



# THE WANADA BULLETIN

NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR AND ABOUT FRANCHISED NEW CAR DEALERS IN THE WASHINGTON AREA

WANADA Bulletin #21-04

May 24, 2004

## WANADA APPRENTICE TRAINING PROGRAM

### Dealer Support Grows as WANADA Kicks Off 4<sup>th</sup> Year *WANADA Broadens Program to Dealers of All Brands*



A large turnout of dealers was on hand for the 4th year kickoff meeting of the WANADA Apprentice Training program.

With the announcement that WANADA has opened its highly successful Technician Apprentice Training Program to dealers of all brands, a strong showing of dealership managers eagerly seeking skilled auto technician trainees turned out last week for the 4<sup>th</sup> annual kickoff meeting held at Kenwood Country Club in Bethesda.

The focus of this year's presentation was on how this unique partnership forged between WANADA and Ford Motor Company has been refined and improved into one of the most successful auto tech apprenticeship programs in the country. Based on this success, and with Ford's approval, WANADA CEO Gerard Murphy said the decision was made to offer a "generic" version of this apprentice training to dealerships of all stripe as the next logical step to building similar relationships with other automakers, as well as meeting the critical need for qualified technicians in our industry.

"We're not in it to be altruistic," he added. "We're

in it to yield skilled techs for our dealer members. We have a proven formula that has been successful with Ford for the past three years, and we will finish the summer session with 49 technicians working in new car dealerships that we've recruited and trained."

Dick Snyder of Jerry's Lincoln-Mercury/Jeep, who was instrumental in gaining Ford's support for the apprentice program and directing its implementation,

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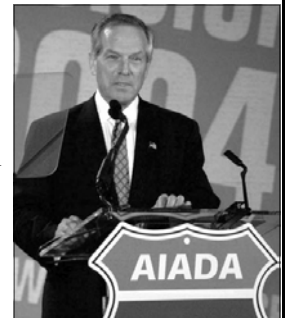
## AIADA AUTOMOTIVE CONGRESS:

### Cabinet, Congressional Leaders Push Election Year Issues *Dealers Target Trade, Tax, Class Action & CAFE Issues*

In a hotly contested election year, three Cabinet secretaries and leaders of both the House and Senate headed a powerful lineup of speakers on hand for the 27<sup>th</sup> annual AIADA Automotive Congress, held last week at the JW Marriott in Washington.

Over 500 import brand franchised dealers from all over the country gathered for the Congress, which focused on AIADA's top priority legislative issues: free trade, elimination of the 25% import truck tax, permanent repeal of the estate tax, class action reform, and reasonable CAFE standards.

Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao, Secretary of Commerce Donald L. Evans and Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta championed President Bush's economic and trade policies, while Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-TN) and



Commerce Secretary Don Evans.

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## Apprenticeship Training Meeting

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pointed out that the program can serve as a “national model” for manufacturers and dealers who take a long term view and want “to grow their own” qualified technicians “at a time when techs are in short supply and fixed operations are more and more important to the dealership’s profit picture.”

Snyder said that plans are underway to expand the program, which now operates at Montgomery College in Rockville, MD, and Marshall Academy in Falls Church, VA. A third facility is under development in Prince William County, VA and due to open this fall.

### The Keys to Success

WANADA’s “auto tech team” of Archie Avedisian, Bill Belew and Mike Wilson, EdD, explained that the success of the program is based on identifying, recruiting and screening *motivated and qualified* applicants for a work/study apprentice training program that meets the specific needs of dealers and manufacturers.

The program is an ideal extension of the pre-apprenticeship high school programs that WANADA has supported around the Beltway since the 1970s, many of which are now certified by NATEF and AYES. The high school programs offer an opportunity to identify young people with the right attitude and aptitude.

Belew pointed out that the WANADA program is one of only three remaining auto tech training programs sponsored by Ford, which once had a dozen such programs. “And this is the only one run by a dealer association,” he added. “We know what the dealer body is looking for and what they need.”

Belew stressed that all of the 49 apprentice trainees “will have all the training they need to do MLR [maintenance and light repair], “ which is a big deal because it means they can do warranty work.” The goal of the generic program for non-Ford products dealerships will be to offer MLR as well as ASE training so at the end of the first two semesters students “can go to work and earn money for the dealership,” he added.

