

Vac tokens can save time, money

Owner of Courthouse Car Wash, a self-serve/tunnel operation, dispenses tokens to simplify free vacuum service.

BY DOTTIE HOPKINS

After 18 years of operation, the verdict is in for the Courthouse Car Wash located in Fredericksburg, VA. "If it isn't broke, don't fix it" might be one way to articulate the feelings of Courthouse owner Jim Dixon. Another verbalization might be that, "You can make a tidy profit at a quarter a time."

Ever since he opened the carwash nearly two decades ago, Dixon has offered his customers coin-operated vacuums as a way to help support his four self-service bays and his exterior tunnel wash.

How they work

Dixon purchases tokens twice a year in quantities of about 10,000 per order. This bulk order allows him to attain a price of less than .11 cents each, and that includes shipping costs.

Customers are given free vacuum tokens along with the purchase of one of Courthouse's two top washes — "The Works" (valued at \$14) and "The Ultimate Wash" (valued at \$12).

The standard brass tokens — with a depiction of a vacuum station on one side and the words "no cash value" on the other — can be used at any of the vacuum stations around the site. There are four vacuums over by the self-serve bays, a pair of vacuums in front on the outside and two more in back off to the side.

Dixon estimates that the volume for the vacuums is about 25 percent tokens and 75 percent quarters. Some customers naturally vacuum immediately following getting their car washed, while others hold onto their tokens and perform a "big clean" at a more convenient and advantageous time. There are also customers who use their free tokens and will still purchase additional time using quarters, which generates more revenue.

Ease and convenience

While customers appreciate the free vacuums, Dixon said the biggest advantage for him is that he now handles fewer



quarters while he also provides an incentive to purchase higher-valued wash packages.

The tokens also weigh less than quarters, and with more tokens being used it means that Courthouse employees are lugging around less weight when emptying coin boxes. And with fewer quarters in circulation, Dixon makes fewer trips to the back to make sure that he has an adequate supply of quarters on hand.

"Customers can use them now or later," said Dixon. However customers use them, Dixon said he is pleased with the results, and the cash generated from the vacuum stations. **PC&D**

Jim Dixon, owner of the Courthouse Car Wash in Fredericksburg, VA, uses tokens to better manage his free vacuum service and sales.

