

USED CAR DEALERS ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

230 NORSEMAN STREET, TORONTO, ONTARIO M8Z 2R4

TEL: (416) 231-2600 or 1-800-268-2598 • INTERNET: www.ucda.orgwww.ucda.org

February 2024

Vol. 37 No. 2

OMVIC MESSAGING

"Nefarious"

- flagrantly wicked or impious: evil (Merriam-Webster)

Are dealers "wicked" or "evil"?

As OMVIC proceeds with fee increases and raises the transaction tax to \$12.50 come April 1st, it's fair for dealers to ask what sort of service they get from OMVIC.

OMVIC want to present a consumer-friendly face, which is fine. They are also very concerned with the number of dealers that continue to be non-compliant with laws that have been on the books now for 14 years, such as all-in-pricing. So are we.

Where the disagreements arise between OMVIC and the UCDA is about how to achieve this. We believe progress can be made, and it must be made, without disparaging all dealers, or painting the whole industry with the same brush that just a few bad apples deserve.

Consider this recent media report by Global News:
[HERE](#)

It was a fairly positive news item, looking forward to 2024, and quoting respected sources about inventory, electric vehicles and pricing.

Unfortunately, along comes an unnamed spokesperson for OMVIC who, apparently in an email to the reporter, offered the following opinion:

"The organization also warns as Canadians look into a potential vehicle purchase, they should also be sure to know how to protect themselves as supply chain challenges and the resulting inventory issues have led to "nefarious" sales tactics. It said this has included pressuring car buyers to purchase additional products with their vehicle, with it sometimes being presented as mandatory."

This opinion appears to derive from what we view as a

flawed, subjective and biased "survey" by a consumer advocate association that themselves make money off this industry by way of dealer referrals.

People may have lost sight of the fact that adults over 18, of sound mind, still have the freedom to negotiate their own contracts. They have free will and, despite the fact buyer's remorse about buying something like an extended warranty, or paying over MSRP, is reflected in a "survey", does not mean they were "forced" to buy the vehicle. They could have simply walked away.

It's not a crime for dealers to make a profit, it's what funds OMVIC after all. The notion that legions of dealers are forcing consumers into cars and products they do not want or need is overblown hype. Does it happen? We expect it does, but nowhere near as much as the media or consumer advocates would have us believe. Of course, dumping on dealers gets attention and sells papers.

Then, on January 30, 2024, an OMVIC Dealer "bulletin" on the important subject of abiding by "all-in pricing" regulations in Ontario was issued. Important message? For sure. How was it worded? Well, that was also unfortunate:

(edited for space and emphasis)

A REALITY CHECK FOR DEALERS!

2023: yet another year of poor mystery shop results - OMVIC plans to raise the bar amidst ongoing compliance struggles.

*The results are in for our 2023 Mystery Shop Program, and it's evident that many aren't **getting the memo** ... It's time for you as registrants to **sit up, take notice, and clean up your act** ...*

*Starting this year, **OMVIC is taking a bold step** by publicly disclosing administrative findings ... if you're not on board with compliance, **your business practices will be under the spotlight for all to see.***

*... no corner will be left unchecked. And **don't get too comfortable** if your dealership isn't on the list - OMVIC may visit unexpectedly, so ensuring compliance should be your top priority.*

Get educated or face the consequences

For those serious about compliance, OMVIC offers educational webinars to keep you on the right side of the law ...

Still scratching your head about the Mystery Shop Program?

Call 1-800-943-6002 ext. 4 for answers. **Don't wait until OMVIC comes knocking ...**

We strongly believe that Education, with a capital E, is key, so OMVIC may want to lead with that, and avoid the temptation to pile on with the rest of the chatter out there.

The UCDA was actually pleased to see that almost 70% of dealers inspected passed the 2023 mystery shop. That does not mean 30% failing is anything to applaud, but at least it shows a good majority of dealers are in compliance.

Let's build on that positive message, and get the other 30% on board with it too!

We have told OMVIC, if they are looking for an ally in education, raising the bar on compliance and professionalism, they will find it in us. And we mean that sincerely. The UCDA wholeheartedly supports ongoing dealer education and is a partner in that effort with OMVIC, and has been for years.

The UCDA knows it's possible for OMVIC to fulfil its mandate to promote a safe and fair transactional environment for consumers at the same time as supporting and educating motor vehicle dealers. OMVIC can do this without portraying dealers as villains that consumers need to "protect themselves" from.

