

# SERVICE IS THE KEY

A Tempe auto-repair shop has found success by specializing in hybrid vehicles and emphasizing customer satisfaction.

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Mechanic Raul Mendoza replaces a timing belt at Good Works Auto Repair in Tempe. The shop, which opened in 2004, added a hybrid division in 2013. MARK HENLE, MARK HENLE/THE REPUBLIC

# Service is key for Tempe auto shop

Focus on hybrids carves niche market for couple

GEORGANN YARA  
SPECIAL FOR THE REPUBLIC

He had been in the auto-repair industry since graduating from high school in Milwaukee in 1974. But when Glen Hayward applied his old-school knowledge and customer-service practices to servicing contemporary vehicles, the co-owner of Good Works Auto Repair created a niche for his shop in the hybrid repair space.

Adding that specialty division in 2013 has helped Hayward and his wife and business partner, RaeAnn, grow their Tempe repair shop, which has serviced just about every type of vehicle since opening in 2004.

The idea came when Hayward started noticing a lot of hybrids on the road. His research revealed that there were about 46,000 such green vehicles in Maricopa County at that time but barely, if any, independent shop that specialized in working on them.

"This is such a niche market we could develop into something. There's got to be a great opportunity here," Hayward said of his thinking.

He discovered a company in Virginia that owned several hybrid specialty shops. Hayward reached out to the owner, who trained him and his techs, and designed and engineered the equipment to refurbish hybrid batteries — a big source of repair.

This technology can refurbish a used hybrid battery pack up to 95 percent of its original condition, Hayward said. A typical new hybrid battery can last seven to 10 years if it's used often, he said. Hayward estimated that currently there are more than 160,000 hybrids in the county.

Hayward said he invested \$50,000 for the training, equipment and addition of the division, which operates like a franchise of the Virginia company. This component has broadened Good Works' service lineup.

When Good Works opened, it generated \$750,000 in annual sales, Hayward said. Within two years, that jumped to \$1.5 million, a total it's reaped each year since. The shop has also doubled in size. When the current expansion is complete, Good Works will span 11,000 square feet.

## 'Good mechanics are hard to find'

Having the capability to work on just about every type of older and newer automobile has remained a key asset, from hybrids to diesels. On a Tuesday morning, a



Glen and RaeAnn Hayward have seen business boom at their Good Works Auto Repair. They've doubled the shop's space to 11,000 square feet and have seen annual sales jump to \$1.5 million. PHOTOS BY MARK HENLE/THE REPUBLIC

## Good Works Auto Repair

**Where:** 2348 E. Broadway Road, Tempe.

**Employees:** 10.

**Interesting stat:** The U.S. hybrid market is projected to grow 25 percent this year, according to Michigan-based research and analytics firm Baum and Associates.

**Details:** 480-894-0018, [goodworksautorepair.com](http://goodworksautorepair.com).

Ford, Kia, Jeep, Honda, Mercedes and an Audi were all on Hayward's lot.

As more car owners hang on to their vehicles, repair shops that can care for older models become more in demand. The average age of the U.S. vehicle fleet has increased 17 percent over the past 10 years, with the typical car on the road being 11½ years old — a record high, according to research firm IHS Markit. Also, 75 percent of aftermarket auto repair is performed by independent auto repair shops like Good Works.

Being active in the community and charitable efforts is also part of the routine. Among the efforts is the Brakes for Breasts campaign, for which RaeAnn spearheaded the collaboration. It amounted to a donation of \$20,000 from more than 20 auto shops to the Cleveland Clinic for



Mechanics Ryan Sparks (left) and John Petersen inspect a vehicle at Good Works.

Breast Cancer Research. Customers who donated to the cause received their brake pads for free.

This campaign is what initially drew Ted Greene to Good Works about a year ago. After getting the brake pads on his Ford Taurus changed, Greene has returned for other services.

"Everything was absolutely fantastic," said Greene, who lives in Tempe. "I was very impressed with Glen's knowledge, caring and full explanation of everything before the work was done."

This kind of thoroughness is what has kept Harvey Gibson a satisfied customer for nearly two years after becoming discouraged with his former mechanic. Gibson's 2008 Volvo, his wife's 2011 Honda Ac-

cord and his stepson's 2007 Mini Cooper have all been serviced at Good Works.

