

# Repair shops sought for auto mechanic referral

**BY MARY RODRIGUE STAFF WRITER**  
It sounded like a good idea, but Steve Hamed's auto mechanic referral service is stalling before it gets out of first gear.  
The Canton resident is trying to launch the Auto Repair Referral Association (ARRA). The idea: consumers would dial an

800 number for referral to a reputable auto mechanic in their area. Livonia, Canton, Plymouth, Northville, Farmington, Bloomfield Hills and Birmingham would be covered in the network.  
"When I returned from California last July, I had this idea in mind," said Hamed, a 1989 graduate of Eastern Michigan Univer-

sity with a degree in aviation management technology. Hamed was laid off from an airline job after three years in flight administration operations. He went to California to care for his ailing mother a year ago. There, he worked for an electronics company.  
"I noticed radio and TV ads in

California for such a service. I figured it would be a very good idea, benefiting consumers and independent repair shops. And there isn't such a service in Michigan," Hamed said.  
Hamed submitted his proposal to a targeted 121 repair shops. Response was less than stellar. "I don't have any clients yet. They

didn't sound all that interested. I only got response from four shops."  
Hamed is sending out a second correspondence to his target group and also paying personal visits to those shops.  
"I'm looking for good quality work and special services. Do they have tow trucks? Do they offer pick up and delivery? Are they a member of the Automobile Association of Michigan? Also, I will check with the state to see how they handle consumer complaints."  
Hamed figures he needs 15 clients to launch his business. He plans to charge \$300 a month to clients, which would cover radio advertising costs.  
"In California, they charge \$1,000 a month," he said. "I charge a much lower price because I need to get started."  
Consumers are not charged for the referral. They would simply dial 1-800-CAR-4-FIX for referral to an auto repair shop in their

area to suit their problem.  
"This would benefit individuals who seek a trustworthy repair facility but are afraid to be taken advantage of by just any repair shop," Hamed said. "The repair facilities which cannot afford broadcast advertising would get to boost their business."  
"There is such new and demanding technology, a lot of shops cannot fix the electronics or don't have the computers or training for the newer cars. We want to make sure consumers are getting certified mechanics who have pursued training and invested money in the proper equipment."  
Hamed likens his operation to the very successful 1-800-DEMTIST, in which consumers can find a reputable dentist in their area. There are 1,000 member dentists plus a waiting list with 100 more names. That service gets 4,000 calls daily.  
Hamed has hopes of eventually expanding the service to include the entire tri-county area.

# Minority business advocate named

The Small Business Strategy Group, a Southfield-based consulting company, was named runner-up as the 1993 Minority Business Advocate of the Year.  
The announcement was made by the Minority Business Development Agency of the U. S. Department of Commerce.  
The award was presented to West Bloomfield resident Don Reimer, co-founder of the company, and was presented by B. Ke-

in Lauderdale, project director of Grant Thornton's Detroit Minority Business Development Center.  
"Don Reimer has been active for many years in consulting and promoting minority owned businesses and I am very pleased that Don's efforts are now being recognized," Lauderdale said.  
The Small Business Strategy Group specializes in developing management strategies for

growth-oriented, closely held businesses.  
A pioneer in fostering assistance for minority businesses, Reimer spent 10 years with the Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce. He also created a milestone for assisting minority businesses with the Small Business Development, which led to the development of the Business Advisory Resource Bank. He helped

develop his business in 1987.  
"I am delighted to be recognized for many of the contributions made over the past 25 years to fostering minority businesses in this community," said Reimer, a first-time award winner.  
Reimer is an alumnus of Lawrence Technological University and an adjunct professor in the College of Management of the Southfield campus.

# Standard Fed earns support award

Troy-based Standard Federal Bank was among winners of the President's Community Support Award granted by the Federal Home Loan Bank of Indianapolis.  
The award, presented to two Indiana and two Michigan FHLBank members annually, is in recognition of efforts to meet needs of individuals and communities they serve.  
Mary Fowle, Standard Federal vice president, accepted a plaque in honor of the award from Martin L. Heger, president and CEO of the Federal Home Loan Bank. As a part of the award, the FHLBank will donate \$500 to the nonprofit organization of Standard Federal Bank's choice.  
Award winners are nominated by representatives of the communities in which they operate.  
The Housing and Community Development Corp. and Lighthouse of Oakland County submitted nominations for Standard Federal Bank, recognizing the financial institution's activities to improve the affordability of housing for low-income families.  
"We are very honored to be a recipient of this prestigious award," said Thomas Ricketts, Standard Federal chairman and presi-

dent. "The bank has been, and will continue to be, very active in developing programs that promote affordable home ownership in all of the communities that we serve."  
Standard Federal Bank has been awarded 21 affordable housing program grants by the Federal Home Loan Bank of Indianapolis totaling over \$1.3 million in subsidy and supporting nearly \$20 million total development costs.  
Working with a wide range of nonprofit sponsors and government agencies in both Indiana and Michigan, Standard Federal has used these funds to create a total of 341 units of affordable housing to date.  
Standard Federal has also received eight Community Investment Program advances totaling over \$82 million. These funds were used to finance conventional mortgage loans to low- and moderate-income families and for a variety of other community development projects.  
The Federal Home Loan Bank of Indianapolis, which provides services to federally insured depository institutions in Indiana and Michigan, is one of 12 such banks across the country. The FHLBanks are government-sponsored enterprises representing over \$165 billion in total assets.

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