

The Voice Of The Car Care Industry

Auto Laundry News

Results from the Auto Laundry News

2026 IN-BAY AUTOMATIC SURVEY



CarWashMag.com

2026 IN-BAY AUTOMATIC SURVEY

The 2026 *Auto Laundry News* In-Bay Automatic Survey was conducted by randomly mailing/e-mailing questionnaires to subscribers who own and/or operate in-bay automatic car wash equipment. The information in this survey results from an analysis of data provided by respondents throughout the United States.

Participating locations with self-serve wand bays accounted for 83 percent of respondents. Last year, 64 percent of survey takers reported operating self-serve bays.

STATE OF THE SEGMENT

As they have for the past few years, operators answered a couple of open-ended questions about the segment's current and future state.

While most responses about the current landscape were positive, the past three years have shown a consistent downward trend in segment outlook. This year, 62 percent of survey takers responded positively, down from 71 percent last year and 90 percent two years ago.

The most common positive responses this year were 'Strong,' 'Good,' and 'Growing.' 'Challenging' and 'Slow' were the most common negative responses. Around 9 percent provided neutral responses.

When asked for a single word to describe the future of the in-bay market, survey takers were more positive, with 68 percent providing positive responses, down from 77 percent last year.

The most frequent positive responses were 'Good' and 'Growing,' with 'Challenging' topping the list for those with a negative outlook on the future. Six percent of respondents gave neutral responses about the future.

WASH VOLUME

Sixty-seven percent of those surveyed report an increase in wash volume over the previous year. This represents a significant increase over the 38 percent that reported an increase last year, and a major rebound from the 27 percent that reported an increase two years ago.

Twenty-five percent of operators reported a decrease in volume, down from 31 percent last year. The graphic on page 30 provides a full seven-year perspective.

REVENUE

Average gross revenue per car continues to rise. Operators reported an average ticket of \$13.07 this year, up from \$12.67 last year and \$11.78 two years ago.

FUTURE INVESTMENT

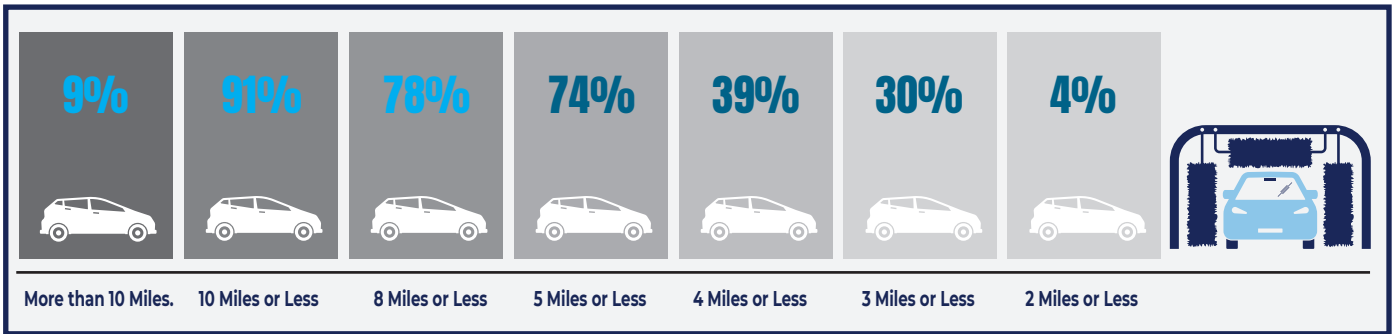
An impressive 40 percent of respondents plan to make a new equipment purchase over the next 12 months, up significantly from the 28 percent that planned to do so last year.

The most popular planned purchases were in-bay equipment, vacuums, and dryers.

