the Assembly Agriculture Committee, Vice-Chair of the Assembly Oversight, Reform and Federal Relations Committee, and member of the Assembly Tourism, Gaming and the Arts Committee.

Assemblywoman Joann Downey



What inspired you to run for office and become a legislator?

My parents didn't go to college. They worked very hard for my brothers, my sister and me to have a better life. My sister and I were the first to go to college in my family. I was practicing law working for the attorney general's office, where I saw so many people for whom the system was not working. I knew I could do more to help people, so I went to school at night and became a licensed social worker.

Too many people in this community are working just as hard as my parents and family, yet they are not getting ahead. As a lawyer, social worker, and a mom, I was fed up with the fact that we couldn't get more done for working families. So in 2015, I didn't hesitate to take on the challenge to get a seat at the table and try to make real change.

My friend and running mate, Eric Houghtaling, believed in me since day one, and together, we knocked on hundreds of doors across our district to tell them why we were running and what we believed.

Name your greatest achievement and greatest disappointment as a legislator. If you could change one thing in Trenton, what would it be?

Greatest achievement: As Chair of the Assembly Human Services Committee, I embrace overseeing the entities tasked with serving our residents with disabilities, mental health challenges, unique health situations or difficult financial situations. It is essential to ensure that our government protects our most vulnerable residents.

In recent years, New Jersey came one step closer to ending the gender wage gap for good after my salary history bill was signed into law. With this new law, we're one step closer to making sure that if you work hard in New Jersey, you've earned a fair paycheck.

Greatest Disappointment: While the Legislature works to get as many bills passed into law to help our fellow New Jerseyans, sometimes the timeline of getting legislation moved through the Legislature and to the Governor's desk can take a very long time. Bills that, on the surface, seem like common sense can sometimes take years to get signed into law. However, I will never stop advocating and pushing to help the residents of New Jersey live a better life.

Changing something in Trenton: While more and more women get elected to office each year, I will always push for that number to grow. I hope Trenton continues to value the perspective of people from all different types of backgrounds and represents New Jersey's

5 QUESTIONS *continued on page 14*

5 QUESTIONS *continued from page 13*

diverse culture. I want my two little girls and those all over the state to have role models to look up to when they think of our state government.

What are the legislative priorities, issues or areas of concern on which you would like to focus your attention?

As chair of the Assembly Human Services Committee, I work tirelessly to ensure that the voices of the disabled community are heard, and their needs are met. I am also a working mother with two young children, so ensuring the state can remain affordable for not just them but all future generations remains a constant priority for me.

Coming out of the pandemic, what are the lessons you've learned, and how do you think those lessons should guide public policymakers going forward?

A major lesson I have learned working through this pandemic is using the technology we have to enhance our way of life. When we could not do things in person, we were forced to go into this virtual world, and through that change, we found innovators who made amazing creative choices to keep this world turning. Now that we can start meeting with people again, we should keep the innovation in place and work to keep our virtual options intact when necessary. Our policymakers should continue to find innovative ways to make people's lives easier in New Jersey, and using technology is one way to do that.

What was the make and model of the vehicle in which you learned how to drive? Also, what was the first (new or used) vehicle you owned?

I learned how to drive in the year 1983 in a 1978 Chevy station wagon. My first car was a Chevy Chevette.

Assemblywoman Downey's Bio:

Assemblywoman Joann Downey has represented New Jersey's 11th Legislative District since 2016. An attorney in private practice, Assemblywoman Downey has served as Assembly Parliamentarian since 2018 and is also a member of the Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee and is the Chair of the Human Services Committee.

Senator Patrick Diegnan, Jr.**What inspired you to run for office and become a legislator?**

As the son of immigrants, my parents always stressed the importance of public service.

Name your greatest achievement and greatest disappointment as a legislator. If you could change one thing in Trenton, what would it be?

I am proud of all of the bills that, as primary sponsor, have been signed into

law. If I could change one thing, it would be a conscious effort to do what is necessary to reduce partisanship.

What are the legislative priorities, issues or areas of concern on which you would like to focus your attention?

As chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, my focus is on making our transit system environmentally state-of-the-art.

Coming out of the pandemic, what are the lessons you've learned, and how do you think those lessons should guide public policymakers going forward?

Don't presume you have all the answers. Listen, collect reliable data. Don't hesitate to adjust as circumstances change.

What was the make and model of the vehicle in which you learned how to drive? Also, what was the first (new or used) vehicle you owned?

I learned how to drive in my brother's 1960 Ford. My first car was a 1966 Chevy Nova.

Senator Diegnan's Bio:

Senator Patrick J. Diegnan, Jr., has represented New Jersey's 18th Legislative District since 2002 when he represented the district as a member of the General Assembly. He joined the Senate in 2016 and currently serves as the Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee and is a member of the Budget and Appropriations Committee and Select Committee on New Jersey Transit.

Senator Vin Gopal**What inspired you to run for office and become a legislator?**

I was lucky enough to be born and raised here in Monmouth County and even luckier to be able to start a career and build my life here. I truly believe that Monmouth County is a special place in New Jersey. The diversity of our families, our landscape, and our opportunities makes this a place where so many different people can build a future for themselves.

The future I saw was one where I could give back to my community. It was this goal that encouraged me to start a small business here in Monmouth County so I could be part of the efforts to strengthen our economy and so I could hire and work alongside my neighbors. But I know that for too many families, this dream is drifting further out of reach. I was inspired to run for office so I could fight in Trenton to make sure more families can stay and thrive in our communities; so that all of our children have access to a great education and can fulfill a dream of college, and so that businesses will stay and grow in our communities.

