

Business model changes to stay current

Bluffs car wash business adapts to meet customers' needs

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Twenty years after opening his first car wash, Jeff Ballenger, owner of Gorilla Car Wash, will say goodbye to the first building he built.

But it won't be a complete severing with the 512 23rd Ave. location, just a reawakening.

Ballenger built Jeff's Wash and Glo at the corner of the 23rd Avenue and South Expressway in 1991. He turned the keys over earlier this week.

The building will come down to make way for a new Casey's gas station, and a new car wash.

"We are partnering up with Casey's on 23rd Avenue," Ballenger said. "They are going to put up a new gas station and we are going to tie in a 110-foot tunnel wash.

"You'll be able to get your gas and get a car wash all in one."

Ballenger said there were a lot of memories for him in the building - so handing it over was difficult.

"There were a lot of memories, but the reality is the market has changed, and we have to continue to grow and evolve," he said. "There will be no more self-serve bays, but you will be able to pull right in after buying your gas or pizza."

The evolution of business has forced the move. The new location will offer a friction car wash, which features equipment that "rolls over" the vehicle.

Ballenger's other three Gorilla Car Washes - at 1270 E. Pierce St., 114 E. Broadway and 3003 W. Broadway - provide touchless car washes.

"This new facility will give our customers a choice between our other touchless washes and the friction wash option," he said. "It's important to any business to continue to grow. When my grandpa started his business (Ballenger Automotive) in 1926, you could stay in the same business for a number of years.

"Now, I think you have change every 10 or 20 years to keep up with technology."

Ballenger said Casey's and Jeff's Wash and Glo have had a working relationship for years. In fact, coupons were available for purchase at the gas station to use at the car wash across the street.

"They (Casey's) have been great partners and I am really excited about the future," he said. "Construction should take 120 days, and we plan on breaking ground the first or second week of June."

Another new technological advance that Gorilla Car Wash is investing in is swipe stations at the self-serve bays.

Ballenger is testing the technology at two washes in Omaha as well as the Gorilla Wash on East Pierce Street.

"It's taking off like gang busters," he said of the new swipe machines. "Nobody seems to carry cash anymore."

Instead of using a fist full of quarters to wash a vehicle, the swipe machines allow users to swipe a debit or credit card to purchase a wash. Ballenger said the customer can use the washing equipment for as long as they want and push a button to stop. The card is then charged for the amount of time that is used.

"It is just another convenience for our customers," he said.

The project is a "win-win" for both the customer and for Gorilla Car Wash, Ballenger added. The customer has the convenience of using their debit or credit card, and there is less damage to equipment from thieves trying to steal quarters.

"The card information is protected; we are excited it has worked really well," he said.

Another technological leap the company has made is in the new website:

Gorilla online

The Gorilla Car Wash's new website, www.gorillawash.com, offers customers the chance to purchase the "Works" or "Deluxe" carwash online. With online purchases only, the business offers a buy six get one free deal. The carwash packages include:

The Works

- Two low pressure soaps
- High-pressure rinse
- Foaming wax, poly seal
- Spot free rinse and dry

The Deluxe

- Undercarriage spray
- Low-pressure soap
- High-pressure rinse
- Foaming wax, poly seal
- Spot free rinse and dry

The Premium

- Undercarriage washing
- Double soap pass
- Double high pressure wash rinse
- Clear coat protection
- Spot free rinse and dry

www.gorillawash.com.

Ballenger said the new website allows customers to purchase carwashes online.



Gorilla Car Wash, 1270 E. Pierce St., recently installed credit card scanners for faster and easier transactions.

Staff photo/Cindy Christensen



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Advertising deadline is 4 p.m. for the next day's afternoon edition.

SUCCESSFUL GARAGE SALE TIPS

- **Set the dates and times of your sale.** Extend your sale hours into the early evening, so people who work during the day will have a chance to stop by. Because most people have the day off, Saturday is a good time. Start your sale fairly early to catch early birds.
- **Advertise your garage sale.** Place an ad in The Daily Nonpareil Classifieds. Ads are well worth their small cost. One ad can reach hundreds of shoppers, many of whom only shop at sales advertised in the paper. Here are some tips for writing a successful ad:
 - Begin with your address, directions, days and hours of the sale.
 - List major items to be sold and their prices.
 - Be honest and don't leave out valuable information.
 - Listing a phone number may help sell larger items.

You'll also want to make posters to direct people to your sale; keep them simple enough to be read from a car.

- **Prepare your articles for sale.** The cleaner an article is, the more likely it is to sell. So dust off the knickknacks, wash and hang up clothing, and display items for easy viewing. Make sure you label anything that does not work.
- **Price your items realistically.** Many people go to garage sales looking for bargains and will barter. Prepare for that in the price. To avoid confusion, make sure the price is clearly marked on each item.
- **Make any final preparations.** Make sure you have plenty of change and a calculator to add up prices. Grab some boxes, sacks and newspapers to wrap fragile items. Arrange for helpers, especially during the busy morning hours.

With just a little planning, you can have a great garage sale!

GARAGE SALE AD FORM

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Garage Sale Address: _____

Directions: _____

Day(s): _____ Time: _____

Featured Items: _____

All ads must be paid for in advance. Drop off or send in your ad and payment to The Daily Nonpareil, 535 West Broadway, Suite 300, Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503.

Place your ad online
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or call 712-325-5700
or visit
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