

## President's Letter

Howdy fellow SSAer's!

It was so good to see many old friends and meet new ones at our 2023 convention in Vermont. We had great participation at our meetings, the seminars, panel discussion and even our off site visit to the PG Adams plant.

The SSA also hosted a wonderful evening reception at the Grapevine HDAW in January of 2024. Our members, suppliers, friends and family got to enjoy some time together after a busy day at the show. It is always good to get together with our peers and discuss all the relevant and important matters. One of my favorite conversations that evening was with Stu MacKay and his passion for locomotives. A topic probably not cover at a seminar or meeting.

The board is well underway in the planning process for our next October convention at the fabulous Las Vegas Caesars Palace Hotel. It is the SSA board's mission to supply our members with worthwhile events. We work hard so they will contain valuable and usable content. The convention also provides the ability to network with our industry colleagues in a relaxed and memorable setting. We know your time is valuable. So we want each of our members to come and participate because that is what makes these events worthwhile to everyone.



**Warren Wild**  
President

This just in! Our esteemed colleague Rick Sheen has secured a golf outing for early Tuesday morning (Oct 1) only 15 minutes from the Caesars Palace Hotel.

Thanks for being a Service Specialist member.

El Presidente Warren Wild

## SAVE THE DATE!

October 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup>

**SSA Visits Old School Vegas**

Visit [www.ssatruck.com](http://www.ssatruck.com) for  
links to hotel block rate!



# SHOP PROFILE, DIAS SPRING SERVICE

## *Dias* Auto & Truck

In 1919 Laurence Dias relocated from his hometown in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to Erie, Pennsylvania. With a \$2,000.00 cash advance and a promise of a small amount of inventory from Bill Brown, president of Iron City Spring, Laurence opened a spring shop in Erie. No legal contracts or attorneys were involved, just a gentleman's handshake as an agreement to pay back the loan.



Dias Spring Service was at several locations in Erie until it found its current and permanent home in 1949 on the busy industrial corridor in downtown Erie.

Laurence's son Frederick came on board with his dad in 1935 to start a second generation of Dias Spring Service. Fred was small in stature and at 100 pounds, realized that manufacturing springs was not going to be his forte, so in 1943 he ventured into passenger car suspension, wheel aligning, and frame straightening.

In 1963 Fred added heavy duty truck alignment and frame straightening to the business. In addition, Fred's eldest son Fred Jr. joined the business that year to begin a third generation of Dias Spring. Fred Jr. was not interested in the hands-on labor aspect of the business, so he began selling tools and suspension parts to local garages and gas stations and continued to expand the

“Sales” side of the business by adding truck suspension parts and filters.

In 1975 Fred Sr.’s second son Ken joined the family business. Unlike his brother, Ken took a real interest in the mechanical side. Since making springs from raw material was not profitable for a small shop anymore, one of Ken’s first jobs was to dismantle the handmade furnaces his grandfather built 55 years prior.

Fred Sr. and his wife Margaret also had a daughter Nancy who ran the office for many years. Currently, in 2024, Fred Sr.’s grandson John Pence runs the office as the fourth generation of the 105-year-old family-owned company.



# Power Heavy Duty celebrating 30 years of helping service specialists and distributors grow and excel.



Article contributed by Truck Parts Service ([truckpartsandservice.com](http://truckpartsandservice.com)) | Jan 23, 2024

Power Heavy Duty marks its 30th anniversary this year of helping independent service specialists and parts distributors grow their businesses and thrive in an ever-competitive aftermarket. The buying and marketing group was founded in 1994 by Brett Upton with a handful of independent service providers, primarily spring and suspension specialists, and parts manufacturers serving this segment. Three decades later, Power Heavy Duty has a record 224 locations throughout the U.S., and added 18 new members in 2023, another record.

“My family operated a large automotive parts buying group for many years and some of our largest members were also very active with heavy-duty accounts. At their request, we pursued additional programs for them with suppliers more focused on the heavy-duty aftermarket, and that led to the creation of Power Heavy Duty,” says Upton. “The relationships we built with these suppliers and group members was key to our early growth and is still the driving force behind our continued success.”

Power Heavy Duty was acquired by VIPAR Heavy Duty in 2014 and is part of the VIPAR Heavy Duty Family of Companies. Together, they represent more than 920 locations throughout North America, including 600 service providers, with an estimated \$2.5 billion in final point-of-sale revenue.

“Power Heavy Duty joining the VIPAR Heavy Duty Family of Companies was significant in positioning us to include the full range of independent aftermarket service providers and parts distributors,” says VIPAR Heavy Duty President and CEO Chris Baer. “It has been a very successful union that brings greater value to our distributors and supplier partners, but more importantly, it delivers greater value to our end-user customers. The ‘Power’ brand is a critical part of our growth acceleration plans.”

