

# DEAR READER

DREW VASS

## No Time for the Same Old

I can't recount the number of times I have heard someone say, "Well, window film is sort of recession proof." I have heard a number of very convincing reasons for this notion, all of which I think help prop the product segment up during difficult times and give it an advantage over many others, but none of which constitute a "bullet proof" mentality.

I have followed, studied and even lived the details of our current crisis. Prior to WINDOW FILM, I wrote for one of its sister publications which serves the residential construction industry—one of the first to be severely impacted by this recession. I reported layoffs, closures and cutbacks for more than a year before the window film industry even began using the word "recession." I was also involved with the financial industry amid the height of the last real estate boom. I watched the story unfold on paper as financial institutions scrambled to keep the good times rolling. I was fortunate. For me, the writing was on the wall and I protected myself. Others were not so fortunate. Those who will be fortunate in the window film industry will be the ones who face the realities of this economy and rise to the occasion. Those who choose to do the same-old risk falling by the wayside. This may not be the beginning of a crisis, as much as it is the beginning of a new era.

At the recent SEMA Show in Las Vegas, I seized the opportunity to ask every manufacturer I met: "Are we, in fact, in a window film recession?" The answer was a resounding "Yes." On page 22, you can read what industry leaders have to say about the current economy. A healthy dialogue may be one of the best remedies and I hope it



will begin on the resulting pages.

The SEMA Show certainly witnessed the results of an economic recession this year, as the show never reached its usual mass. But you know what? It didn't matter. Like so many shows I covered and attended in 2008, quality prevailed over quantity. The majority of exhibitors we interviewed said the show was a resounding success, despite its turnout. On page 26, you can read the details and see a bit of what you missed if you were unable to attend.

Window film dealers are beginning to explore new ways of keeping sales up during these times. Many are considering diversifying their lineup to offer more products and services. Barb Moran, chief executive officer for Moran Industries, is very familiar with the concept of diversifying. In fact, her company's success is based on it. On page 14, Moran provides key advice on the subject.

Another way dealers are filling gaps in their schedules is by cooperating with "middle men"—that is, businesses that fill gaps in the industry chain by either providing contract-based installation services to dealers (who would otherwise have to walk away from a deal) or by landing large corporate-level deals, then lining them up with qualified dealers/installers. On page 18 contributing writer Les Shaver delves into this concept to bring you the details.

The window film industry has witnessed more recessions than just the current. And WINDOW FILM magazine, now in its 13<sup>th</sup> year, has been through many of the same. If we drudge full-steam ahead, 2009 *will* be another great year for the industry. **WF**

—Drew Vass

# WINDOW FILM™

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Key Communications Inc.  
385 Garrisonville Rd, #116  
Stafford, VA 22554  
540/720-5584; 540/720-5687 (fax)  
email: dvass@glass.com  
www.windowfilmmag.com

*Publisher* DEBRA LEVY  
deb@glass.com

*Editor/Associate Publisher* DREW VASS  
dvass@glass.com

*Managing Editor* SHANNON FLETCHER  
sfletcher@glass.com

*Contributing Editors* CHARLES CUMPSTON  
ccumpston@glass.com  
ELLEN ROGERS  
erogers@glass.com  
PENNY STACEY  
pstacey@glass.com

*Assistant Editor* MEGAN HEADLEY  
mheadley@glass.com

*Art Directors* CHRIS BUNN  
cbunn@glass.com  
DAWN CAMPBELL  
dcampbell@glass.com  
MARCI MALINOWSKI  
mmalinowski@glass.com

*Advertising Coordinator* ERIN HARRIS  
eharris@glass.com

*Exhibits Manager* TINA CZAR  
tczar@glass.com

*Marketing Director* HOLLY BILLER, VICE PRESIDENT  
hbiller@glass.com

*Marketing Assistant* JULIE FREUND  
jfreund@glass.com

*Web Developer* BRYAN HOVEY  
bhovey@glass.com

*Video Producer* DREW VASS  
dvass@glass.com

*Customer Relations Manager* JANEEN MULLIGAN  
jmulligan@glass.com

*Customer Service Assistant* KATIE HODGE  
khodge@glass.com

### ADVERTISING OFFICES

**Midwest** LISA NAUGLE  
lnaugle@glass.com  
Phone 312/850-0899  
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267/626-8405  
Fax 610/965-9285

**Southeast** SCOTT RICKLES  
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emitchell@glass.com  
Phone 805/445-4805  
Fax 805/445-4806

**Europe** PATRICK CONNOLLY  
patco@glass.com  
699 Kings Road  
Westcliff on Sea  
Essex SS0 8PH ENGLAND  
Phone (44) 1-702-477341  
Fax (44) 1-702-477559

**China & Asia** SEAN XIAO  
sxiao@glass.com  
Rm.403, Block 17,  
Wuyimingzhu, No.6 Jinshan Road,  
Fuzhou, Fujian, 350001, China.  
Phone (86) 591-838-63000

**All Others** Contact Publisher Directly

DEBRA LEVY  
540/720-5584, ext. 111;  
fax: 540/720-5687  
advertising@glass.com

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