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2008 Opening General Session Kicked-Off the Inaugural ASRW Week

Las Vegas, NV — The inaugural ASRW Week, featuring the 26th annual International Autobody Congress & Exposition (NACE) and the Congress of Automotive Repair and Service (CARS) Opening General Session, sponsored by DuPont Performance Coatings, welcomed a crowded, enthusiastic audience on Thursday, November 6.

The event began with a dialogue between Darrell Amberson, AAM, President of Lehman's Garage, Bloomington, MN, who is the 2008 Event Chairman of NACE; and Aaron Clements, president of C&C Automotive in Augusta, GA, who is the 2008 CARS Event Chairman. The discussion was moderated by industry icon Bob Anderson, of Anderson's Automotive, Sheffield Village, OH. The two chairmen shared their viewpoints on the industry and the parallels between collision and mechanical repair.

In the opening message, the underlying theme behind the conversation was change. Both addressed the current economic situation and its effect on each respective industry, current challenges each is facing as well as insight into what the future holds.

"I would describe the state of our industry as challenging, but with opportunity," said Amberson. "We are under unprecedented pressure from insurers and consumers to contain cost while providing quicker cycle times with higher quality. Yet changing technologies and processes provide opportunity for some to differentiate themselves, thus providing opportunity."

Clements and Amberson highlighted several issues affecting today's collision and mechanical repair industries, including insurer regulations, legislative issues, shifts in consumer behavior, and profitability drivers within estimating systems for both the mechanical and collision repair sectors.

"Instead of dwelling on the issues of our industry, we must seek solutions and focus on success," commented Amberson. He stressed the importance for audience members to embrace and adapt to change, while maintaining a high standard of ethics. "There will be winners and losers. But the winners will be those who seek improvement, such as those who attend the events here at ASRW."

Looking toward the future of the industry, Clements said, "I'm cautious but excited about the future. I see many opportunities in many areas for the collision and mechanical facilities to network and learn from each other." Amberson and Clements advised the audience to stop thinking of themselves as repairers and start thinking of themselves as successful businessmen.

Anderson concluded the dialogue by empowering the audience, telling them, "Every one of you are leaders. Go home and lead."

Both NACE and CARS, the 2008 ASRW co-located events were held November 5-8, at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA. The educational Conference took place November 5-8 (Wednesday-Saturday), and the Exposition ran from November 6-8 (Thursday-Saturday).

ASRW 2009, featuring NACE and CARS as co-located events, will again take place at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center from November 4-7, 2009 in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA. The educational Conference will run Nov. 4-7 (Wednesday-Saturday), and the Exposition will be open Nov. 5-7 (Thursday-Saturday). ASRW events also take place during the Automotive Aftermarket Industry Week (AAIW), taking place that same week in Las Vegas.

NACE -- the world's collision repair event – annually attracts collision repair industry professionals from around the globe and features a comprehensive educational Conference and Exposition of leading manufacturers and companies representing the latest in collision repair equipment, products, services and technologies. To exhibit at NACE 2009, call toll-free 888.529.1641 (ext. 6316) or 972.536.6316. For more NACE information, visit the NACE website at www.NACEexpo.com.

CARS -- the premier event for automotive service professionals – annually attracts automotive service and repair industry professionals and features a comprehensive educational Conference and Exposition of exhibiting companies representing the latest products, equipment, services and technologies available to the automotive service and repair market. To exhibit at CARS 2009, call toll-free 866.704.8069 (ext. 6399) or 972.536.6399. For more CARS information, visit the CARS website at www.CARSevent.com.

The Automotive Service Association is the sponsor of ASRW, NACE and CARS. ASA is the largest international not-for-profit trade association of its kind dedicated to and governed by independent automotive service and repair professionals. ASA advances professionalism and excellence in the automotive industry through education, legislative representation and member services. Its international membership base includes numerous affiliate, state and chapter groups from all segments of the industry. For additional information about ASA, go to www.ASAshop.org. ASRW, NACE and CARS are produced by Hanley Wood Exhibitions (HWE). For additional information, contact HWE at P.O. Box 612128, Dallas, Texas 75261-2128 or call toll-free 888.529.1641 or 972.536.6444.