I know Monmouth County families deserve a senator in Trenton that puts their interests first 100% of the time, not just when it's politically convenient. I have held on to that belief since I first took the oath of office, and I will continue to stand by that for as long as I have the pleasure to serve as Monmouth County's State Senator.

Name your greatest achievement and greatest disappointment as a legislator. If you could change one thing in Trenton, what would it be?

Greatest Achievement: Many, but some include fighting for small businesses through numerous bills, getting major increases in special education funding, major increases in mental health funding and standing up to my party when they were wrong, like stopping a shore rental tax.

Greatest Disappointment: Voting for cannabis legislation that didn't have parental notification. I missed it when I read it and worked quickly to fix it. It originally didn't have parental notification for the first offense, and once I realized this error, I quickly worked to fix the mistake. I lobbied my own party to pass the corrected bill, and we got the Governor to sign it quickly.

Changing something in Trenton: Legislators can always do more to get their residents active in the legislative process. I would love to see more individuals become politically active and get involved in New Jersey politics, especially the next generation.

What are the legislative priorities, issues or areas of concern on which you would like to focus your attention?
Our families are facing some of the highest property taxes in the country. We need to be smarter about lowering costs. I have been encouraging consolidation and shared services between towns to deliver savings directly to residents. I continuously fight to fully fund our schools and expand tax credits to homeowners and seniors by closing the million-dollar tax cuts handed out to millionaires and billionaires.

Coming out of the pandemic, what are the lessons you've learned, and how do you think those lessons should guide public policymakers going forward?

Throughout the pandemic, our office was able to work directly with the community to figure out how to best assist the residents. Whether dealing with individuals one-on-one or working with nonprofits, schools, small businesses and municipalities, we came together to brainstorm how to get through this together. That is how we created the LD11 Recovery Council. We needed their expertise and insight, and they needed to have a seat at the table as we worked toward a statewide re-opening.

What was the make and model of the vehicle in which you learned how to drive? Also, what was the first (new or used) vehicle you owned?

I learned how to drive on the first car I owned – a Jeep Cherokee.

Senator Gopal's Bio:

Senator Vin Gopal has represented New Jersey's 11th Legislative District since 2018, and serves as the Senate Majority Conference Leader, Chairman of the Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee, Vice-Chair of the Senate Higher Education Committee, and as a member of the Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee.

We Will Find
SAVINGS
 For Your Dealership!

NJ CAR SERVICES, INC.
 works for you!

NJ CAR Services has provided fair, competitive and consistent pricing on business forms and advertising items to members of the New Jersey Coalition of Automotive Retailer since 1975.

NJ CAR Services has saved members tens of thousands through increased competition and less expensive products.

One call does it all.
 609.883.5056 ext. 402
www.njcar.org

njcar
 THE NEW JERSEY COALITION OF AUTOMOTIVE RETAILERS



Customized Natural Gas & Power Solutions

Take advantage of your NJ CAR membership benefits

Member benefits:

- Knowledgable and local Account Manager
- Over 150 years of energy experience
- Tailored advice from market experts
- Pricing programs that fit your needs
- Outstanding Customer Care

Call today for your free, no-obligation natural gas or power quote!



Gail Caputi, Program Manager
 609.760.2043 | gcaputi@njcar.org



Peter Jagodzinski, Account Manager
 pjagodzinski@spragueenergy.com | 732.440.0038

DEALERLAW.COM

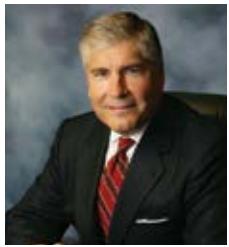


BELLAVIA BLATT

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

New Jersey's Most Familiar Legal Faces!

The firm's DL500 Program is a nationally acclaimed, affordable program that provides auto dealers with unlimited access to the preeminent firm of Bellavia Blatt for a low flat monthly fee.



LEONARD A. BELLAVIA



STEVEN H. BLATT



SUSAN BARTKOWSKI



JAMES E. BRANDT



DAVID E. COHEN



CHRIS CORWIN



KEITH E. GITMAN



KEVIN TIMSON

Thousands of auto dealers retain the firm to handle all facets of their legal needs including:

- **Buy/Sell Agreements**
- **Factory Deficiency Letters**
- **Succession/Estate Planning**
- **Retail Warranty Reimbursement**
- **Factory Litigation**
- **Floor Plan Issues**

New Jersey Offices: 95 Route 17 South, Paramus, NJ 07652

For more information, call 201-473-3000 or visit **DEALERLAW.COM**



CITRINCOOPERMAN®
FOCUS ON WHAT COUNTS

citrincooperman.com

Focus on the Future Reimagined.



ELLEN KERA, CPA

Partner, Co-Leader

Automotive Dealerships Services

ekera@citrincooperman.com

914.949.2990



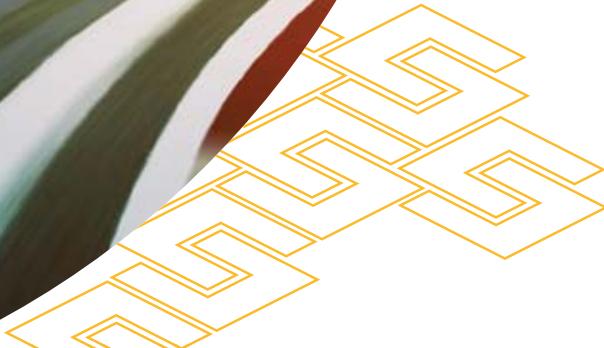
WILFREDO FERNANDEZ, CPA

Partner, Co-Leader

Automotive Dealerships Services

wfernandez@citrincooperman.com

973.218.0500



Focused on the bottom line.

