



Motor academy offers more courses

A TRAINING academy that teaches people skills for the motor trade is planning to expand.

SB Automotive Academy is a Bristol success story, training more than 700 people a year.

It is defying the credit crunch – which has badly hit the car industry – by building two new workshops with specialist equipment for assessing damage to vehicles.

This could, in turn, help many local garages to survive the recession as it will give them the chance to tap new markets.

The academy has added 1,137 sq m of space from a builders' merchant next to its other facilities in Princess Street, Bedminster.

The space will be used to offer automotive technician accreditation short courses for mechanics throughout the UK.

The courses, which last up to four days, qualify students in assessing the damage to cars for the insurance industry.

The academy has been offering training for more than 30 years in courses ranging from pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, management training and other short courses.

Chief executive Jon Winter said: "We have owned the building adjoining our own in Princess Street for some time and will be submitting plans later this year for a major new facility on the site.

"Meanwhile, it gives us space to offer new specialist short courses for vehicle damage assessors.

"To many small- and medium-sized garages and workshops, being able to



New space: Jon Winter, chief executive of SB Automotive Academy

carry out insurance work is vital to their survival. These courses will mean that staff can get accredited to the industry standards, which is what the major insurers look for when they are approving garages and workshops to work for them."

One workshop will be set up to

provide training on body and paintwork while the other will look at mechanical and engineering issues.

The academy will be taking on specialist trainers to deliver the new courses. It will be the only West Country venue providing all the courses in damage assessment.