

Car Care Corner

U.S.-Made Parts Can Be Key To Positive Car Repair Experience

(NAPSA)—The next time you have someone work on your car, it may pay to ask the technician why he or she chose a specific brand of replacement parts.

That's because a brand name can be a strong indicator of product quality. It can also provide added assurance that the manufacturer will stand behind the product. It might even increase the likelihood that the part was engineered and manufactured in the U.S.A.

"U.S. manufacturing can be a strong competitive differentiator in the replacement parts industry," explained John Perrin, executive director of product management for the North America Aftermarket business of Tenneco, Inc., which manufactures Monroe shock absorbers, struts and other ride control products. "Many consumers are attracted to U.S.-based manufacturers because of the perceived quality, performance and durability advantages of these parts as compared to products imported from offshore manufacturers."

A vast majority of Monroe ride control products sold in North America are manufactured or assembled in the company's plant in Paragould, Ark. Last year, the massive facility, with adjacent warehousing and strut assembly manufacturing operations, produced nearly 19 million shocks, struts and Monroe Quick-Strut modular strut assemblies.

Why Quality Matters

The choice of one parts brand over another can affect how your vehicle will perform following the repair. In the case of shocks and struts, the differences could include ride quality; handling precision; noise, vibration and harshness (NVH); component durability; and even tire wear.

Quality differences can be even more profound in preassembled modular strut assemblies, which include all the subcomponents—strut, coil spring, upper strut mount, spring seat, isolator, boot kit, and more—needed for a com-



Many car owners prefer vehicle repairs be completed using U.S.-manufactured parts.

prehensive strut replacement. While many assemblies might look alike, a single poorly designed or mismatched part could lead to a performance problem or premature failure.

"There's a lot of science in a quality strut assembly," Perrin explained. "You need a coil spring with the proper metallurgy, coil configuration and spring rate for the vehicle. The damper needs to be tuned to the proper ride and handling profile. Every component can either contribute to or detract from the consumer's driving experience."

Given that hundreds of unique strut assembly configurations are required to cover the passenger vehicle population, maintaining U.S.-based engineering and assembly operations helps companies more closely control product quality and performance. For example, each Monroe assembly is both fit- and ride-checked on the corresponding vehicle model prior to introduction.

"That would be very difficult to do if we weren't designing, engineering and manufacturing in the U.S.," Perrin said. "We believe that's an important message for consumers, who deserve to know why a specific brand was chosen for their vehicles."

Learn More

For further facts on automotive replacement parts, go to www.monroe.com.