Mountain Post Car Wash is a thirteen year old car wash on Ft. Carson Army Base in southern Colorado Springs. It was built with six self serve bays and one automatic, with plans to add the second automatic as the demand increased. The second automatic was added a few years after opening. Recently the customer wait times for the two automatics was often over 30 minutes which led to decreased customer satisfaction and a traffic issue on the one acre site.

We discussed adding a third automatic by converting the nearest self serve bay in order to decrease the wait time and increase stacking behind the automatics. A third automatic bay would have required additional foundation, block wall and a roof design that would have been difficult. In addition to these large upfront costs, the added capacity of another automatic would have been 8-12 cars per hour or a realistic maximum of 140 per day. In comparison, the mini tunnel in the existing 48' bay would not require the foundation work, block and roof changes. It would however add capacity at 50+ cars per hour, positively changing the customer wait time. To give you a preview of the rest of the story, on the second Thursday after the the mini-tunnel was open, it washed 280 paying customers in 11 hours.

The preparation for this remodel was key. Designs by Hi-Performance Wash Systems and Sonny’s Car Wash Factory required a few weeks to prepare with on site measurements, power requirements and concrete changes taken into account. These drawings were given to the architect, the electrical engineer and the general contractor for further work to receive permitting and approval. Bid proposals and meetings were prepared by HPWS in order to select the subcontractors. To maximize throughput we chose a 70’ conveyor installed with 20’ out the entrance so a rear wheel push method could be used for customer vehicles. There are several benefits to this method compared with front wheel pull that outweighed the additional concrete work required for the added conveyor length.

Mountain Post Car Wash has six self serve bays, one FusionX Automatic and one SONNY’S mini tunnel.
Another hurdle in the design and construction process was the addition of a water reclamation system. Three 2,500 gallons tanks were placed in the exit area for the mini-tunnel which required a substantial amount of planning and execution. The goal during this project was to keep the second automatic bay open for nearly the entire construction. A water reclamation system by PurClean was debated because of the additional construction costs, however the environmental push by officials currently is as valuable as the water savings.

The two month construction process began with removal of the concrete that would be replaced, followed by the reclaim tank placement, conveyor trench concrete pours, floorheat, re-pouring of the concrete slab, electrical site upgrades, and equipment installation. In addition, Bay Watch installed the new doors and radiant heat in the bay to operate during freezing temperatures.

The pricing set by the owner for the start up and the near future is $4 for the basic wash, and $6, $8 and $10, respectively. The customer reception has been fantastic.

For a full album of pictures during the construction process you can visit the Hi-Performance Wash Systems web site at www.hpws.com under the photos and videos tab and remolds.