How we connect to the heart of the matter, with the strategic ability to plan and put ideas into practice, is what sets us apart and lets our dealership clients know they are in good hands. Start your journey towards excellence by contacting us today.

Importance of Measuring the Customer Experience & Engagement for Online Shoppers

BY DURRAN CAGE



We've all heard about the importance of customer experience and engagement. The truth is, the customer experience was just as important before the digital age came along. If you give your customers the ultimate experience, they will do business with you repeatedly and bring some referrals.

What does a great customer experience look like?

How, exactly, do you give a solid customer experience? How do you measure it? This is where the leadership team at the dealership should get together and layout “what does a solid customer experience look like both online and offline?” Make sure the experience the leaders believe in matches your people and culture. If it’s not a genuine and authentic experience the team believes in, *it will not work*. So, let’s dig into some examples of what a solid online experience looks like:

- **Initial Response Time:** The customer receives a prompt response within minutes of the inquiry. (*Yes, in 2021, the average response time is still a struggle for most.*)

- **Keep the conversation going:** If a customer started their process online with a live chat, our first communication must pick up where their live chat left off.
- **Engaged Response Time:** This is just as important as the initial response time. When a customer replies to a text or email, how quickly should your team respond? An engaged shopper who has taken the time to communicate with your team is expecting a prompt response. I encourage you to set goals for response times and have the proper processes in your CRM so that no customer falls through the cracks.
- **Personalized Video:** Take a look at the top free downloaded apps across the globe. Odds are, you will run into social media apps that are practically 100% video-based. The vast majority of consumers spend hours daily and weekly watching videos, so why not meet them where they are? Here are a few examples:
 - o Video walkaround sent to a customer of the vehicle in which they are interested.
 - o Personal greeting video introducing yourself and laying out next steps.
 - o Introduce your Finance Manager to address any questions about financing.
 - o Service Department video, talking about the inspection process and what to expect after their purchase.
- **Pictures and GIFs:** There is still a lot of power in pictures and gifs. The importance of using pics is that customers can quickly look at them anywhere to see if they are interested. GIFs can be great when they are used in the right way with your customers. Most importantly, keep them lighthearted and use them with the focus to get your customers engaged. Here are a few examples of how to enhance the experience with pictures:
 - o **Send a pic of a unique interior feature** that adds value to their driving habits (*Apple CarPlay, Android Auto, Adaptive Cruise Control, etc.*). Along with the pic, add a question to see if it’s important: “How do you feel about this feature? Could you see yourself using this?”
 - o **Send a Thank You GIF** after having a great conversation and showing appreciation for their time. It’s amazing how something this small creates a big experience in the customer’s eyes. Encourage creativity.
 - o **Send an image of recent reviews from your customers.** Pick reviews that address common pain points that most customers face buying a vehicle (*i.e., time, financing, trade, etc.*).

- **Text and Email etiquette.** This one often gets overlooked, but it's important the team constantly evaluates emails and text communication for grammar and common errors they might have missed.

It's essential to constantly evaluate which processes you will encourage to create the ultimate online experience. With the surge of video calls during the pandemic, it wouldn't be a bad idea to ask customers if that's a way they might want to communicate. Most importantly, ask your customers and your team what customers rave about once they've received a great experience. As you consistently innovate, it's important to measure and have your team self-assess.

How do we measure the customer experience?

Measuring the customer experience is just as important as implementing a solid customer experience process. The fun part is to talk about what your team will do to "level up" the experience, but it's the execution that will bring results.

First, we need to come up with a scoring system. My team created this for our clients to measure the progress of each individual and the entire sales team. I would encourage you to ask the leaders and the sales team how they would score certain items. This keeps them involved and encourages ownership of a solid customer experience. After you have labeled out what will be scored and how many points will be attributed to each item, it's time to assess the experience.

We can score the experience two ways:

1. **Online Mystery Shop your own store.** We believe this is a great starting point. With respect to your employee's time, let them know it was not a real customer after 72-96 hours.

2. **Have your team self-assess real customers and score them against their execution of the customer experience items.** This is powerful and helps hold them accountable without being a micromanager. During your next one-on-one, have them pull up customers from four to seven days ago, grab your scoring sheet, and let them go through some of the customer interactions to see if they scored well in giving the ultimate customer experience. This option allows your employees to modify their interactions and still provide the ultimate experience before it's too late. Remember, praise employees for what they did well, and coach on the areas that need improvement.

Now you have a great framework to start consistently delivering your customers a great experience. Get started right now. Make sure your team evolves with the needs of your customers. **njcar**

Durran Cage is the founder and owner of Cage Automotive, which provides dealerships with consulting, training and coaching for Internet Sales, CRM and Digital Marketing. He can be reached at 731-394-6907 or via email at durran@cageautomotive.com. Learn more about Cage Automotive at cageautomotive.com.



Self Assessment

Why wait for a mystery shop ?

Dealerships need to have their own Performance and Online Experience Review .
Inspect what we ...



Cage Auto Online Experience Review

- 20 points - Answered within 5 minutes.
- 15 points - Answered within 10 minutes .
- 5 points - Answered within 15 minutes.
- 10 points - Call, personalized text and email sent within 20 minutes.
- 10 points - Answered the customers questions (10 points if the customer didn't ask questions).
- 20 points - Sent a personalized video within 60 minutes .
- 10 points - Picture sent within 48 hours.
- 10 points - Asked for an appt to call or visit the store (via email and text).
- 10 points - Did we ask 3 of 4 power questions within 72 hours.
- Bonus 10 points - video sent within 15 minutes
- Bonus 10 points - appts set within 48 hours
- Bonus 15 points - Invitation to Start the Purchase Experience Online

100 Points - Scoring

Goal - 90 % or above

100 Points = Gift card \$10 **110 Points** = Gift Card \$20

120 Points = Gift Card \$30



FLORIDA
NEW YORK
NEW JERSEY
CALIFORNIA
TEXAS

HERE WE GROW AGAIN....