Although the Volvo and Honda have had routine services, the Mini Cooper has undergone more extensive work that required diagnostics, like transmission work and a new starter. Regardless of the service, Gibson appreciates that Hayward takes the time to explain the problem, what needs to be done and all the options so he can make an informed decision.

At what Gibson called a reasonable price, Hayward gets jobs done in a timely manner. For example, if he takes his car to the shop in the morning, he gets a call at noon saying it'll be done later that afternoon. If they need to send out for a part, it's usually done by midmorning the next day.

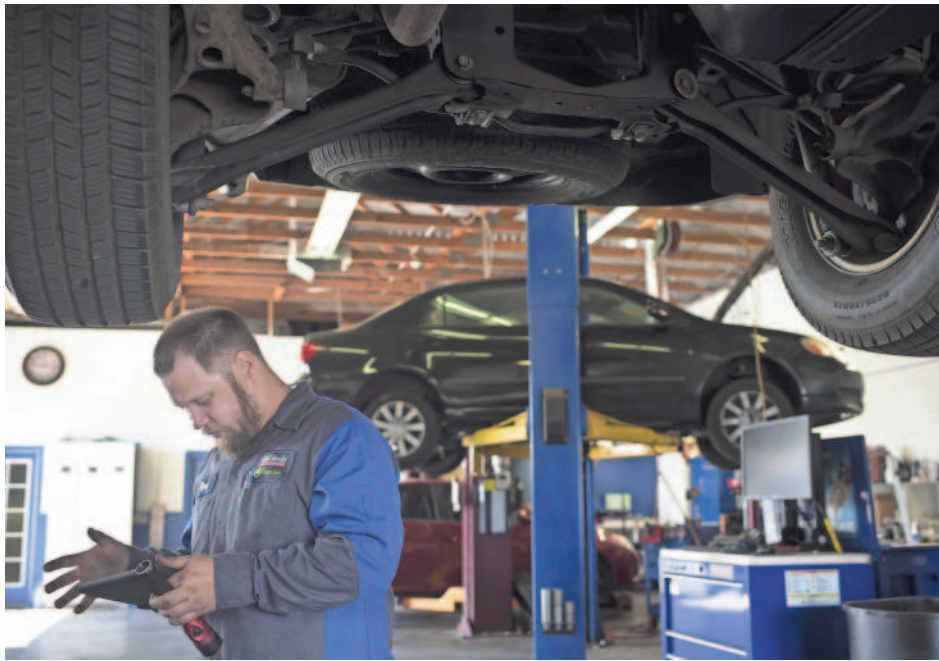
"He gets it fixed the first time so I don't have to worry about those kinds of things. Good mechanics are hard to find," said Gibson, who lives in Tempe. "When he tells you something will be taken care of, it will."

## Building relationships one repair at a time

Hayward left his native Wisconsin and followed his family, who had relocated to Arizona, in 1990. Here, he met native Arizonan RaeAnn, his wife of 23 years. They

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Hayward says being in an industry with a questionable reputation of trustworthiness can make his job tougher when trying to win over skeptics. MARK HENLE/THE REPUBLIC

## Shop

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have three children.

Hayward and his former business partner decided to open Good Works with RaeAnn, who had worked as a dispatcher for a construction company, handling the accounting and phone duties. In 2015, Hayward bought out that partner and he and RaeAnn became the sole owners.

Hayward acknowledged that being in an industry with a questionable reputation when it comes to being trustworthy can make his job tougher when trying to win over skeptics. Decades of experience have taught him that delivering exceptional service and building relationships with every

repair is the best way to accomplish this.

This includes doing oil changes, which Hayward said he loses money on. But it helps maintain clients' vehicles and gives his team a chance to look at them and offer preventive maintenance advice, which they are free to take or leave. He shows them around the shop and takes photos of what he sees as potential costly problems and sends them to customers to evaluate.

He upped his previous two-year, 24,000-mile warranty for parts and labor to an unheard-of three years and 36,000 miles to further earn customers' confidence.

"That's a part of how you win people's trust, by offering a warranty that supersedes anything that's out there in the industry," he said. "It's about treating people with respect and dignity ... not thinking about how much money you're trying to shake out of their pockets."