

THE WANADA BULLETIN

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

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ADEI Graduation Draws Record Crowd and Highlights the Value of Apprenticeship

The Automobile Dealer Education Institute (ADEI) celebrated another successful year of workforce development on August 26 at Montgomery College's Gudelsky Institute for Technical Education, with the program's largest graduation ceremony to date. More than 120 dealership sponsors, apprentices, family members, educators, workforce development partners, and community leaders gathered to recognize graduates and welcome the newest group of students entering the program.



The event underscored the growing impact of ADEI as dealerships throughout the Washington region continue searching for solutions to the industry's technician shortage. As the nation's largest nonprofit automotive technician apprenticeship program, ADEI provides a direct pathway into automotive service careers through a combination of classroom instruction and paid, hands-on dealership training.

Several elected officials participated in this year's ceremony to recognize the importance of career and technical education. Montgomery County Councilwoman Kristin Mink, Prince George's County Councilwoman Jolene Ivey, and Maryland State Senator Will Smith joined graduates and guests, offering remarks that celebrated the achievements of the apprentices and highlighted the critical role skilled technicians play in supporting Maryland's economy and transportation infrastructure.

While graduation day is an opportunity to celebrate completed milestones, the most meaningful measure of ADEI's success is what happens after students return to their dealerships. Employer feedback continues to demonstrate the value of investing in apprenticeship as a long-term workforce strategy.



Clockwise, from top left: PG County Councilwoman Jolene Ivey addresses the attendees; Jim Willard (EuroMotorCars); Greg Newbert (Jaguar-Land Rover NA); MoCo Councilwoman Kristin Mink; Steven Boden (MCPS); ADEI Chairman Harold Redden; Joe Koch (WANADA); John O'Donnell (WANADA); Maryland Sen. Will Smith addresses the attendees.

One dealership partner, Fitzgerald Subaru, recently shared several examples of how ADEI graduates have advanced their careers while contributing to dealership success. Dwayne Waters, a member of ADEI's very first graduating class, has remained with Fitzgerald Subaru for 20 years and currently serves as Team Leader after eight years in that role. Today, he holds the distinction of Subaru Senior Master Technician.

The program's impact can also be seen in younger technicians. Kevin Guzman serves as Assistant Team Leader and works alongside Waters helping manage the Subaru team. At just 25 years old, Guzman has already earned Subaru Master Technician status, illustrating how structured training and mentorship can accelerate professional development.

More recently, ADEI graduate Cris Hernandez has progressed into an Apprentice Technician role, working closely with one of the dealership's Platinum Master Technicians. According to

dealership leadership, Hernandez is expected to advance to a full technician position on January 1, 2027.

For dealer principals and service managers, stories like these demonstrate that apprenticeship is more than a recruitment tool. It is a proven talent development strategy that helps create productive technicians, future shop leaders, and long-term employees. As ADEI continues to grow, so too does its network of graduates who are building successful careers while helping dealerships meet the increasing demand for skilled service professionals.

WANADA congratulates the 2026 graduating class and thanks the dealers, instructors, public officials, and workforce partners whose support continues to make ADEI one of the industry's most successful workforce development programs.

Gov. Wes Moore Focuses on Apprenticeships at WANADA/MADA Fundraiser

On Tuesday, September 1, WANADA and MADA held a joint fundraiser where Maryland Governor Wes Moore met with a strong turnout of dealer principals for an evening of candid discussion and engagement. The Governor made a point of spending time with attendees individually, speaking with guests throughout the event and gaining firsthand insight into the



Clockwise, from top left: Gov. Moore speaking with Rob Smith (Fitzgerald Auto Malls) and John Bowis (Chevy Chase Cars); Gov. Moore with Jamie Darvish (DARCARS); Pat Coleman (Coleman Automotive), John O'Donnell (WANADA), Gov. Moore, and Alex Perdikis (Koons Silver Spring).

issues facing Maryland's automotive retail community. The evening reflected the strong relationship that has developed between Governor Moore and the state's franchised dealers.

