

# Grit, Growth and Giving Back in the Windy City

Chicago Wrap started in a basement. Today, it's one of the country's premier vinyl wrap shops



Chicago Wrap bills itself as the one of the oldest commercial vehicle fleet wrapping providers in the Windy City. Along with its focus on commercial vehicle fleet wrapping, the company gives back to the community through charitable efforts. And it helps move the industry forward as a training hub for the next generation of vehicle wrappers.



“We did whatever it took to wrap vehicles back then.”

Sean Heffner, Chicago Wraps

#### From doing whatever it took to wrap vehicles...

Sean Heffner started Chicago Wrap in the family's basement in 2003. To help get the business going, he relied on referrals from local car dealerships. With few resources on hand, Sean needed a lot of grit and determination to get through those early years. “I couldn't afford a laminator,” he says. “So, I would print a wrap, then spray the laminate with soapy water, flip it over, set it on the material and hand-squeegee everything out. It was the only way we could get started. We just did whatever it took to wrap vehicles back then.” The business grew steadily while still operating out of that basement. Neighbors eventually got upset; the last straw was when a customer dropped off his semi-truck cab to be wrapped. Sean finally leased a commercial space, and Chicago Wrap never looked back.

#### ...to a state-of-the-art workspace

The company now owns and occupies a 10,000-square-foot space in Aurora, a Chicago suburb roughly 30 miles west of downtown. Here, it focuses on commercial vehicle/fleet wrapping services, though the company does color-change and clear-paint protection film requests as well. The team includes two designers and five installers. Sean's father and sister are also involved in the business. New car dealerships remain an important customer pipeline. Sean and the team not only wrap parts trucks and courtesy cars owned by the dealerships, but they also benefit from referrals: Local businesses purchasing new commercial vehicles are frequently directed to Chicago Wrap for their wrapping needs. The days of laminating manually are long gone! The company's production equipment includes a Roland SOLJET Pro 2 XR-640, two Roland TrueVIS VG Series wide format eco-solvent inkjet printers, and a GFP Cold Laminator.





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Sean Heffner, Chicago Wraps

### Prioritizing ease and durability with material selection

When it comes to materials, Chicago Wrap values ease of installation, long-term durability and ease of removal. For owner Sean Heffner, the choice is clear. “We use Avery Dennison MPI 1105 EZRS digital wrapping film about 95% of the time,” he says. “And we typically laminate with Avery Dennison DOL 1060Z or DOL 1360Z.” Avery Dennison MPI 1105 Easy Apply™ RS Supercast Digital Wrapping Film is a premium cast film. It offers superior 3D conformability, stunning printability and maximum durability for complex surfaces with curves and recesses. The Easy Apply RS technology ensures Sean and the team save time and effort at installation: It provides air-egress, and is easy to reposition and slide across a surface. The film’s easy and clean removability ensures the team can help customers continually update their “look” to stand out on Chicago’s busy roadways. The Avery Dennison DOL 1060Z Gloss and DOL 1080Z Matte Digital Overlaminates are designed for use with MPI 1105. The DOL Z series are high-performing overlaminates with a variety of finishes offering abrasion resistance, conformability, and color durability. The product carries a warranty of five years for vertical applications when used according to the manufacturer’s instructions. “Tough” and “Chicago weather” might as well be synonyms. So pairing an Avery Dennison digital overlaminate with MPI 1105 ensures the best possible protection against whatever Mother Nature can conjure up — from stinging lake-effect snow to brutal summer sunshine, heat and humidity. DOL 1060Z, a thicker material, also provides Sean with peace of mind in his shop. “I’ve been using 1060Z throughout my career,” he says. “I like the thicker laminate because it tends not to get nicked or damaged as easily. And that’s important not only once it’s installed, but also for when it’s being moved around the shop or put in position for installation. If the material falls over and hits the ground, or you swipe it with a fingernail, the film is undamaged.”



To learn more about Chicago Wrap, visit [chicagowrap.com](http://chicagowrap.com)

For more information about Avery Dennison Graphics Solutions, their training classes, including MPI 1105 film, the DOLZ series of overlaminates and the DOL Max series overlaminates, visit [graphics.averydennison.com](http://graphics.averydennison.com)

Products used:

- Avery Dennison® MPI 1105 Supercast Digital Wrapping Film
- Avery Dennison® DOL 1060Z Gloss Digital Overlamine
- Avery Dennison® DOL 1080Z Matte Digital Overlamine
- Avery Dennison® DOL 1360 Max Optically-Clear, High Gloss Digital Overlamine

### Local work, national impact

Chicago Wrap has customized countless vehicles over the years, but some projects have left a lasting impression. An 80-vehicle fleet-wrapping project for Nicor Gas, for example, helped the team get through the pandemic. A fleet of six Volkswagen Atlas SUVs for the Chicago Auto Show presented various difficulties that really pushed the team and brought it together. In early 2025, Chicago Wrap donated its time and expertise to wrap a new, 38-foot recreational vehicle (RV) for the Skin Cancer Foundation. The RV tours the country as part of the Foundation's Destination Healthy Skin project, working with local dermatologists to provide free screenings to anyone interested. The green-and-blue wrap is printed on MPI 1105 and protected by DOL 1360 Max overlamine (donated to the project by Avery Dennison) and is helping attract attention to the RV and the project. The DOL Max series is a portfolio of premium digital overlamine films that offer maximum protection for digitally printed graphics. They offer added durability for horizontal and vertical surfaces and are available in a high gloss, luster or matte finish.

### Giving back to the next generation of installers

The shop has developed its own vehicle wrap training program called Chicago Wrap University. The goal is to arm others with the knowledge they need to get hired in the industry or even start their own business. Chicago Wrap also hosts Avery Dennison vehicle wrap training. And, even with his decades of experience, Sean himself continues to take advantage of Avery Dennison training. "Avery Dennison has taught us so much over the years," he says. "They've just helped us immensely to be successful."

[graphics.averydennison.com](http://graphics.averydennison.com)

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