



spotlight on cars

Expert Tips On Buying Certified Used Cars

(NAPSA)—Used cars are not as risky a purchase as they used to be. Thanks to certification programs, the industry is changing for the better, and more Americans are turning to used cars for better value.

Certification offers a way to weed out unscrupulous used car dealers who might sell damaged cars. The nearly 600,000 vehicles damaged by floodwaters from last year's storms are prime candidates to end up as part of such scams.

As more car buyers turn to certified vehicles, the number sold this year is expected to increase significantly from the 1.6 million purchased in 2005. Besides costing less than their new-car counterparts, certified vehicles also come with many of the same benefits, eliminating much of the guesswork associated with buying used.

Be wary, however, because not all certification programs are created equal. To help sort out the best from the worthless, used-car experts offer the following tips:

Certified by whom? Make sure you know who sets the standards for the certification program and who makes certain they're being enforced. Look for a manufacturer-backed program—the best people to certify a car are the ones who built it and specialize in that make. Most manufacturers will offer a limited warranty in addition to honoring the car's original warranty.

Do your homework. Research the makes and models that make



Vehicle history information reports help both buyers and sellers make better decisions about used cars.

sense for your driving needs. Check safety and reliability reports published online and prices from your whole area.

How was the car certified? At a minimum, a car should have a detailed mechanical inspection and a vehicle history report. Carfax Vehicle History Reports are a mandatory part of the certification process for 80 percent of today's manufacturer-certified programs.

What does it get you? The certified used car you're buying probably comes with an extended warranty. Make sure you know exactly what this covers and for how long. You can always add additional coverage.

Ask for more. If you want roadside assistance, options added to the car, free oil changes or anything else, don't be afraid to ask.

For more information or to order a report, go to www.carfax.com.