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Mr. Clean now washing cars

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DEERFIELD TWP. – Mr. Clean – the bald, muscle-bound genie known for generations as the nemesis of household dirt and grime – will now clean your whole car, as well as everything that’s in it.

In a multi-million dollar experiment aimed at extending the reach of its iconic Mr. Clean brand, Cincinnati-based Procter & Gamble Co. has opened the first of two area Mr. Clean Performance Car Washes at Mason-Montgomery and Socialville-Foster roads, about a mile north of its Mason Business Center.

A second car wash will open by early October in the new Evendale Commons Business Park in Evendale.

The car washes, marrying high-tech car cleaning with the latest in customer convenience including sleek waiting areas with wireless internet, flat-screen TVs and a coffee bar serving P&G’s Millstone brand, are the consumer giant’s latest attempt to extend the reach of the Mr. Clean brand – P&G’s oldest continuous character – marking its 50th anniversary next year.

Four years ago, P&G took Mr. Clean out of the house and into the garage with its Mr. Clean AutoDry car wash for do-it-yourselfers as part of a broader P&G strategy to drive growth by extending brands into new markets and product categories.

Over the last five years, Mr. Clean brand sales have more than tripled to more than \$400 million.

Since quietly opening the \$3.3 million car wash here on June 22, Procter officials say they’re pleased with the customer response, despite coping with recurring rain storms which tend to slow drive-up traffic.

“One sure way to end a drought is to open a car wash,” quips Mike Hershberger, a Procter research engineer who helped develop the new facility.

One measure: More than 400 motorists have signed up for the Mr. Clean Club, a loyalty program that includes a free, full-service wash every 10th visit and a free express wash on their birthday.

“We had one gentleman ask if he could schedule a regular weekly appointment,” said Grady McCarthy, site manager for the car wash that employs about 50.

Glenn Williams, external relations manager for P&G’s home care brands, said the company won’t make a decision on further car washes until it gets a better handle on customer response, but adds: “We believe it will work, or we wouldn’t have made the investment.”

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