TAX | ATTEST | CONSULTING



25 YEARS OF SERVING THE AUTOMOTIVE COMMUNITY,
NOW WITH OFFICES IN CALIFORNIA AND TEXAS

ROSENFIELDANDCO.COM

Making business easier for auto dealers. Especially now.

Running a dealership comes with its share of uncertain terrain. But one thing is certain. Our Dealer Financial Services team is dedicated to being by your side with the resources, solutions and vision to see you through.

John Kratsch

john.r.kratsch@bofa.com

862.485.4467

bofaml.com/dealer

BANK OF AMERICA 

"Bank of America" and "BofA Securities" are the marketing names used by the Global Banking and Global Markets divisions of Bank of America Corporation. Lending, other commercial banking activities, and trading in certain financial instruments are performed globally by banking affiliates of Bank of America Corporation, including Bank of America, N.A., Member FDIC. Trading in securities and financial instruments, and strategic advisory, and other investment banking activities, are performed globally by investment banking affiliates of Bank of America Corporation ("Investment Banking Affiliates"), including, in the United States, BofA Securities, Inc. and Merrill Lynch Professional Clearing Corp., both of which are registered broker-dealers and Members of SIPC, and, in other jurisdictions, by locally registered entities. BofA Securities, Inc. and Merrill Lynch Professional Clearing Corp. are registered as futures commission merchants with the CFTC and are members of the NFA.

Investment products offered by Investment Banking Affiliates: Are Not FDIC Insured • May Lose Value • Are Not Bank Guaranteed.

©2020 Bank of America Corporation. All rights reserved. 3235016 12-20-0021

An Update On The Charge Up New Jersey EV Incentive Program

BY MAGDALENA PADILLA

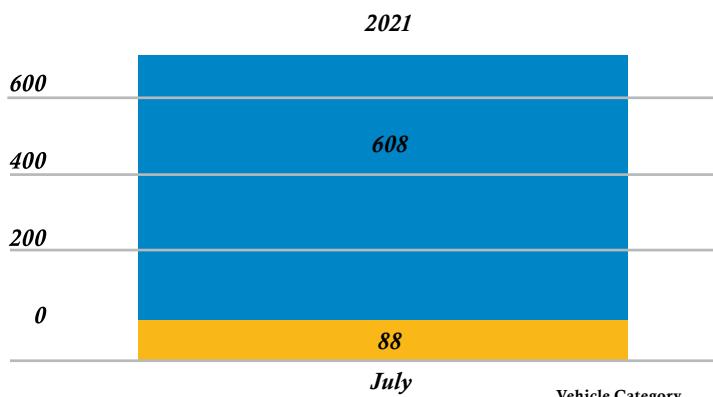
The second phase of Charge Up New Jersey, the state's electric vehicle (EV) incentive program, was launched July 6, 2021, with \$30 million of funding, in another step toward Governor Murphy's goal of 330,000 EVs on New Jersey roads by 2025. In contrast to the first phase of the Charge Up New Jersey Program, whose \$30 million incentives were mailed directly to consumers as a post-purchase incentive, the incentives in the second phase were provided by participating dealerships at the point of sale. On Sept. 15, 2021, less than 10 weeks after launching, the second phase of the program was paused. Announcing the expected depletion of program funds, the Charge Up New Jersey Program administrators advised on the program website that:

The Charge Up New Jersey Program has been successful for the second year in a row, with allocated funding expected to dwindle by the end of the week. The deadline to order, purchase, or lease an eligible electric vehicle was 9 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 15, 2021.

Dealerships had until Oct. 15, 2021, to submit incentive applications for eligible vehicles. The cutoff date ensured all eligible customers due an incentive had the opportunity to have their incentive reserved and applied at the point of sale once the vehicle was delivered.

In this article, we provide a brief snapshot of the second phase of the Charge Up New Jersey Program based on the data available on the Charge Up New Jersey website at the time of publication. While the website indicates the last update was made on September 8, 2021, the data is limited to sales activity for July. There were 696 EVs incentivized in July 2021. Of those, 608 were battery EVs and 88 were plug-in hybrid vehicles.

The Number of Incentives per Month



The stacked bar chart displays the number of incentives awarded by month and vehicle category.

The 696 EVs consisted of 21 makes and models. According to the Charge Up New Jersey program administrator, Tesla is not included in this initial data because the data reflects fully completed transactions that have applications fully submitted and approved. Since the entirety of the transaction needed to be completed on or after July 6, 2021, many Teslas ordered were not delivered for sale within July. As a result, the data for Tesla lags due to production and delivery times. Applications pending or currently under review are also not reflected in the vehicle statistic dashboard.

The 21 makes and models, with their corresponding total rebate amounts, are as follows:

Vehicle Makes and Models	Sum of Number of Rebates	Sum of Total Rebate Amount
BMW i3	1	\$ 2,000
BMW i3 with Rex	1	\$ 2,000
Chevrolet Bolt	138	\$ 690,000
Chevrolet Bolt EUV	16	\$ 80,000
Ford Mustang Mach-E California Route 1	14	\$ 28,000
Ford Mustang Mach-E Premium	32	\$ 64,000
Ford Mustang Mach-E Select	77	\$ 211,000
Hyundai Ioniq Electric	52	\$ 221,000
Hyundai Ioniq PHEV	10	\$ 7,250
Hyundai Kona Electric	92	\$ 460,000
Hyundai Kona Electric Ultimate	15	\$ 30,000
Kia Niro Electric	25	\$ 122,000
MINI Cooper SE Hardtop	4	\$ 11,400
Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV	1	\$ 550
Nissan Leaf	3	\$ 11,175
Nissan Leaf Plus	14	\$ 70,000
Toyota Prius Prime	7	\$ 4,375
Toyota Rav4 Prime	70	\$ 73,500
Volkswagen ID.4	56	\$ 280,000
Volkswagen ID.4 Pro S	62	\$ 310,000
Volkswagen ID.4 Pro S w/Gradient Package	6	\$ 12,000
Grand Total	696	\$ 2,690,250