PERCENTAGE OF WASH BUSINESS DONE BY DAY OF WEEK

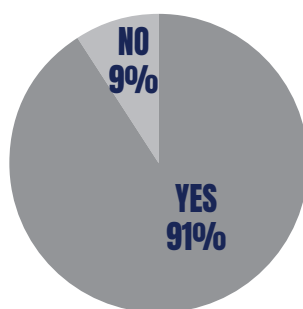
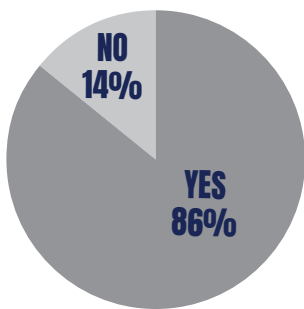
	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
Pacific & Mountain Alaska-Arizona-California-Colorado-Hawaii-Idaho-Montana-Nevada-New Mexico-Oregon-Utah-Washington-Wyoming	10	10	10	10	20	20	20
Midwest Iowa-Kansas-Minnesota-Missouri-Nebraska-North Dakota-South Dakota-Wisconsin	9	8	8	15	22	24	14
Central Illinois-Indiana-Michigan-Ohio	13	10	10	10	17	20	20
South Alabama-Arkansas-Delaware-Florida-Georgia-Kentucky-Louisiana-Maryland-Mississippi-North Carolina-Oklahoma-South Carolina-Tennessee-Texas-Virginia-West Virginia	10	10	10	13	21	20	16
Mid-Atlantic New Jersey-New York-Pennsylvania	10	10	10	10	22	20	18
New England Connecticut-Maine-Massachusetts-New Hampshire-Rhode Island-Vermont	9	9	13	17	18	17	17

HOW FAR DO CUSTOMERS COME?



OPEN 24 HOURS

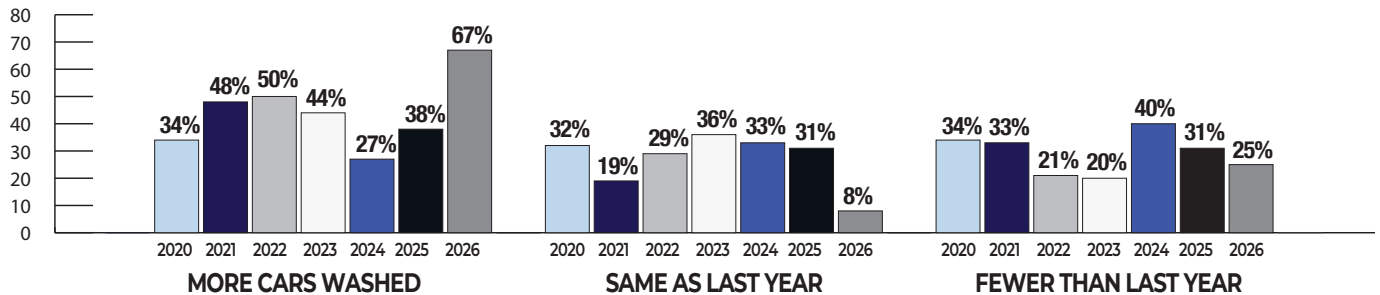
OPEN SUNDAYS



18,601

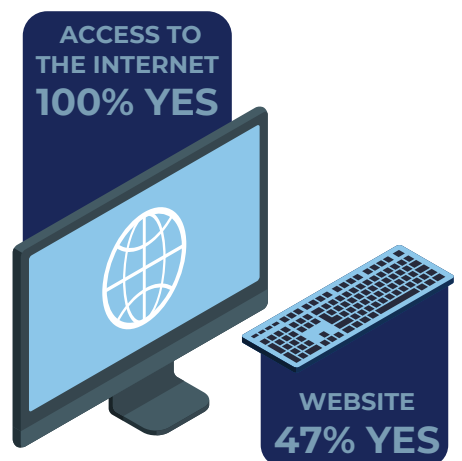
**AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC
COUNT AT BEST SITE**

WASH VOLUME COMPARED YEAR TO YEAR (IN-BAY AUTOMATICS)



PERCENTAGE OF WASH BUSINESS DONE BY SEASON BY REGION

	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL
Pacific & Mountain	20	22	36	22
Midwest	32	27	21	20
Central	35	20	25	20
South	20	33	21	26
Mid-Atlantic	29	27	22	22
New England	33	27	23	17



