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Thursday, July 29, 2004

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## Car buff turns hobby into unique business

**Matt Goerzen**  
The StarPhoenix

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Chris Daviddovich's office sits right beside a scrapyard, where a mountain of twisted metal looms above the separating fence.

His business is metal pieces -- not scraps but aftermarket modifications in high demand by car buffs all over North America.

Flat Out Performance, located on Quebec Avenue, was opened by Daviddovich in November, catering to those with a special taste for unique and rare parts to modify their vehicles.

"I had all kinds of crazy parts on (my last car) that hardly anyone else in North America had," said Daviddovich, 21. "I got



**CREDIT: Richard Marjan, The StarPhoenix**  
**Chris Daviddovich with his prize-winning Corrado**

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into buying and selling parts to other Volkswagen guys just as a hobby, and I finally realized, 'heck, I might as well give it a shot, I'm pretty good at doing it.' "

Having built up a supply of international contacts over years of interest -- since restoring his first Volkswagen van at age 14 with his dad -- Daviddovich received a startup loan from the Canadian Youth Business Foundation and opened flatoutperformance.com.

So far he estimates 95 per cent of his business is coming from international orders off the website.

"I'll see on the Internet that guys are looking for a certain (rare) part. I see it as an opportunity to bring it in for them because no one else is really willing to," he said.

Daviddovich speaks German, allowing him to bring in unique parts from Europe for his clients.

His current car, a Volkswagen Corrado, won an award at the Sport Compacts Night car show on July 17. Daviddovich admits he faced literally no competition in the category -- but appreciates the free advertising.

He's currently working to get more local clients while keeping busy racing and studying commerce at the University of Saskatchewan.

"He's doing fantastically well internationally," said Chris Ransom from the Canadian Youth Business Foundation. "This was an extremely viable idea because there were no other competitors in the area he wanted to get into."

The organization set Daviddovich up with Thane Olson of Thane's Big T Auto Repair, of Saskatoon, as a mentor.


"It's a long hard haul, I'm at 11 years and it's still a long hard haul. You've got to build a client base," he said.

Daviddovich dreams of rivaling the scrapyard mountain beside his office with an inventory mountain of his own -- not a cheap feat.

"You can easily spend \$10,000 on a set of wheels just like that," he said. "I've got to start somewhere and hopefully I'll work up to that."

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