

# Andy's named as Small Business of the Month

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ALTON — With a new location, continued involvement in the community and, now, a Small Business of the Month award, it has been a big year for Andy's Auto Body.

Andy's was recently named as the RiverBend Growth Association's Small Business of the Month for August. The Growth Association often attempts to keep the award ceremony a secret, with Andy's owner Mark Anderson saying he was shocked by the honor.

"I was surprised," Anderson said. "When I walked out of the back office into the store room we had all the people from the Growth Association there and I was kind of shocked. It was a nice surprise."

Andy's opened in 1974 and currently has four locations, including its newest shop in Wood River. Anderson bought the business in 2004.

Anderson said community service is one of his biggest objectives with the business. Andy's gets involved in a number of ways, including a golf tournament to raise money for the 5A's Animal Shelter, a Thanksgiving dinner for the homeless in November, and assisting in Pride Inc.'s Bucket Brigade, among others.

"I'd like to think the biggest part of (the award) is because of the work we do in the community," Anderson said. "That's the stuff I'm most proud of because it gets us out there and people know who we are and that we're out here trying to improve the community that we live in."

The business has expanded several times in recent years, with the Wood River location opening this past March.

"It's been good," Anderson said of the new location. "It's the same as any new business when you start up, you go through your growing pains and you have to let people know in the neighborhood that you're there. But we've actually hit our forecast for sales each month. We knew we were going to have to start small and work our way up, and we're getting there. I think in the next four or five months we should be to the level where we should start making some money. So it's where we wanted to be."

Andy's now employs around 45 people, Anderson said, with locations in Alton, Wood River, Maryville and Fosterburg. For more information on all of Andy's offerings, call them at 618-465-7006.

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