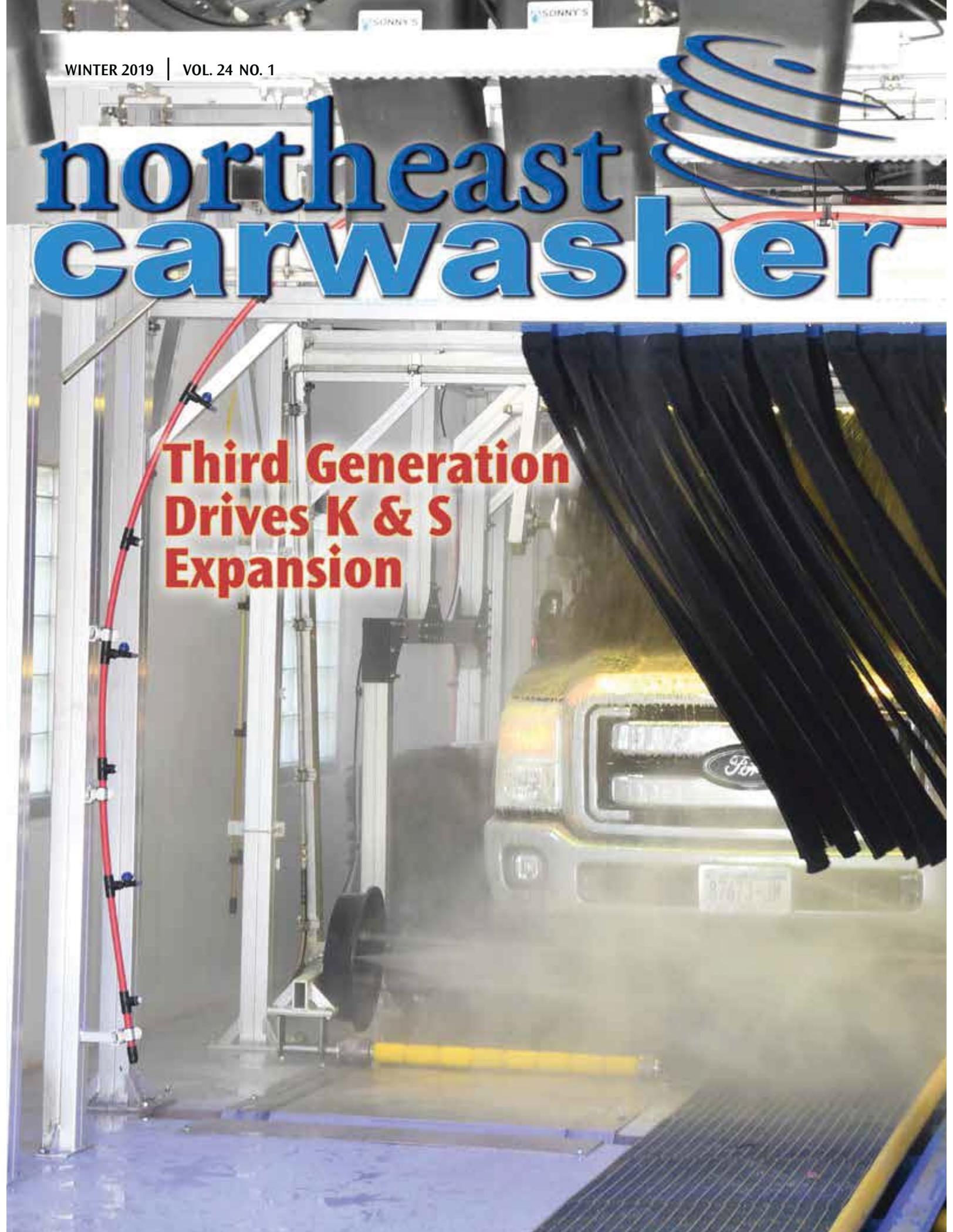


northeast carwasher

**Third Generation
Drives K & S
Expansion**



Third Generation Drives K & S Expansion

By Alan M. Petrillo & Suzanne L. Stansbury

The Kubarek family of Auburn, NY, has never shied away from a challenge or hard work. In the last six months they have doubled the size of their operation through initiative and blood, sweat and I'm guessing, a few tears, to now run four washes in Central New York. The close-knit family of four, who have frequent family dinners, work together as a colorful unit never afraid to share their thoughts or ideas to help grow their family-run operation that father, Mark, first got into in 1980 when he bought out his father-in-law and his partner, and took over K & S (Kastick & Smith) in Auburn.

Expanding a business is never an easy task, especially when you are doubling the size of your company. But that hasn't stopped Mark Kubarek and his family from purchasing two run-down and somewhat failed carwashes and rejuvenating them to bring K & S Car Wash to a total of four locations in Cayuga County in central New York.

Kubarek, the owner of K&S Car Wash along with his wife Terri and son Christopher and daughter Amanda, cites the involvement of his children as the impetus for buying the two carwashes.

"Having Christopher and Amanda in business with me is great," Kubarek said, "and that's what has driven this expansion. The opportunity to purchase the two washes came up, one to the east of our current locations and one to the west, so it seemed like a good thing to do."

K & S Car Wash purchased the former Suds & Buds Auto Wash at 351 Genesee St. in Auburn, and the former Apple Auto Wash at 323 Grant Avenue in Sennett. K & S also has locations at 108 North St. in Auburn and at 2677 Erie Dr. in Weedsport. All are now branded as K & S Car Wash.

K & S's North Street location has a 90-foot exterior tunnel with two in-bay automatics and four self-service wash bays, while the Weedsport location has one frictionless in-bay automatic with four self-service bays. Kubarek is totally renovating the Genesee Street location, which consists of a 120-foot tunnel, two in-bay automatics, and six self-service bays.