By county, the 696 sales of battery EVs and plug-in hybrid EVs in July 2021, with their corresponding total rebate amounts, are as follows:

County	Sum of Number of Rebates	Sum of Total Rebate Amount
Atlantic	8	\$ 26,625
Bergen	80	\$ 316,525
Burlington	35	\$ 124,650
Camden	37	\$ 117,425
Cape May	1	\$ 5,000
Cumberland	2	\$ 7,000
Essex	47	\$ 174,025
Gloucester	25	\$ 92,700
Hudson	21	\$ 87,150
Hunterdon	16	\$ 73,250
Mercer	39	\$ 142,100
Middlesex	65	\$ 232,825
Monmouth	73	\$ 301,950
Morris	41	\$ 151,350
Ocean	113	\$ 519,700
Passaic	11	\$ 35,025
Salem	1	\$ 4,250
Somerset	41	\$ 137,425
Sussex	15	\$ 42,550
Union	25	\$ 98,725
Grand Total	696	\$ 2,690,250

The website also reveals distribution by make and model of each EV sold in the state's 21 counties, as well as the sums of the rebates associated with each EV. This information can be found at <https://chargeup.njcleanenergy.com/incentive-statistics>.

Based on the information provided as of Sept. 8, 2021, the state's consumers are becoming increasingly interested in EVs. Considering the first month's data, consumers were eager to put the incentive to work by purchasing vehicles they could drive off the lot. With the pause to the program, more data will likely be available regarding more recent sales and orders. NJ CAR will continue to monitor the website's updates and provide additional analysis once updates are released. 

Magdalena Padilla is NJ CAR's Director of Government Affairs. She can be reached at 609.883.5056, ext. 345 or via email at mpadilla@njcar.org.

Dealership Supplies & Exceptional Customer Service

Why Should Your Dealership Partner With WASCO?

**VOLUME PRICING
DISCOUNTS**

**PURCHASING
EFFICIENCY**

**ANNUAL
DIVIDEND**

Wholesale Auto Supply Co.
THE ONE STOP SHOP
FOR AUTO DEALERS

“ WASCO helps me manage a very diverse, very difficult business. Interacting with many vendors on my behalf really helps me simplify the entire process. ”

— Ed Rossi, Rossi Chevrolet Buick GMC



22 Florence Street • South Hackensack, NJ 07606 •
Learn more at WASCOonline.com • 800-732-4511



SHIFT YOUR PLANS INTO DRIVE, STARTING TODAY.

PNC DEALER FINANCE GROUP | From floor plan and retail financing, to treasury and wealth management, PNC's specialized Dealer Finance group delivers a flexible, custom-built solution that supports your sales efforts and growth strategy. With a complete range of personal and business banking and financial services — and the support of our dedicated relationship management team — we're committed to helping you put your goals on the road to success.

Talk to a PNC Relationship Manager today, and put our Dealer Finance group to work for you.

RELATIONSHIP MANAGER

Charles Dougherty: 570-961-6457

RELATIONSHIP MANAGER

Brian Fox: 215-585-7300

RELATIONSHIP MANAGER

Dave Keebler: 856-489-2914



PNC and PNC Bank are registered marks of The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. ("PNC"). Banking and lending products and services and bank deposit products and investment and wealth management and fiduciary services are provided by PNC Bank, National Association, a wholly-owned subsidiary of PNC and **Member FDIC**. Lending and leasing products and services, including card services, trade finance and merchant services, as well as certain other banking products and services, require credit approval.



Reliability is important.

Providing stability to auto dealerships since 1951.

From the people closing the deal to the vehicles themselves, dependability is everything in the auto industry. Which is why dealers choose to work with M&T Bank for the long haul. Through the industry's highs and lows, our clients have come to rely on our steady support. We've learned the ins and outs of the business along the way, enabling us to deliver the right products - from floor plan to construction financing, merchant services to purchasing cards, and investment management to 401(k) advisory and wealth planning. It's this dependability that helps dealers like you do what they do best - run their businesses. **That's what understanding what's important is all about. Get in touch with M&T today.**

New Jersey

Nicholas Breslove

Dealer Commercial Services

nbreslove@mtb.com

201-788-0713

mtb.com/dealerservices

M&T Bank

Understanding what's important®



Equal Housing Lender. ©2021 M&T Bank. Member FDIC. CTD-903 210908 V1

Franchised New Car Dealerships Partner with New Jersey State Police

BY MAGDALENA PADILLA

New Jersey residents may not be aware that franchised dealerships throughout the state play an important role in helping combat motor vehicle crimes. Some may be familiar with TV episodes of crime investigators approaching the private sector for help investigating a crime. In real life, the state's 500-plus dealerships play an essential role in helping New Jersey State Police's Motor Vehicle Crimes Unit (MVCNU).