Starting with a fairly specialized membership, Power Heavy Duty members now include service providers and parts distributors that are as diversified as the aftermarket itself. The network includes businesses of all sizes, serving every market and providing solutions for every customer’s needs. The organization’s extensive product lines and broad range of marketing and communications resources have helped fuel its growth and increase value for both members and supplier partners, the company says.

“Cummins-Meritor has been a steadfast advocate of the Power Heavy Duty network since Meritor’s acquisition of the Euclid brand,” says David Wintle, national accounts manager for Cummins-Meritor. “Power Heavy Duty’s membership consists of experienced industry veterans, many with expertise in the spring and suspension business, which is a great fit with Euclid’s core business to this day. The partnership has grown through the years with new product lines and new ways to support the expanding network, and the collaboration between Cummins-Meritor, Power Heavy Duty and VIPAR Heavy Duty will lead into the future for years to come.”

When it comes to being an industry veteran and spring and suspension expert, Tampa Spring Company, which was founded in 1927 and among the earliest companies to join the network leads the way.

"I was at the Spring and Suspension Association show [now the Service Specialists Association] and was speaking with a supplier who recommended I join one of the buying groups, and his suggestion was Power Heavy Duty," says John Messina, owner of Tampa Spring Company and a member of the Power Heavy Duty advisory council. "Brett was at the event recruiting new members. After we spoke and I looked at our options, they seemed to be the best fit for us, and it was the right choice. We joined and it's been a good relationship; in fact, it's become a great relationship." He notes the relationship continues to evolve and bring new benefits, such as the IMPACT Conference, which included Power Heavy Duty for the first-time last year. Messina, who attended the event, says it was a great opportunity to network with peers, strengthen relationships with suppliers and make new ones, and learn more about industry issues and best business practices, such as the session on cybersecurity.

Dayton Parts is an original supplier partner and remains a strong ally. Walter Sherbourne, vice president of Canada, Mexico and group sales for Dayton Parts, says, "Traditionally, Power Heavy Duty members were spring and service facilities — a key segment for us as our product portfolio centers around undercarriage components — but over time they have seen extensive expansion into new channels by adding warehouse distributors and diesel specialists.

"We anticipate our relationship to keep growing as they continue to increase their footprint and play a vital role in connecting Dayton Parts with quality businesses who provide parts and service solutions to the transportation industry." Cyphers Truck Parts has been a Power Heavy Duty member since 1997 and its owner, Kevin Cyphers, sits on the group's advisory council. He says it's brought numerous advantages. "Instead of being a little fish in your own little pond, you become a much bigger voice with greater access to suppliers, product lines and group pricing. If I call up and say 'I'm part of Power Heavy Duty,' people listen," he says. "It's also facilitated many new friendships and peer-to-peer relationships."

One of those relationships helped his 83-year-old business survive a catastrophic event. He recalls that in 2010 a major fire destroyed the company's facility and inventory. "While some competitors are trying to put you in the ground, the group helps everyone pull in the same direction," he says. "During that very difficult time for us, we got a helping hand from Associated Truck Parts, a VIPAR Heavy Duty distributor, who helped us with products and allowed us to continue to serve our customers. It was assistance that came from a personal place, not just two businesses doing business together. It shows what the value of being in the group really is."

As new members are brought into the network, the benefits are quickly realized. USA Diesel Truck & Trailer Parts in Penitas, Texas, joined Power Heavy Duty last year. Its manager, Mario Hinojosa, says they have already increased their product lines, grown their sales and brought customers greater cost savings.

"It's a great organization and works well for businesses like us. It was easy to integrate into our heavy-duty parts distribution model," Hinojosa says. "We see the benefits. We have access to more suppliers and get our inventory with better pricing."

Through three decades there are many stories from many service providers, distributors and suppliers that tell of similar support, camaraderie and growth.

"Our goal from day one was to support independent service specialists and parts distributors through access to the products they need — at competitive prices — and provide them the best support possible to achieve their full potential and be leaders in their markets," says Upton, Power Heavy Duty's director of business development within the VIPAR Heavy Duty Family of Companies. "And 30 years later, we're still doing it!"



# Unlocking the Excitement: Unmissable Experiences in Las Vegas

Las Vegas, the Entertainment Capital of the World, is renowned for its vibrant atmosphere, luxurious resorts, and endless entertainment options. Whether you're a first-time visitor or a seasoned traveler, this bustling city in the heart of the Mojave Desert has something for everyone. Here's a curated list of must-do experiences that will make your Las Vegas trip unforgettable. With SSA room block rates available from Friday September 27th through Tuesday October 8th at Caesars Palace, there is time to do them all.