COMPETING WASHES IN AREA OVERALL

NUMBER OF COMPETITORS

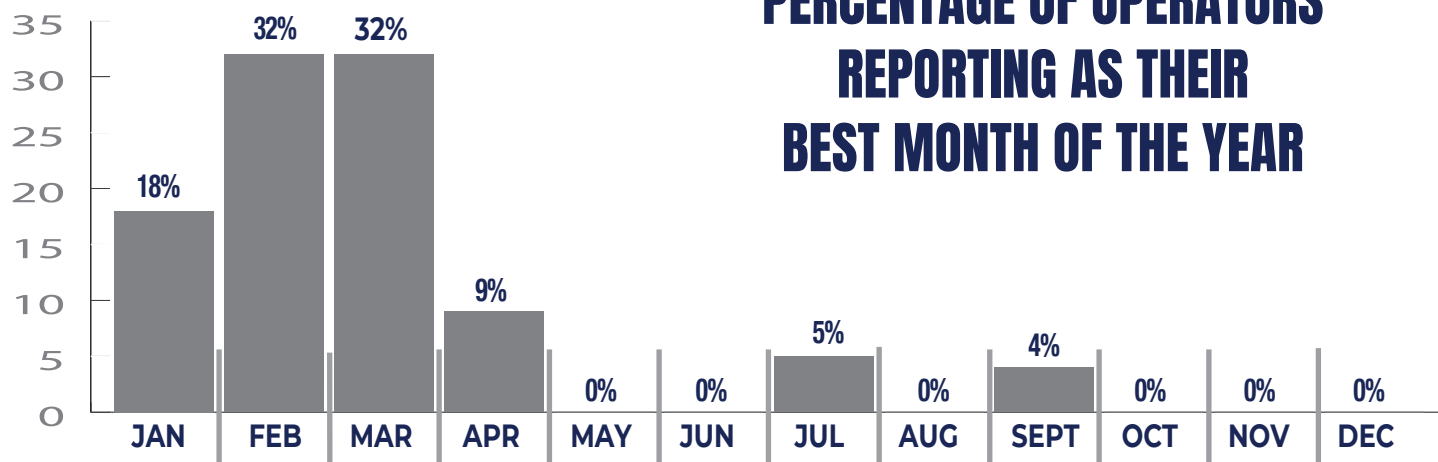
OPERATORS REPORTING

0		0%
1		23%
2		32%
3		9%
4		14%
5		9%
MORE THAN 5		13%

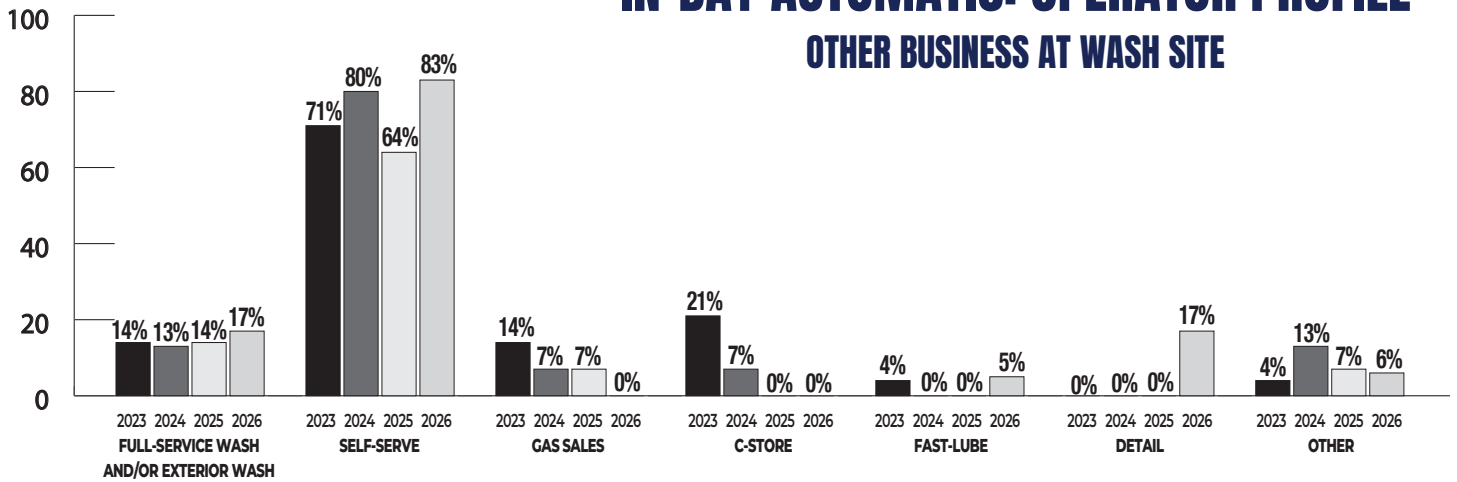
OPERATING COSTS (PER MONTH AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL REVENUES)