Belew noted that the program had produced seven or eight “A techs,” and had only one case of a trainee who jumped ship and went to another dealership. “And when that happens, or you are not happy with the progress of your apprentice trainee, we find you a replacement for free.”



**Washington area tech educators at the kickoff meeting included (from left): John Lawrence, Marshall Academy; Steve Boden, Montgomery County Schools; Tom Fosler, PG County Schools; Jeff McFarland, Fairfax County Schools; and Ric Glen, AYES manager.**

“We are very happy with the program,” said Belew. “We have learned over the past three years and we have modified it, refined it, and we are going into it stronger than ever. I hope that next year we can report we have trained 100 people.”

Wilson emphasized that the curriculum, which

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**—Bill Belew.**

combines ASE certification completion and manufacturer-specific training, is “alive and it’s flexible based on the needs of the dealer and manufacturer. We continue to modify, streamline and improve it to make it more dealer responsive. We want that

person to be able to do warranty work as quickly as possible.”

Communication among WANADA, the dealership and the trainee is also an important element of the program, and Wilson pointed out that, “We are available to be contacted at any point to work with the service director and the student.”

The plain-spoken Avedisian, who headed up Boys and Girls Clubs programs around the country for many years, is WANADA’s specialist in recruiting, screening and keeping the kids on the straight and narrow. Just as important as mechanical aptitude, he says, “ is somebody who wants to learn, has the ambition to be a tech, wants to go to work, is intelligent, and can get along with everybody. I’ve got a big pile of kids who were rejected because they didn’t have those qualities.”

Their high school instructors or counselors generally recommend applicants, although other good trainees have come from those already employed at dealerships and from the armed forces. They are then interviewed by Avedisian, who stresses, “It is ex-

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## AIADA Congress



Labor Secretary Elaine Chao

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Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert (R-IL) highlighted the president's legislative agenda and its progress through Congress.

While the war in Iraq and homeland security command high priority, Evans pointed out, "There is no national security without economic security." He credited the

administration's policies for economic and job growth, and had particular praise for the role auto dealers have played in creating jobs and supporting the Administration's economic and tax policies.

In reference to import auto manufacturing in this country, Evans emphasized the importance and impact of foreign investment on economic growth and job creation in America.

Chao discussed the positive impact of the new Fair-Pay Overtime Regulations and the president's agenda on job creation and small business growth. She acknowledged, "skilled trades are crucial to America's future," and applauded Automotive Retail Today's contributions towards providing solutions to the shortage of skilled technicians in the auto industry. She also noted that the Department of Labor provided a \$600,000 grant to certify 5,000 young people as automobile technicians under the Automotive Youth Educational Systems (AYES) Initiative, "as a way to attract young people and others to careers in the skilled trades.

Mineta called on the House and Senate to reconcile competing highway funding bills in order to meet the President's budgetary guidelines. The House has approved a \$275 billion package; the Senate's is \$318 billion. The president has vowed to veto any budget-breaking bill that exceeds his \$256 billion price tag. Mineta urged dealers to impress on elected officials to put partisanship aside and resolve their differences on the bill before the July 4 recess. He explained that Congress needs to "support long-term investment and surface infrastructure without raising gas prices and increasing the federal deficit."

One of AIADA's top legislative priorities is the permanent repeal of the estate tax, and several speakers were proponents and cosponsors of such legislation, including Senator Jon Kyl (R-AZ), Rep. Neil Abercrombie (D-HI), Rep. Chris Cox (R-CA), Rep. Tom Davis (R-VA), Rep. Jennifer Dunn (R-WA), Rep. Harold Ford (D-TN).

Sen. Kyl, for example, is championing a provision in the 2005 Federal Budget that would accelerate Death Tax repeal for one more year in 2009. He urged AIADA dealer members to continue their push for full repeal of the tax, but advised dealers to "take what we can along the way."

AIADA Congress participants also heard engaging analyses of current issues and the presidential campaign by some of Washington's top pundits, including political columnist George Will; Donna Brazile, a veteran political strategist and former campaign manager for Gore-Lieberman 2000; and political journalist Cliff May who is president of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies.