**1. Explore the Las Vegas Strip:** No visit to Las Vegas is complete without a stroll along the iconic Las Vegas Strip. Marvel at the dazzling array of neon lights, iconic resorts, and world-famous landmarks. From the replica Eiffel Tower at Paris Las Vegas to the stunning fountains of Bellagio, each resort offers its own unique charm and attractions.

**2. Visit the Las Vegas Sphere:** Set to become an architectural marvel and entertainment hub, the Las Vegas Sphere is a must-visit attraction. This groundbreaking venue promises immersive entertainment experiences, including concerts, theatrical performances, and interactive exhibits. Keep an eye out for updates on its opening to ensure you don't miss out on this futuristic spectacle.

**3. Test Your Luck at Casinos:** Las Vegas is synonymous with casinos, and no trip would be complete without trying your luck at the gaming tables. Whether you're a seasoned gambler or a casual player, the city's world-class casinos offer an exhilarating gaming experience. From classic table games like blackjack and roulette to state-of-the-art slot machines, the possibilities are endless.

**4. Catch a Show:** Las Vegas is home to some of the best live entertainment in the world. Treat yourself to a spectacular performance ranging from Cirque du Soleil extravaganzas to awe-inspiring magic shows. With a diverse lineup of shows catering to every taste and preference, you're sure to find something that captivates your imagination.

**5. Indulge in Culinary Delights:** Las Vegas boasts a culinary scene that rivals any major city in the world. From celebrity chef restaurants to casual eateries, there's no shortage of dining options to tempt your taste buds. Sample gourmet cuisine from around the globe, indulge in decadent desserts, and sip on handcrafted cocktails at trendy bars and lounges.

**6. Experience Thrilling Attractions:** Get your adrenaline pumping with a visit to one of Las Vegas's thrilling attractions. Take a ride on the High Roller, the world's tallest observation wheel, for breathtaking views of the city skyline. Or, experience the heart pounding excitement of indoor skydiving or zip-lining down Fremont Street.

**7. Explore Beyond the Strip:** While the Las Vegas Strip offers endless entertainment, don't forget to explore the city beyond its glitzy facade. Discover the vibrant arts district of Downtown Las Vegas, browse through eclectic shops and boutiques, or embark on a scenic drive to nearby natural wonders like Red Rock Canyon or the Hoover Dam.

**8. Relax and Unwind:** Amidst all the excitement, don't forget to take some time to relax and rejuvenate. Pamper yourself with a spa day at one of the city's luxurious resorts, soak up the sun by the poolside, or enjoy a leisurely stroll through serene botanical gardens.

*Las Vegas is a city like no other, where every moment is filled with excitement and possibility. Whether you're seeking adventure, entertainment, or relaxation, Las Vegas offers an unforgettable experience that will leave you wanting more. So, pack your bags, prepare for an unforgettable journey, and get ready to unlock the excitement of Las Vegas!*

**SCAN TO LEARN ABOUT OUR HOTEL BLOCK RATE  
AND BOOK YOUR ROOM**



# OSHA Announces Switch From Traditional Hard Hats To Safety Helmets To Protect Agency Employees From Head Injuries Better.

**WASHINGTON** — The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration announced that the agency is replacing traditional hard hats used by its employees with more modern safety helmets to protect them better when they are on inspection sites.

In 2020, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports head injuries accounted for nearly 6 percent of non-fatal occupational injuries involving days away from work. Almost half of those injuries occurred when workers came in contact with an object or equipment while about 20 percent were caused by slips, trips and falls.

Dating back to the 1960s, traditional hard hats protect the top of a worker's head but have minimal side impact protection and also lack chin straps. Without the straps, traditional hard hats can fall off a worker's head if they slip or trip, leaving them unprotected. In addition, traditional hard hats lacked vents and trapped heat inside.

On Nov. 22, 2023, OSHA published a Safety and Health Information Bulletin detailing key differences between traditional hard hats and more modern safety helmets and the advancements in design, materials and other features that help protect workers' entire heads better. Today's safety helmets may also offer face shields or goggles to protect against projectiles, dust and chemical splashes. Others offer built-in hearing protection and/or communication systems to enable clear communication in noisy environments.

The agency recommends safety helmets be used by people working at construction industry and the oil and gas industry; in high-temperature, specialized work and low-risk environments; performing tasks involving electrical work and working from heights; and when required by regulations or industry standards.

OSHA wants employers to make safety and health a core value in their workplaces and is committed to doing the same by leading by example and embracing the evolution of head protection.

— *For more information, visit [www.osha.gov](https://www.osha.gov)*