

Well-kept--and clean--car worth more

BETHESDA, Md. (6/30/10)--A little elbow grease can pay off when it comes time to sell your vehicle. According to the Car Care Council (carcare.org June 16), a clean, well-maintained vehicle can be worth as much as 50% more than one in "fair" condition.

These recommendations take little money or no effort but deliver huge returns:

- *Wash and polish.* Washing once a week and polishing once every six months keeps the finish free from damaging chemicals and dirt. It also protects your car's finish from the damaging effects of ultraviolet rays and acid rain.
- *Examine the surface.* While you're washing and waxing, look for dents, dings, scratches, or cracked glass. Fix any problems right away, before they become expensive repairs later.
- *Use recommended products.* Harsh detergents, even dish soap, can damage the protective finish, leaving your vehicle even more vulnerable to the elements than before you washed it. Clean your car with products recommended by the manufacturer.