Several years ago, MVCNU approached NJ CAR to establish a motor vehicle fraud information-sharing network. The Unit is a collaborative team comprised of New Jersey State Police detectives, the New Jersey Division of Criminal Justice, and officers from police departments in Paramus, Warren Township, Bernards Township, Westfield, Middletown and Clifton. Through NJ CAR to dealerships, the Unit disseminates information about fraud suspects who attempt to victimize dealerships with various car theft schemes. Once the information is provided to NJ CAR, it is immediately distributed to its franchised dealership members. Criminals consider this "vehicle finance fraud" to be low risk and easy because finding and linking the conduct to the suspect is complicated, and there may be a long reporting time before the fraud is discovered. The deception is usually detected once the financial entity realizes they haven't received several payments or after they're contacted by the identity theft victim who started receiving bills for vehicles they don't own.

The partnership between the MVCNU and NJ CAR's members creates a critical first step in locating the suspects in real time as they attempt their fraud. The motor vehicle crimes targeted by the partnership start when fraudsters present dealerships with stolen identification or credit cards of actual people to support the purchase or financing of new vehicles. Or, they present credentials they created of phantom people to trick dealerships and financial institutions. Through

either technique, suspects seek to take possession of vehicles, then ship them to foreign countries where they become part of an illegal underground market to be resold. The targeted states for these efforts include New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Maryland, and sometimes the fraudulent transactions occur several times a day throughout various states.

The partnership between MVCNU and New Jersey new car dealerships has demonstrated that dealerships are incredibly useful in the fight against motor vehicle crimes. Once informed, they can alert the MVCNU when the suspects are in the dealerships and thus help law enforcement prevent the crime and track any ongoing efforts. According to the MVCNU, the following are examples of successful collaboration between franchised dealerships and law enforcement:

Incident #1

- A suspect attempted purchase in Somerset County but was denied based on an NJ CAR alert. The dealership contacted NJ CAR and the MVCNU.
- The suspect visited a dealer in Middlesex County and obtained a car using a stolen identity. The dealership contacted the MVCNU after seeing the NJ CAR alert.
- The suspect (and accomplices) were apprehended in a Monmouth County dealership after the dealership contacted the MVCNU while the individuals were in the dealership. This fraud ring was linked to seven suspects and 23 fraudulently purchased vehicles in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

Incident #2

- A Burlington County dealership sold a Jeep Grand Cherokee on a Thursday to a suspect who used a stolen identity, wanted another car the following Monday, and sent a copy of a fictitious license.

- After seeing the NJ CAR alert, the dealership contacted the MVCNU.
- The suspect, who had been involved in over 20 dealer frauds in New Jersey, was apprehended at the dealership, along with another suspect involved in at least four scams. And, the MVCNU was able to recover the Jeep for the Burlington dealership.

Sometimes neighboring law enforcement agencies rely on New Jersey's network to help track motor vehicle crime rings. As recently as Sept. 2021, Maryland law enforcement requested the assistance of NJ CAR's members when they provided information about suspects who, using stolen identities online, were involved in a vehicle fraud ring related to the purchase of luxury vehicles in New Jersey, Virginia and Delaware.

Motor vehicle finance fraud prevention is a niche industry. Unlike other motor vehicle crimes, which concern the possession of a car, these specific crimes involve fraudulent purchases that trick dealerships and the finance industry. These crimes are different from the usual references to motor vehicle theft. In today's day and age of internet sales and purchases, the facility of these types of financial auto thefts has become even more complex and difficult against which dealerships must guard. Through their efforts at the international, national, and state levels, law enforcement identifies "red flags" for motor vehicle fraud purchases, about which they then caution dealerships. In New Jersey, the MVCNU has presented training sessions for dealerships on "Trends and Tips to Avoid Becoming a Victim" and has made recommendations on best practices to prevent fraudulent purchases. 

Magdalena Padilla is NJ CAR's Director of Government Affairs. She can be reached at 609.883.5056 ext. 345 or via email at mpadilla@njcar.org.



Legislation in the Final Months of an Election Year

BY MAGDALENA PADILLA

2021 is a busy year for the New Jersey Statehouse: it's an election year, and the Legislature and the Governor are both up for re-election. The summer campaigning season began in full swing when the session recessed in June with expectations that it would return in September.

But this year, the Legislature chose to delay its return to legislative business until November, after this year's State elections. This delay impacts the legislative cycle.

Under New Jersey's Constitution, the usual course of the legislative process culminates in a bill becoming law when it is signed by the Governor (or after 45 days) if the Governor takes no action. However, the State Constitution also provides that if the House of a bill's origin is not in session on the 45th day, the Governor has until the first session day after that to act on the bill. This year, since the Legislature is not returning until after the November elections, the Governor's Office has decided to utilize this provision for some bills.

NJ CAR tracks approximately 200 state legislative bills that affect our industry. One can become law any day of those we support now, allowing e-signatures on powers of attorney and other motor vehicle documents (Assembly Bill No. 5033). Unanimously approved by the Legislature and delivered to the Governor for his signature June 21, 2021, **the bill has not yet been signed by the Governor.**

In a normal year, the bill would have been signed or vetoed by Aug. 5th, 2021. For this bill, the Governor's Office has made the strategic decision to use more than 45 days to determine how he will respond. Though the bill received unanimous legislature support and was amended in response to concerns raised by the Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC), the MVC continued to object to the bill. NJ CAR

has expressed its support to the sponsors and the Governor's Office and will continue to lobby for its signature.

When the Legislature reconvenes after Election Day, we anticipate a flurry of legislative activity typical in post-elections. Some new bills may be introduced, including one related to direct sales, similar to legislation introduced in 12 other states: Connecticut, Georgia, Kansas, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont and Washington.



Direct Sales Legislation Has Been Introduced In The Following States:
Connecticut, Georgia, Kansas, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont and Washington

According to Automotive News, the only state to enact direct sales legislation thus far is Vermont, which enacted its legislation June 7, 2021. Dubbed "the Tesla bill," it allows electric vehicle manufacturers to conduct direct sales for their electric vehicles.

