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Community News



Brooklyn's Gershow Recycling: It Serves The 'Scrappers'

by Raanan Geberer (edit@brooklyneagle.net), published online 08-03-2010

Firm Featured on TV Show

By Raanan Geberer
Brooklyn Daily Eagle

BROOKLYN — This newspaper recently featured the new Spike TV reality show, "Scrappers," which follows three Brooklyn-based scrap metal crews on their search to find valuable scrap metal. But where do the crews go once they've collected their prize?

On the show, they go to Gershow Recycling at Pitkin and Junius streets, East New York, one of seven facilities owned by the Long Island-based company.

Elliot Gershowitz, who heads the company that his family established in 1964, says "everybody generates scrap — municipalities, the general public, businesses. It includes everything from the kitchen sink to the family automobile, I-beams, cooper, metal roofing, appliances, copper, brass."

Gershowitz, an LIU graduate whose fiancée, Wendy Sutkin, connected him with the show's producers, says, "We hope to be in almost every episode." The show first aired on Tuesday night.

The publicity for the show portrayed most of the scrappers as rough-and-ready guys who scour neighborhoods from Canarsie to Coney Island, Gravesend to Greenpoint to find scrap. Gershowitz stresses that they don't go looking in vacant lots or people's backyards on their own — they solicit the owners of sites, usually industrial and commercial, first.

"Say you have an auto body shop. It's not worth it for you to kill an hour of your time to take somebody's wrecked cars or a fender that's been sitting in your yard, load it onto your truck, and go to us. It's much more profitable for you to spend your time fixing cars. These scrap peddlers have routes where they pick up material every day from people who don't want it."

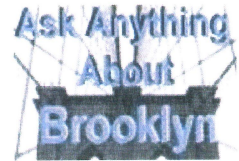
The challenge for many of the scrappers, he adds, is to get to the customers before their competition.

Gershowitz characterizes the scrappers as "nice, hard-working guys. They're out at 5, 6 o' clock in the morning looking for business. They're all friendly, but they compete with each other.

"One is a semi-pro fighter, one is a writer. Some say, 'I used to be in construction, I used to be a carpenter.' Some say, 'I am a carpenter — this is what I do in the morning before I go to work.' They can make anywhere between \$20 or \$30 a day to \$70,000-\$80,000 a year."

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