We have shared that message with OMVIC and we think they understand where dealers are coming from on it.

Auto Theft

Since its inception in 1984, the Used Car Dealer Association of Ontario (UCDA) has provided extensive support to stakeholders, government, law enforcement and regulators to try to help address issues of importance to our 5000 new and used automobile dealer members.

It has become almost routine now to observe that automotive theft in Canada has reached a crisis point. There are a number of reasons for this, just as there are a number of ways to address the problem. This complex issue will not be solved as the result of one Summit, but it's a good start.

The Insurance Bureau of Canada and the Équité Association report, in Ontario alone, over \$700 million in losses due to auto theft, with over \$500 million of that in the Greater Toronto

Area in 2022. Only 57% of stolen vehicles are recovered nationwide, with the vast majority of such vehicles being 2019 or newer.

On the heels of our Member survey last year, you told us you wanted the UCDA to focus on combatting this issue. We asked Members in late January for their input on solving the problem of auto theft in preparation for our participation.

The UCDA attended the Federal Government's National Summit on Combatting Auto Theft on February 8, 2024 in Ottawa. We also had staff attend virtually.

We brought the comments and concerns of our members to a meeting where experts from across the country, who are in a position to shift approaches on this problem, were present. We believe efforts such as this might be the beginning of the start of a solution, by gathering the best and brightest from across the nation, and across disciplines, to work together and find the will to end this scourge once and for all.

This is a chance for Canada to emerge as a leader in solving this issue. You can see the UCDA's submissions to the Summit here: <http://tinyurl.com/mt5t8589>

The UCDA has also been invited to participate in the second annual Peel Regional Police Auto Theft Summit in Mississauga. This will be in March.

Stay tuned for more on this!

Digital Dealer Registration Update

How to have your own in-house licence office of a sort! Get in on DDR.

Here is the latest update from the good folks at the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) and the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery (MPBSD):

February 2024

Sign up today to learn more about DDR!

The MPBSD in collaboration with the MTO will be hosting a 2024 Digital Dealership Registration (DDR) Webinar.

Digital Dealership Registration is a web-based application that enables dealers to:

- Complete passenger vehicle registrations online
- Manage, order and report issues with permits and plates online
- Reduce the dealerships visits to ServiceOntario centres
- Improve margins for dealerships
- Reduce the time Ontarians and Ontario businesses spend dealing with vehicle
- Related administration

(continued on page 4, column 1)

On The Road Again

A very significant commitment by the UCDA to its members, but one some members may not know about, are our on-the-road ambassadors. These 6 talented and experienced individuals offer UCDA members that most precious, and increasingly rare, service experience ... face to face interactions at your business!

What value-added do they bring?

Our UCDA road representatives cover most of southern Ontario and, on arrangement, can venture even further north, depending on needs.



Virginia has been with the UCDA for just over 25 years. She worked in the Lien department for many years before hitting the road for the UCDA.

Dealers in her area, which includes the 613-area code and also including Peterborough and Port Hope, know her well!



Frank has been on the road with the UCDA for over 13 years. Frank worked for NAPA before joining the UCDA.

Through his years of experience, he's gained knowledge of the intricacies of the automotive industry. Frank meets with members in the Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge areas, but also covers from Burlington to Mississauga.



Sachin, a graduate of Georgian College in the Automotive Business and Marketing program, started as a co-op student with UCDA and was hired after graduating in 2013.

He held various internal roles in Member Services at UCDA and in 2018 Sachin continued to support members on the road. He meets members primarily in the GTA and surrounding areas.

Each rep has their own 'territory' so dealers in their zone often get to know them, and not just by name or email, but in-person. They will visit dealers, by appointment, and help them with everything from searches to questions about advertising regulations.



Lorrie entered into the automotive industry in 2009, starting her automotive career at Carpages. In 2015, Lorrie joined the UCDA and has been with us since.

She is one of our Member Services Advisors meeting with members on a daily basis, covering Windsor to Goderich over to St. Catharines. She is one of two reps on the road that teach the OMVIC Certification Course.



Conor is a Georgian College Automotive Business and Marketing graduate but before joining the UCDA, Conor sold cars, worked for Discount Car and Truck, and at the Honda plant in Alliston. He joined the UCDA in 2009 quickly transitioning from working in the office to a Member Services Advisor on the road. In 2017 teaching the OMVIC Certification Course was added to Conor's responsibilities.