Thankfully, New Jersey is different from the 12 states, considering it has already made a legislative concession to Tesla. Enacted March 18, 2015, Assembly Bill No. 3216 allows any electric vehicle manufacturer licensed on or before Jan. 1, 2014, to sell

directly to consumers from four approved locations. As written, the legislation only applies to Tesla since they were the only EV manufacturer licensed prior to Jan. 1, 2014.

Despite its enactment, the law is not enforced, and Tesla repeatedly ignores it. For instance, Tesla has been authorized to operate four sales facilities, plus at least one repair facility, but they operate six sales facilities. In another blatant disregard for New Jersey law, Tesla has taken steps in Eatontown to open a seventh sales facility, its third illegal operation.

When the Legislature returns in November, Tesla may confront it with proposed legislation to retroactively approve the current illegal Tesla stores. Or, the Legislature could allow Tesla to open more stores without restrictions, including the stringent background checks that all franchised dealership principals must undergo to be licensed in this state. If it partners with other electric vehicle manufacturers (such as Rivian, Lordstown Motors and Lucid Motors) as it has in other states, Tesla may lobby legislators to amend the current Tesla bill to permit other electric vehicle-only manufacturers also to sell their cars outside the franchise system. NJ CAR has continued to assert that direct sales operations undermine manufacturer accountability, customer safety, and warranty repair completion.

As with every two-year legislative cycle, bills currently pending in the New Jersey Legislature that are not enacted may be re-introduced in the new legislative session in 2022. We are mindful that some bills we successfully opposed during this two-year legislative cycle may be re-introduced next year to begin the legislative process anew. And some bills we supported but were not enacted will have another opportunity in the next session. **njcar**

Magdalena Padilla is NJ CAR's Director of Government Affairs. She can be reached at 609.883.5056 ext. 345 or via email at mpadilla@njcar.org.

The Race to Digital Retailing:

How to Win in a Competitive Landscape

BY KERRY WISE



“Digital Retailing” has been all the buzz in automotive, particularly in the aftermath of the pandemic. The race to digital retailing is packed with different players across the industry, including individual dealers, dealer groups, digital dealers, OEMs, lenders, and marketplaces – all trying to find the best way to use digital retailing to enhance the auto purchase experience.

However, while adoption of digital retailing tools has increased on many individual dealer websites, some dealers still see digital retailing solutions as a way of simply generating leads. Many are hesitant to dive in because they are concerned about negatively impacting profitability. And finally, others have invested in digital tools on their websites but have failed to provide any sort of hybrid approach with their showroom experience.

In this competitive landscape, it’s clear that for dealers to truly remain relevant and “disruption-proof,” we have to reframe the way we look at digital and the retail experience. We must reorient our mindsets to think beyond just “digital retailing” and instead focus on digital transformation. This goes well beyond just a widget on your website. It’s an overhaul of your team strategy and process as well. It’s using digital to enable a better experience for the customer and a more efficient selling process for the dealership. And the dealers

that embrace digital transformation across their entire sales process have reaped the rewards, with *close rates two to three times higher than the average dealer.*

Digital transformation starts from the top and requires a shift in mindset. Here are a few examples of shifts to consider:

- We need to think of “digital retailing” as “retailing.” In other words, it’s important not to treat DR as some separate experience relegated to the internet department. Instead, view it as a strategy that enables and supercharges your entire sales process.
- Many dealers view their websites as an extension of their showroom. But in a world where consumers visit 10-plus websites during the shopping experience but less than two showrooms, we need to reframe that view. In reality, the store is actually an extension of the website, and it’s critical for us to put our best foot forward in our approach to our digital showroom.
- Only 10-12% of customers finalize their auto purchase experience entirely online, while the rest complete parts of the experience online and transition into the showroom. Consumers want the flexibility to do as much or as little of the car-buying process as they want online. This requires the dealership to give up some of the control historically preached in sales training – and enable every customer to purchase in their preferred way.
- Digital retailing has transformed the way we should think about our open business hours. Many dealers are open “bell-to-bell.” However, in a world where 38% of shoppers apply for credit apps after dealership hours, it’s apparent that the point of sale is wherever the customer is. That’s anytime and anywhere – whether at home, on the move, in the showroom, or some combination thereof.

We recently studied the top-performing digital retailers on the AutoFi platform to understand the philosophies, strategies, and best practices that have enabled them to succeed. Here is what sets them apart:

Website Experience and Branding

It’s not enough to slap a widget on your website. Top dealers brand their digital retailing experiences and use this as a way to differentiate themselves from the competition.

Once you get the brand down, don’t forget about the nuts-and-bolts user experience on your site. Many dealer sites have seven to 10 different calls to action; this lack of direction completely confuses the customer. Top dealers understand that it’s vital to nurture the consumer through the purchase journey and show how simple it is to transact – and that starts with one or two clear and simple starting points like “shop now” and “schedule service.”

Online Engagement

Top dealers use technology that empowers consumers to complete as much or as little as they want online, including trade, payment estimate, application, and delivery. These dealers use digital retailing solutions that help them offer a high level of transparency in an accurate and customizable way so that what they show online matches up to what they offer in-store.

The leading retailers use digital to meet the customer wherever they are and pick the deal up where it left off. When they engage with the digital consumer, they do their homework on the customer journey to avoid disconnects like making the consumer repeat information or steps or quoting them information that is different from what they received online.

Top dealers empower their sales teams to engage with the digital consumer remotely. When customers receive a

remote deal in a shared experience, we know that they are 96% more likely to set an appointment and 234% more likely to fill out a credit application.