"The tunnel equipment has been in there since 1988," Kubarek says. "It's the original equipment, so it needs to be replaced. But the bones of the building are phenomenal. It's built like a fortress of brick and block, so we don't have to change that."

Kubarek is putting in two DRB pay stations and a 120-foot Sonny's tunnel with Extrutech Plastics throughout and epoxy coating on the tunnel's floor. The in-bay automatics

will be Washworld Razor touch free machines with DRB pay stations, while the new self-service equipment will be Carolina Pride units.

"The building is laid out in the form of a T," Kubarek noted. "The tunnel is in the middle, and the self-service and in-bays are in the cross of the T. The whole location sits on two acres and cost us \$155,000."

At the Sennett location, which is east of K & S's locations in Auburn and Weedsport, there is one in-bay automatic and four self-service bays.

"Sennett's washes are housed in two buildings, and the in-bay automatic was an old Razor," Kubarek pointed out. "We are removing that and putting in two Washworld Razors and replacing the pay station with DRB so that we have continuity across all four of our locations. In the self-service bays, we're putting in Carolina Pride equipment, and the same coin boxes as we're using at the Genesee Street location. Fortunately, we won't have to do anything to the structures in Sennett."

The Sennett location, which is on one of the busiest thoroughfares that runs through the city of Auburn from the town of Sennett, cost K & S \$445,000, Kubarek said.

Help from the County

Tracy Verrier, executive director of the Cayuga County Economic Development Agency, said K & S Car Wash was provided incentives to purchase the two carwashes.

"K & S carwash applied for and received a total of \$206,500 in financial assistance from the Cayuga County

Continued ...

Terri, Mark, Amanda and Christopher Kubarek.





These photos show the K & S Car Wash site, formerly Suds & Buds, in Auburn during its total transformation. This new acquisition consists of a 120-foot tunnel, two inbays and six self-service bays.



Economic Development Agency,” Verrier said. “This was in the form of a sales and use tax exemption on the renovation and purchase of equipment. That’s a savings of eight percent and the maximum sales tax exemption is \$184,000.”

The second type of incentive was a mortgage recording tax exemption, according to Verrier.

“Cayuga County has a one percent mortgage recording tax, and the exemption is for 75 percent, which is a savings of \$22,500,” she said.

Verrier noted that her agency’s mission is to incentivize projects that will increase the county’s tax revenue over time and develop jobs for local citizens.

“K & S Car Wash has been very good about local labor policy on the renovations,” she said. “Construction labor is being sourced locally, and K & S has gone above and beyond our policy in that regard.”

Kubarek said he expects to add four new positions at the carwashes to begin operations, and up to a dozen positions in total in less than two years. Terri Kubarek is now overseeing the growing staff in addition to her marketing role, and daughter Amanda is mechanically inclined and troubleshooting equipment issues, while also helping out in the office. Son Christopher is hands-on with the renovation as well as daily operations and Mark oversees the team while working with local contractors and the towns in which the washes operate.

“The community has been very good to us since we first opened in 1977 (when Mark started working with Terri’s father and partner),” Kubarek observed. “We’re investing (a lot of money) in the two locations, and think that having four K & S Car Washes in the area will increase our customer base. We’ve set things up so our unlimited program works at both tunnels, and gift cards will work in both tunnels, all the in-bays and all the self-service bays.”

A True Family Affair

But as Mark Kubarek mentioned earlier, none of this would have happened without the drive and input from his two children. Son Christopher isn’t shy about stating the undertaking was enormous. “One way or another, we’ll get there,” said Christopher Kubarek. “That’s what I kept saying, but I don’t think I’d ever take on two purchases and renovations at the same time again. It was a lot of juggling, planning and hands-on work on our part. At times you feel like you’re spread too thin.”

The challenges of keeping a family-run business in harmony is constant. But Christopher Kubarek said it’s the nature of the beast and something his family has figured out. “You’re in a family-run business and that’s the biggest challenge. I tell people that I’m extremely fortunate to be in business with my family, and to be able to spend every day with them,” said Kubarek. “Most people don’t get a quarter of the time I get with my family. We’re



Third generation carwashers, Amanda and Christopher Kubarek, were the driving reason for doubling the K & S footprint. Each play an integral role in the success of their family business and are its future.



The finished product at the family’s Genesee St. location in Auburn demonstrates the hard work and effort the family put into the site’s renovation.

all very passionate about this business and we love it. Our family dinners are never boring!”

Anyone who knows the Kubarek family will tell you that they are hard working, straight shooters who will give you the shirt off their backs. “It’s been a lot for us,” said Christopher Kubarek. “The four of us have worked really hard and relied on a couple of great employees who stepped up to run a few of our sites.”

But I’m pretty impressed that we were able to gut two sites in four months, and now I can say that out of sheer persistence, we got there.” ■

Alan M. Petrillo is a Tucson, AZ-based journalist, a former upstate New Yorker, and contributing editor of Northeast Carwasher. He’s the author of the historical mysteries, Full Moon and Asylum Lane, and his latest historical thriller, A Case of Dom Perignon, all available at www.amazon.com

Suzanne L. Stansbury is the Editor/Publisher of the Northeast Carwasher magazine.

K & S ... continued



With four locations now under their belt the family is gearing up for a busy winter washing season and possible additional acquisitions down the road.



The Kubarek's took the former Apple Auto Wash on Grant Avenue in Sennett and breathed new life into its bones.

K & S ... continued

This location in Sennett is east of the Auburn and Weedsport locations and features one inbay and four self-serve bays. The two wash types are housed in different buildings. Luckily with this purchase the bones of the wash were sound.



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