

## Cromwell Creative District INTERVIEWS

### Rodney Bitgood



**Rodney Bitgood** wears many hats: President of the Cromwell Children’s Coalition (CCC), Cromwell representative to the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce, and Master of the Halloween on Main when the Cromwell Merchant’s Association was active. However, he is perhaps best known as the owner of the place most of us go to get our car emissions tested – *Cromwell Automotive*, located at 263 Main Street. He also owns of the lot with the vacant gas station across from Frisbie Park near Rt. 9.

Starting with the last, first – currently there is a public hearing sign at the vacant gas station. The sign for a public hearing is not to replace the gas station. Instead, Rodney will ask Planning and Zoning’s approval to place a billboard facing Rt. 9 which will not be seen from Main St. Regardless of opinions about electronic billboards on Rt 9, it is a positive use of this piece of property that is extremely difficult to develop because of the surrounding wetlands.

Always fascinated with cars and learning to fix them at an early age, Rodney became a race car driver entering competitions across the United States. After he had two serious crashes, wife Jess would no longer attend competitions and, well, his career as a race car driver came to an end.

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In 1999, he opened Cromwell Automotive and soon learned there is more to owning a business than the task of fixing cars. He started taking business classes and joined the Chamber in the same year. Even through Covid, the business has survived, though it has taken many long hours due to fewer staff. Cromwell Automotive fixes all kinds of vehicles and is keen to change cabin filters, especially during this time of Covid. Body work is sent to shops that specialize in this field. He and staff also plow snow and fix plow equipment for others.

Rodney has always volunteered, feeling the importance of giving back to the community. He spearheaded the Cromwell Car show for the Merchants Association and was all in for the Riverport Festival, which Cromwell Creative District hopes to bring back. His business collects toys at Christmas time for the Cromwell Children’s Coalition and pre-Covid CCC held Trick or Trunk at Halloween. This year, CCC hosted a one-evening Drive-Through Halloween event in the recently completed public parking lot.

Rodney has agreed to working on new a venture, Business Associates, under the auspices of Cromwell Creative District for all businesses #inthedistrict. Cromwell is fortunate to have his leadership.

For more information: <https://cromwellautomotive.com/> and <https://www.facebook.com/Cromwellchildrenscoalition/>