In-Store Experience

The most successful dealers use digital to enable a better showroom experience. They lead with technology on their websites but understand that technology can also improve the in-store experience and increase engagement, efficiency, and profitability. This includes arming your sales team with tools that enable them to offer the same digital retailing experience on your website (e.g., calculating payments, building deals, etc.) to customers on the showroom floor.

Digital retailing is no longer just a subset of automotive retailing. It's a vital part of a comprehensive approach to providing customers with the buying experience they've come to expect and creating efficiency in your sales process so your people can do more. The retailers that embrace it fully will stand out and **WIN** in an ever-changing and competitive marketplace. **njcar**

Kerri Wise is Vice President of Marketing at AutoFi, a leading commerce platform for digital auto sales and financing. She can be reached at kwise@autofi.com. Learn more at www.autofi.com.



Arent Fox

Smart In Automotive

We navigate you forward.

Arent Fox's Automotive Group drives innovative strategies. Our cutting-edge, national practice advises leading dealers and dealer groups as the industry faces unprecedented changes and disruptions. We are here to guide you through this crisis and the next one.

**Smart In
Your World**

arentfox.com

What's New With NJ CAR Services?

New Website Launches & New Electronic Forms Available

On July 14, 2021, NJ CAR

Services' new standalone website/online store was launched at njcarservices.com. The site now features a moving billboard on the home page and additional search categories such as **New Items, Clearance, and What's Hot**. More straightforward navigation tools and visual site enhancements, such as clearer and larger graphics and increased type size, have produced a clean and more modern look for the new website.

The first dealer to place an order on the new website was Mercedes Benz of Princeton, who, in turn, received their order of 1,000 "Hold/Sold" tags at no charge. NJ CAR members can still purchase their forms and supplies on the new website and charge them to their NJ CAR Services account or pay via credit card. Additional site additions



are already in the works and will be coming soon.

ELECTRONIC FORMS AVAILABLE

NJ CAR Services now supplies electronic versions (PDFs) of its pre-printed paper forms to DMS providers: Automate, CDK, DealerTrack, and Reynolds & Reynolds. NJ CAR Services offers electronic versions of more than 30 generic forms commonly used in the sale of a motor vehicle. Included are Lemon Law forms,

Odometer Statements, Lease Waiver, Damage Disclosure, Vehicle History Report, We Owe Form, Recall Disclosure Acknowledgement, Dealer Participation Certification, Finance Contingency Agreement and Electronic Communication Authorization. These forms, and more, can be purchased through your DMS provider.

Additionally, NJ CAR Services can supply the PDF of a dealership's custom forms such as Retail Order Form, Vehicle Invoice, Power of Attorney and Privacy Notice to DMS providers. Utilizing electronic documents reduces hardcopy storage and allows dealers to keep forms current and no shipping costs.

Contact your NJ CAR Services Sales Representative at (609) 883-5056 for further information on electronic forms.

njcar

advertiser INDEX

accounting

Citrin Cooperman Page 17
www.citrincooperman.com

Daniel Ferrari & Co., P.C. Page 8
www.danferrari.com

Rosenfield & Co. Page 20
www.rosenfieldandco.com

Voynow, Bayard, Whyte & Co., LLP Page 9
www.voynowbayard.com

WithumSmith+Brown Outside Back Cover
www.withum.com

attorneys

Arent Fox LLP Page 29
www.arentfox.com

Bellavia Blatt, P.C. Page 16
www.dealerlaw.com

Genova Burns Page 3
www.genovaburns.com

banking/finance

M&T Bank Page 25
www.mtb.com

The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. Page 24
www.pnc.com

Valley National Bank Inside Back Cover
www.valleynationalbank.com

cloud DMS

Dominion DMS Page 7

dealership consulting

Vanguard APC Page 11
www.vanguard.com

dealer services

NJ CAR Services, Inc. Page 15

WASCO Page 23
www.wascoOnline.com

electric program

Sprague Page 15

F&I services

Portfolio/Resources Management Group Inside Front Cover

financial planning

Bank of America Page 21
www.bofaml.com/dealer

Dealer Forensics (Weiner, LLC) Page 30
www.dealerforensics.com

Wealth Preservation Solutions Page 5

Financial Automotive Solutions

DEALER FORENSICS

Division of Weiner LLC CPA



WWW.DEALERFORENSICS.COM

201 . 746 . 9700

INVESTIGATION • VALUATION • LITIGATION

THEFT • PARTNER DISPUTES • DIVORCES



► Auto Financing Solutions Drive Your Dealership Forward

Valley has helped auto dealerships meet their financing needs for over 50 years by providing flexible and affordable financial solutions.

Whether you are planning to increase your inventory, acquire or expand your dealership, our competitive terms along with personal lending solutions are designed to improve your operational efficiencies and increase your cash flow.

Dealer Services

- Retail paper
- Automotive floorplan financing
- Commercial real estate loans
- Commercial loans and lines of credit
- Real estate term financing
- Acquisition and expansion financing
- Equipment financing and leasing options
- Insurance
- 50+ years of personalized service to the Auto Dealer Community

For more information contact:

John Botros

P: 973.305.3384 | C: 862.272.1359

jbotros@valley.com



Valley.com ► 800.522.4100



New Jersey Coalition of Automotive Retailers
856 River Road
Trenton, NJ
08628

PRESORTED
FIRST CLASS MAIL
US POSTAGE
PAID
SALT LAKE CITY, UT
PERMIT NO 508

withum.com

withum⁺
AUDIT TAX ADVISORY

drive to success ⁺

performance matters when it comes to your numbers. you want to drive your business to perform at peak levels. With innovative solutions and tools, Withum can fine-tune your New Jersey dealership to turn a profit, meet quotas, exceed customer satisfaction — and ensure everyone is on the road to success.

Visit **withum.com** to learn more about our Automotive Services.