Conor's members include some of Toronto up the highway 400 corridor to Orillia and over to Owen Sound.



Michelle joined the UCDA in 2017. Her role was mainly administrative, working on registrations and promotion for the sales courses and OMVIC Certification Course.

She supported OntarioCars.ca registering members. She is currently transitioning to work on the road to visit Members in person. Michelle, like Lorrie, came to the UCDA after 9 years with Carpages.

If you would like your Member Service Advisor to visit your dealership, please give us a call at (416) 231-2600 or 1-800-268-2598.

(Digital Dealer Registration Update, continued from page 2)

- Minimize manual business processes through data validation and secure online transactions

The event will be taking place on: Tuesday March 5th, 2024, and Thursday March 7th, 2024, from 1:00pm – 2:00pm and will include a walkthrough of DDR showcasing its many features, how to sign up and will address some commonly asked questions about the platform.

Please ensure that you meet the following criteria for DDR before completing the registration:

- Dealership must be within Ontario
- Dealership is registered with Ontario Motor Vehicle Industry Council (OMVIC)

Sign up today to reserve your spot for the DDR webinar [HERE!](#)

Join the many dealerships that are already using DDR for vehicle registration.

Email us at Dealerships@ontario.ca for more information or click [HERE](#) to get started!

Export Check

A New Tool to Protect Against Fake Buyers!

Excitement is building for our new search tool!

As reported in our last Front Line, EXPORT CHECK can help power dealers through their misgivings about whether a buyer is truly buying a vehicle for their personal use, or instead, planning to flip it or export it.

EXPORT CHECK powered by VINShield.ca

Dealers can use EXPORT CHECK to perform their due diligence on buyers by checking if previously purchased vehicles were exported from Canada.

- Search VINs from your Garage Register to see where vehicles you sold ended up
- Run a RIN on suspicious buyers to check prior VIN's for evidence of export
- Help prevent auto theft

A resulting report will be displayed showing the export status, country of import, and date of export.

It will be offered for \$13.95 on the UCDA Search Portal under the heading EXPORT CHECK.

Look for EXPORT CHECK, at www.ucdasearches.com, coming in March!

Service (?) Ontario

In what appears to be a bit of a pattern lately, the Ontario Government has announced the closing of several Service Ontario (SO) licence offices with zero consultation and little information.

It's kind of like giving with one hand, as in the excellent news on digital registration for dealers, and taking away with the other, for dealers who rely on these physical offices, this has the potential to be quite concerning news.

While the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery is taking quite a bit of flack over all this in the media, the focus, as usual, is on consumers. No one is talking about dealers who are the true 'volume users' of the SO system.

We are seeking answers from the Ministry as to what plans SO has for those users, what the timelines are, and if this is a pilot program, how long will it last?

There are a variety of potential concerns which we are trying to get SO to address. What are the addresses of the offices being closed? At the kiosks, will there be special 'dealer lines'? Will bulk registration drop offs be allowed?

In what little we have learned by dribs and drabs in the media, the Government expects kiosks in various community Staples, and possibly some Walmart locations, to pick up the slack left by the service vacuum they have created.

So far, all we know for sure is:

The new Staples Canada-operated ServiceOntario centres are in the following communities:

- Oakville, 2460 Winston Churchill Boulevard
- Newmarket, 17810 Yonge Street (the office they closed was located at 17480 Yonge St.)
- Toronto (Scarborough), 180 Eglinton Avenue, East
- Strathroy, 425 Caradoc Street, South
- Tillsonburg, Tillsonburg Town Centre, 200 Broadway Street
- Welland, Seaway Mall, 800 Niagara Street

Additional ServiceOntario centres will open in Staples Canada stores in Hamilton, Keswick and Toronto (Leaside) later this year.

We called the Service Ontario kiosk in Newmarket on Feb. 5th to ask what arrangements they had for dealers, they referred us to MTO, to whom, after being on hold for 15 minutes, we asked the same question, and they disconnected us. A member called to tell us the Scarborough location does not have a dedicated dealer line.

If you have concerns about these closings, and particularly if you are in the affected communities, please let the UCDA know and, in addition, your Ontario MPP for those areas:

<http://tinyurl.com/sn6h9kyl>.