

Classy Chassis Update

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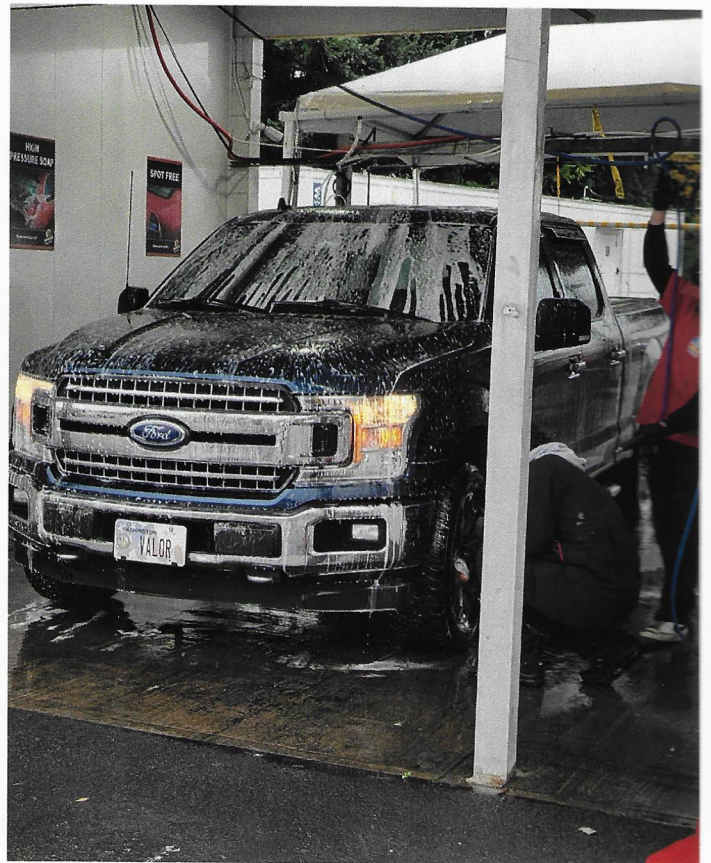
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It was no doubt a shock to the neighborhood when just after midnight on September 19, 2023, a fire broke out at Classy Chassis Car Washes & Detailing in Lakewood. Flames and firetruck sirens never herald good news; yet the owners and staff at Classy Chassis have managed to find the silver lining amongst the smoke.

10-year American Lake residents Corey and Lisa Campbell told us, “This devastating fire took place two weeks from our 28th year anniversary of opening this location.” Since the Campbells built the flagship location in 1995, Classy Chassis Car Wash, along with Classic Coffee Drive-Thru and the Xpress Lube Center, have become reliable and relied upon members of the community they serve. With a total of 10 Car Washes, two Havoline Xpress Lubes, and three Classic Coffee Shops, their vision statement is “relax while we take care of you!” That means their first priority was making sure customers had a place to turn for their service.

“Our focus during this time remained on our mission of serving our customers. We kept our members notified with texts and emails, as well as sent out general notifications to all subscribers and on social media, etc.” Because Classic Coffee Drive-Thru and Xpress Lube relied on the main building’s computers and IT systems, which were compromised due to the fire, their teams worked tirelessly to quickly find alternatives to ensure they were still able to remain open and have operated under normal business hours this entire time. In addition, their teams “immediately went into the planning of a temporary site” for the Car Wash & Detailing, and quickly got up and running a fully functioning lobby, “hybrid” exterior car wash (hand wash plus automatic), and professional detail center at 7432 Custer Road West, just two blocks east of the main site.

So what happened? Corey described an electrical fire that broke out in the car wash’s central equipment room. “It burned to 600 degrees, and quickly broke through the



wall into our detailing bay," Corey explained. Everyone at Classy Chassis expressed gratitude to the West Pierce Fire Department, who "did an amazing job responding. They entered the building and contained the flames just in time to prevent it from burning under the Class C Motorhome we had just completed detailing. If the fire had been allowed to burn just a little bit longer, things would have taken a much more dangerous turn. The fire department would have had to back out and the flames would have reached the motorhome and ignited the propane inside which would have totaled the entire site." Instead, "while the interior, equipment, and roof were all damaged beyond repair, we were fortunate to not have lost the entire structure." And luckily, no one was hurt.

Being able to salvage as much of the structure as possible, keep working and offering services, while also protecting employees and customers, takes an organized, efficient, and careful approach. "We were dedicated to the well-being of staff and minimizing hardships the situation might bring," Corey told us. "Tasks were shifted and compensation was provided. Thankfully, all staff was able to stay on board with us." A little bit of shuffling made everything go much smoother than it might have. "Shortly after, the main admin offices were shifted to our Gig Harbor site offices that were under-utilized."

From the first moment of the disaster, the focus was on the customer. "We wanted to make sure they knew where all our other wash sites were (the closest being just 3.5 miles away, at the corner of Orchard and Center)," said the owners. They were quick to announce online and in-person that the Classic Coffee and Xpress Lube businesses would remain open to serve them, "and that we were taking care of the Lakewood staff that we know THEY also cared about." While this was causing numerous types of inconveniences for the business, more important to them was to acknowledge any inconvenience for their loyal patrons and to "assure them that we were working very diligently to get an alternative in place for their washing."

While losing part of their structure so close to the 28th anniversary of its opening was hard, and caused a lot of short-term changes, it has also given everyone at Classy Chassis a chance to start fresh with a new building. Thanks to insurance and a calm and collected mindset, they have made preparations to begin a full restoration process. "The interior has been fully demoed," Corey shared. "Though time to repair and open is of key importance, we have an amazing team of very experienced professionals who are working the planning, engineering, permitting, and readying the general construction." While they "wish this was all going much faster," there is "SOOO much being done but it just takes time and they have to fall in order."

We often hear that we cannot control what happens in our lives, yet we can control how we respond to it. The owners and team at Classy Chassis responded with what they are famous for: perseverance. They want to remind everyone that they ARE open and that they will continue to give updates of any changes or progress in the rebuild. "We are beginning repair permit submittals this week and expect to see project movement in the very near future," Corey said. "We have the project and teams fully ready to roll as soon as we get some clear green lights from our emergency permitting process." When the main Lakewood building is ready to reopen, Corey told us, "it will be an all-new, redesigned, state-of-the-art car wash and detail center!"

"We ARE open! Come see us, as we are here to serve you today! Visit ClassyChassis.com/Update for specifics on our temp site, as well as a list of other nearby locations available for car washes - our nearest other automatic tunnel site is just 3.5 miles away at the corner of Orchard and Center Street!"