RENT		16.6%
EQUIPMENT & BLDG. MAINTENANCE		9.3%
CHEMICALS (soaps, waxes, etc.)		12.6%
LABOR		8.1%
UTILITIES (incl. water/sewer)		11.5%
ADVERTISING&PROMOTION		2.1%
INSURANCE		3.5%
CUSTOMER CLAIMS		1.1%

PERCENTAGE OF OPERATORS REPORTING AS THEIR BEST MONTH OF THE YEAR



IN-BAY AUTOMATIC: OPERATOR PROFILE OTHER BUSINESS AT WASH SITE



AUTOMATIC REVENUES



**AVERAGE GROSS REVENUE
PER IN-BAY CUSTOMER**



**THE AVERAGE
MONTHLY VENDING/
SALES REVENUE:**

\$417

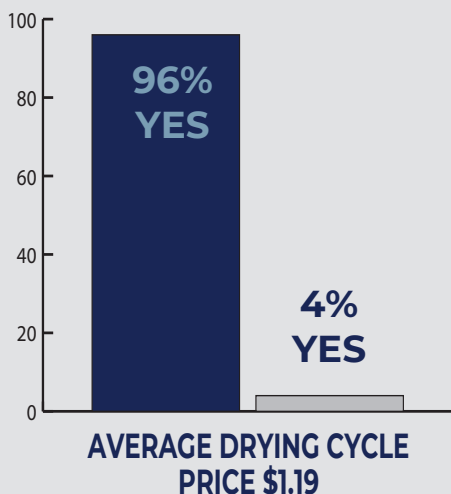
LABOR COSTS



**AVERAGE WAGES PER HOUR
PER EMPLOYEE**

5%	PAID MINIMUM WAGE
21%	PAID Minimum to \$15.00 per hour
37%	PAID \$15.00 to \$20.00 per hour
37%	PAID MORE THAN \$20.00 per hour

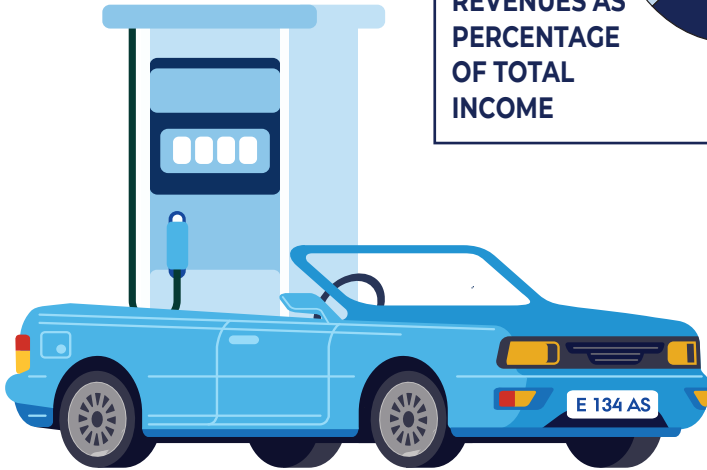
DRYING CYCLE OFFERED



CUSTOMERS BUYING A DRYING CYCLE	OPERATORS REPORTING
UNDER 10%	0%
11%-25%	0%
26%-40%	5%
41%-55%	0%
56%-70%	10%
OVER 70%	85%