The featured industry speaker was Honda Executive VP of US Sales Dick Colliver, who spoke on the importance of AIADA members speaking with one voice. "No other organization can do what AIADA does. No other organization focuses on our issues and protects your interests. It takes a consistent and sustained effort, and the staff of AIADA is vigilant

### Apprenticeship Training Meeting

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tremely important to go to school. I tell them not going to school is the quickest way to get knocked out of the program. We don't tolerate deadbeats, which is probably the biggest reason we are successful."

After the interview process, WANADA checks the applicant's driving record and does a drug test. Only then is the applicant sent to the dealership for an interview with the service manager, who makes the final decision on whether or not to accept the individual.

Once hired, the WANADA team closely monitors the progress of the training and is available at any point to "take care of any problems you have or they have," said Avedisian. "And we regularly sit down with the service director and trainee to go over pluses and minuses and issue a report card or progress report on the student."

Because of this thorough screening and monitoring process, dealers and educators familiar with the WANADA program unanimously agree that these hand-picked WANADA apprentices are far more likely to be successful than those recruited through ads in the newspaper or picked up off the street.

WANADA is asking dealers interested in sponsoring apprentices to sign up now for students who will be placed in dealerships this May or June, and begin classroom training in September. For more information, contact Archie Avedisian, Bill Belew or Mike Wilson at WANADA, (202) 237-7200.

**NADA MONTHLY DEALER OPERATIONS COMMENTARY****Recruiting and Retaining Technicians**

As the backbone of any new car franchise, proper staffing of the service department is essential to the financial health of your dealership. Furthermore, once you have found your winning team, you need to keep them.

Have you designed a pay plan that is going to get the most out of your technicians? In the workshop “*Recruiting and Retaining Technicians*” from NADA’s 2004 Convention, it is submitted that instead of structuring a plan based on hours produced, you should reward bonuses for technician proficiency. This can be determined by dividing the hours produced by the hours available. This plan also will encourage your techs to seek training and information to increase their proficiency. Their growth, and your encouragement, makes for a happy and fulfilling workplace.

Your service department isn’t what it used to be. The average automobile today has more electronic equipment than the Apollo lander that made the trip to the moon. You need to treat your technicians with the respect that one that has that level of expertise deserves. Money talks, but according to Bob Atwood, who was one of the presenters of the above workshop and NADA Dealer Academy instructor, the #1 reason any technician works for you is the respect you show them.

The pools of prospective employees you have at your disposal to recruit from are numerous. Perhaps one of the most beneficial, to both your dealership and the community, is the Automotive Youth Educational Systems (AYES) program. It provides a line of communication from you to local schools that would serve to educate young people to the opportunities available with your dealership after graduation. More importantly, is the relationship you’ll create with the young, eager students who will come to learn under your manufacturer-certified technicians. According to a Wirthlin Study done for ART Task Force in 2001, 45% of high school students will decide on a career in their junior or senior year.

For more information on NADA’s workshop programs or the Dealer Candidate Academy, contact us at (800) 252-NADA. Or to receive more information on the AYES Program, call (888) 664-0044 or use their website [www.ayes.org](http://www.ayes.org).

**Employee Benefits Reminder: Be Aware of Your COBRA Obligations**

Dealers need to remain aware of their COBRA obligations if they sponsor an employee benefits program. When an employee is terminated from employment, generally he/she is entitled to continue health coverage under COBRA. Ultimate fiduciary responsibility remains with the former employer; not the insurance broker/administrator or insurance carrier. It is important, therefore, that the former employee receive written notification of his/her COBRA rights within thirty (30) days of the event.

For those dealerships that use WANADA's COBRA administrative services, please remind your staff to make certain that WANADA is immediately notified when a plan participant is released from employment.

For more information on employee benefit programs for dealers, contact John O’Donnell at WANADA, (202) 237-7200 office ext. 30, or e-mail: [jod@wanada.org](mailto:jod@wanada.org)

**Optional Memorial Day Closing signs have been mailed to WANADA Dealers**

**Thought for The Week...**

*The World War II veterans I interviewed for the book were modest about their service. One highly decorated vet explained, “if I walk into a bar I’ll turn and walk out if some blowhard is going on about his combat experience, because if he really had any, he wouldn’t be talking about it.*

—Tom Brokaw, CBS News and author of *The Greatest Generation*