

The case of the gleaming garage

When a fellow contractor ran into equipment problems on a big job with a tight deadline, TJB Industries, Detroit, got the call to bail him out.

The job was a refit of the 12,700 square-foot repair bay concrete floor at the Lima Auto Mall in Lima, Ohio. The big dealership sells Caddies, Chevies, Pontiacs, Jeeps and more from its two lots in the small (population just over 40,000) Northwestern Ohio town. Like most dealerships, the Lima Auto Mall also does business in car repair and maintenance.

Unlike most dealerships, Lima Auto Mall's owner, Bill Timmermeister, wanted to distinguish himself from the competition with a repair bay that didn't just have clean floors.

"Our motto is 'NASCAR clean'," he said. "So we did everything we could to create a super service center -- a real showplace -- and that included the floors."

And like NASCAR races, the job had to be done fast, over one weekend. That was so the repair center wouldn't lose any business from downtime, said Tom, who started on a Friday in February at 5 p.m., and finished at Noon, Sunday.

Work started with dry grinding at low grits. It helped, Tom said, that the repair technicians had kept the concrete relatively free of grease and oil stains. The floor didn't need any remedial cleaning.

After honing the floor with a 150-grit metal-bond diamond, the TJB Industries crew hit it with Consolideck® LS lithium-silicate hardener densifier at 400-500 square-feet per gallon from backpack pump sprayers. They kept it wet for 15 minutes, then let it dry 45 minutes.

Just over an hour later, the machines were back, growling their way across the concrete, bringing the floor up to an 800-grit polish. Then the ^{LS}Guard sprayed down in tight cones, also from backpack pump sprayers. The crew spread the ultra-thin protective coating with recommended microfiber pads, getting about 1,000 - 1,200 square feet per gallon, Tom said.

The Toledo, Ohio branch of the Chase E. Phipps Company supplied the LS and ^{LS}Guard, he added.

After a 30-45 minute dry-time, the floor got a 3,000 rpm burnishing from a propane burnisher sporting an 800-grit buffing pad. Results were almost mirror-like.

"We've gotten a lot of compliments on the job," Tom said.

Some of those compliments came from the floor's owner, Mr. Timmermeister. "It looks excellent," he said. "It's beautiful."

But the best compliment may be in the form of the repair bay's customers and the fact that since the new "NASCAR clean" floor went in, there's a lot more of them.

"It was well worth it," Mr. Timmermeister said. "We're doing much better business now."