OPERATORS SELLING GASOLINE

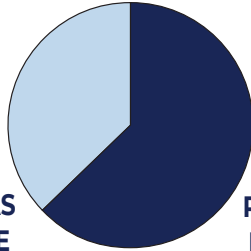
YES 0% | NO 100%



RESPONDENTS WHO OPERATE A COMBINED AUTOMATIC/ SELF-SERVICE FACILITY

37%

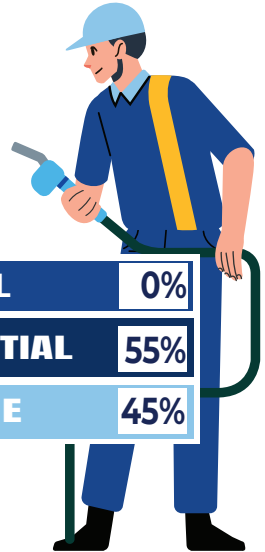
SELF-SERVE
WASH
REVENUES AS
PERCENTAGE
OF TOTAL
INCOME



63%

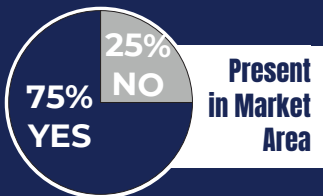
AUTOMATIC
WASH
REVENUES AS
PERCENTAGE
OF TOTAL
INCOME

EMPLOYEE UNIFORMS



FULL	0%
PARTIAL	55%
NONE	45%

EXPRESS EXTERIOR



AVERAGE MONTHLY
GROSS INCOME PER
SELF-SERVE BAY

\$2,570

AVERAGE NUMBER OF CARS WASHED ANNUALLY PER AUTOMATIC



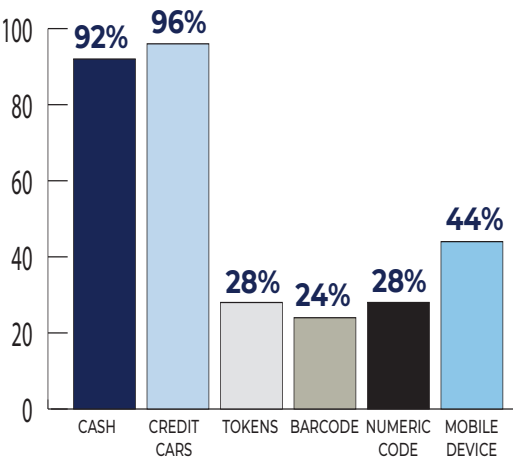
16,827

Respondent Profile

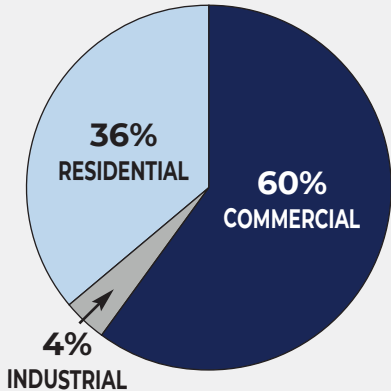
Tables 1 and 2 (right) offer year-by-year comparisons of operator experience levels and multiple site ownership.

Table 1	Length of Experience	2026	2025	2024	2023
	Under 5 years	0%	14%	0%	4%
	5-10 years	16%	8%	0%	25%
	11-20 years	32%	21%	20%	18%
	Over 20 years	52%	57%	80%	53%
Table 1	Site Ownership	2026	2025	2024	2023
	Own 1 Site	48%	70%	50%	63%
	Own 2 Sites	16%	50%	6%	7%
	Own 3 Sites	12%	10%	22%	11%
	Own 4 or More Sites	24%	20%	22%	15%

PAYMENT METHOD ACCEPTANCE

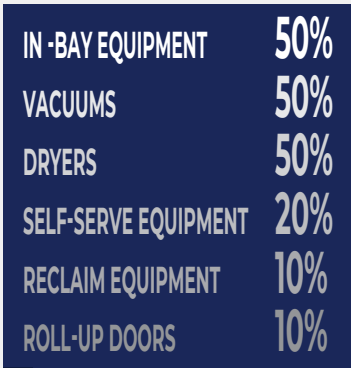


NATURE OF WASH LOCATION



PLANNED EQUIPMENT PURCHASE

(AMONG THOSE EXPECTING TO UPGRADE)



CONVEYOR REVENUES

AVG. GROSS PER CAR

\$15.01



EQUIPMENT

