

REPAIR

NEWS

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CAPA Changes Testing Laboratory

By LARRY ALKIRE
A Special ABRN Report

GRAND RAPIDS, MI—CAPA (Certified Automotive Parts Association) has chosen Entela Laboratories, Grand Rapids, MI as its new testing facility.

Entela Laboratories replaces Detroit Testing Laboratory, Inc. (DTL), Warren, MI. The change became effective Apr. 30, with the expiration of CAPA's contract with DTL.

A statement by Dan Badia, DTL's vice president of OE Sales and Marketing said: "As our business strategy has become more focused on supporting the original equipment manufacturers, we feel that our move to end our relationship with CAPA is consistent with our overall strategic objectives. And, it will allow DTL to now more fully concentrate all of its resources and expertise on the OEM industry."

However, G. Robert Mecherle, president of CAPA and claims vice president for State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance,

told ABRN that DTL was one of three firms bidding for the new contract. "Cost was not the only consideration in awarding the new contract. Detroit Testing did a great job for us, but Entela is a specialist in the area of component fit.

"Entela does about \$5 million volume a year. In addition to testing automotive components, it has done extensive testing of aircraft and marine propellers—products which must meet extremely close tolerances, and where proper fit is imperative," Mecherle explained.

Mecherle acknowledged that proper fit is the primary problem CAPA certified parts must overcome in order to earn widespread acceptance among body shop owners. "Despite what has been said, corrosion never has been a problem with CAPA certified parts. But, we are always checking our parts and looking at the situation. We can always do better and that is what we are trying to do," Mecherle added.

Kim Phillipi, general manager of Entela Laboratories agreed with Mecherle's as-

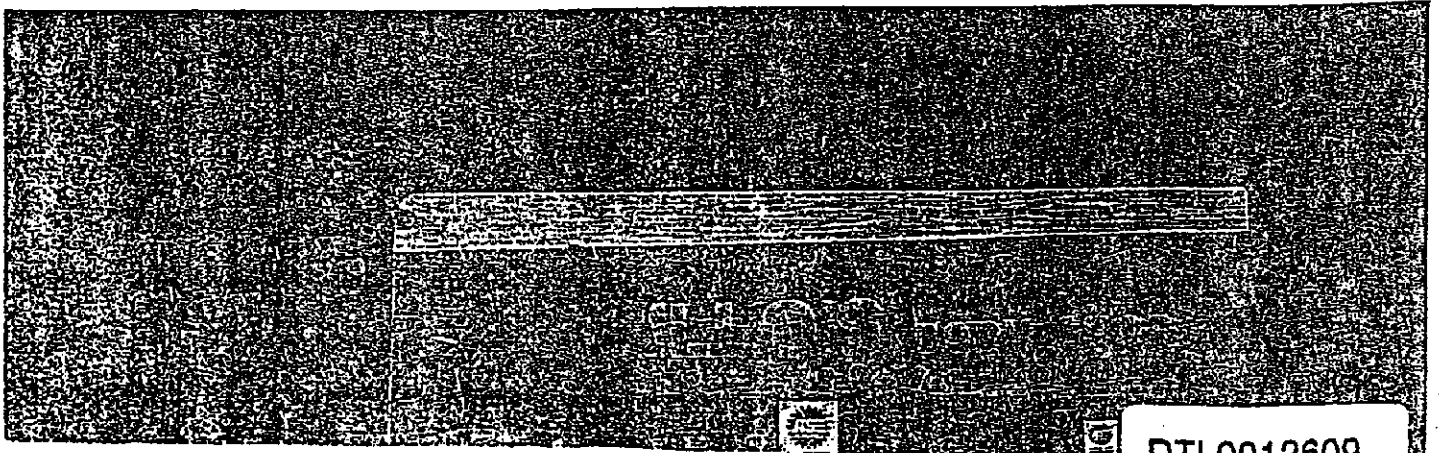
essment of the situation faced by CAPA certified parts, saying: "It should come as a surprise to no one that proper fit is their number one problem." She also said that in anticipation of being selected as the CAPA testing facility Entela spent approximately 12 months investigating the fit problem and sent personnel to Taiwan to work with crash part manufacturers.

"We wanted to be certain that we could solve the problem if we were selected. We didn't want to come on board and not be able to change the situation. In order to be certain of what we could do, we had to see the problem first hand. The Taiwan manufacturers really want to change the situation, but just didn't know what could be done. We will continue to work closely with these manufacturers to upgrade their products," Phillipi explained.

Despite this optimism, she believes change must come rapidly and commented: "People have got to stop ignoring the problem. Improvements must come rapidly—we can't let things drag out," she added.

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