

Dollars Stretch With Recycled Parts

By Sean Rice
Staff Writer

While the down economy may be hurting most retail stores, Southern Maryland Used Auto Parts, the St. Mary's branch of Brandywine Automotive Centers, has seen more customers seeking out used parts to save money.

"With the way the economy is, people are leaning more toward recycled parts instead of new parts," said Randy Whitley, sales manager at Southern Maryland Used Auto Parts on Route 235 in Mechanicsville.

Recycled parts can be bought for as much as 75 percent less than the cost of buying new, and sometimes more, Whitley said.

For example, car batteries cost nearly \$90 new, but \$25 at the recycle yard. A typical engine would cost between \$1,700 and \$2,000 new, but one can be had for as little as \$200 from one of Brandywine's stores, Whitley said.

Brandywine Automotive has 15 locations throughout Maryland and Virginia, and the Mechanicsville store focuses main-

ly on trucks, vans, SUV's, and Honda and Toyota vehicles.

"But just about any part somebody needs we can get it in between our stores," Whitley said. "If we don't have a part at this location, we can get it in by the next day, sometimes the same day."

He also works with a network of recycled part dealers across the country, and can literally get any part a customer needs.

Whitley said he sees many people buying minor parts to install themselves, and even has seen increase in sales of larger parts like motors and transmissions, which he thinks is a direct result of the economy.

"It's always been said buy used and save," he said.

"What we do see is people are coming to buy parts and before they were having service stations putting the parts on for them, and now they're kind of going back and putting the parts on themselves again, trying to save that little extra money," said Woody Meinhardt, president of Brandywine Automotive Centers.



Photo by Sean Rice

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Randy Whitley, sales manager at Southern Maryland Used Auto Parts in Mechanicsville, stands next to racks of motors and transmissions at the recycle yard.