

NU-LOOK COLLISION CENTERS

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Nu-Look Collision revs up growth with new site

Canandaigua facility gives the firm seven locations in region

By VELVET SPICER

Despite a slumped economy, Nu-Look Collision Inc. has been on a growth trajectory.

The company this year expanded its operations, opening a 10,000-square-foot facility on Route 332 in Canandaigua. With its Tuscan facade, including stucco walls, a clay tile roof and arched windows, the facility was fashioned after other buildings and features of the Finger Lakes region, said Jeffrey DiFulvio, president and CEO.

"We wanted to kick it up a notch from what it would normally look like in a collision facility," DiFulvio said. "We made it very curb appealing, especially being in Canandaigua and the Finger Lakes wine area."

DiFulvio declined to discuss financial details of the expansion. The property previously was home to Ken's Auto Body, a small collision repair center. Nu-Look purchased the property in summer 2007, enlisted the services of Kevin Bragg at Chrisantha Construction Corp. and Martin Fredrickson at Kohlstaedt and Fredrickson Architects P.C., and began renovations roughly a year ago.

The facility opened in May and employs six or seven people. Nu-Look plans to increase its Canandaigua staff as sales climb,

because drivers are not pouring money into body work. That may have been the case two decades ago when cars rusted faster and easier, he said, but not so now. Now the majority of his business is on the collision side and that is driven by the auto insurance industry, which means, for the most part, that damage gets repaired.

Still, with the current economic decline, many businesses and industries are scaling back, not expanding. A 2007 survey conducted by the I-CAR Education Foundation for Allstate Insurance Co. shows the number of body shops nationally has declined by more than 12 percent since 1995, while the percentage of large shops has increased. A separate survey by the Automotive Service Association shows estimated sales of \$25 billion last year among independent collision shop owners, up from \$24 billion in 2006.

DiFulvio said his industry has not experienced the wild swings others have in recent years.

"We see subtle changes in our business and one would be the gas (prices)," he said.



Photo courtesy of Nu-Look Collision

Nu-Look's recently opened facility was inspired by Finger Lakes region architecture.

"People are driving a little less and trying to be more conservative, so possibly claims are down a little bit because they aren't on the road as much. But it's not like all of a sudden tomorrow everybody stops driving."

DiFulvio also said people's perception could be that the collision business is slow

because drivers are not pouring money into body work. That may have been the case two decades ago when cars rusted faster and easier, he said, but not so now. Now the majority of his business is on the collision side and that is driven by the auto insurance industry, which means, for the most part, that damage gets repaired.

DiFulvio declined to discuss revenues at Nu-Look but said the company has grown each year since opening in 1983. Last year the company saw double-digit growth in terms of revenues, he said, and is on track for 6 percent growth this year.

"I've got to believe it's all the hard work that our entire staff is doing," DiFulvio said. "Because let's face it, nobody wants to come see us. We have to take a negative and make it a positive."

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