During his remarks, Governor Moore thanked dealers for helping educate his administration on the implications of California's Advanced Clean Cars regulations, noting the industry's role in informing Maryland's decision to withdraw from the California CARS rule framework. He also welcomed an extended question-and-answer session, addressing a wide range of topics important to Maryland businesses and residents. Among the issues discussed were the long-term sustainability of the Transportation Trust Fund and potential funding mechanisms to support Maryland's transportation infrastructure needs. Governor Moore also spoke at length about workforce development initiatives, emphasizing the administration's commitment to expanding career and technical education opportunities and creating additional pathways into the skilled trades. His focus on apprenticeship, workforce training, and economic opportunity resonated strongly with attendees and underscored the importance of continued collaboration between state leaders and Maryland's dealer community.

Fitzgerald Auto Malls Named Montgomery County's First Certified Green Dealer

Fitzgerald Auto Malls today announced that it has earned Gold-level certification under the Montgomery County Green Business Certification Program, administered by Bethesda Green in partnership with the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection. With this achievement, Fitzgerald becomes Montgomery County's first certified Green Dealer.



The certification recognizes businesses that demonstrate a measurable, ongoing commitment to reducing their environmental impact through initiatives such as energy efficiency, waste reduction and recycling, environmentally responsible purchasing, and sustainable business practices. Participating businesses are evaluated and certified at one of four levels: Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum, based on the depth and effectiveness of their environmental efforts.

"Being named a Gold-certified Green Business, and Montgomery County's first certified Green Dealer, is a proud moment for our entire Fitzgerald team," said Rob Smith, President of Fitzgerald Auto Malls. "This recognition reflects years of intentional effort by employee owners across all of our locations. It reinforces something we've believed since 1966: how we serve people, our communities, and our environment matters. Our guests in Montgomery County care about sustainability, and this certification demonstrates our commitment to sharing those values. Simply put, it's the right thing to do."

Since 1966, Fitzgerald Auto Malls has been driven by a simple belief: that how we serve people matters. We have helped customers across Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Florida find transportation solutions they can trust. We are proud to be Montgomery County's first certified

Green Dealer and to maintain ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 certifications. Guided by our commitment to excellence, community, and environmental responsibility, we strive every day to make a positive difference and leave this earth better than we found it.

In 2023 Fitzgerald Auto Malls became an employee-owned company. Family founded, employee owned and customer driven describes the heart of Fitzgerald.

DC Area Automotive Sales Analysis

New vehicle registrations in the Washington area continued to soften through August, reflecting broader national trends while highlighting shifting consumer preferences in the local market. According to the latest Washington Auto Outlook report, year-to-date retail registrations declined 9.4 percent compared with the first eight months of 2025, with 133,576 vehicles registered versus 147,400 during the same period a year ago.

The decline was evident across both major vehicle segments. Light truck registrations, which account for nearly four out of every five vehicles sold in the region, fell 8.9 percent year-over-year, while passenger car registrations declined 11.3 percent. Despite the slowdown, light trucks increased their share of the market slightly, rising from 79.2 percent to 79.7 percent of all registrations.

The Washington area continues to trail national performance. Through August, local registrations were down 9.4 percent compared with a 4.6 percent decline nationally. The gap was similar in both trucks and cars, suggesting regional economic factors and consumer caution continue to weigh more heavily on the Washington market than in many parts of the country.

While overall sales softened, the market's transition toward electrified vehicles accelerated. Hybrid vehicles posted the most significant gain, increasing their market share from 19.5 percent to 23.8 percent year-over-year. At the same time, battery-electric vehicle share declined markedly, dropping from 12.4 percent to 9.3 percent of registrations. Plug-in hybrid vehicles also lost share, falling from 3.2 percent to 1.9 percent. Gasoline-powered vehicles remained dominant at 63.8 percent of the market, essentially unchanged from last year. These figures suggest many consumers continue to embrace fuel-saving technology, but increasingly favor conventional hybrids over fully electric options. Wash DC Aug 26 Data

Brand performance was mixed. Among major manufacturers, Nissan was one of the few brands to post year-to-date growth, increasing registrations 5 percent, while Ram gained 3 percent. Most volume brands experienced declines, including Toyota (-4%), Honda (-4%), Kia (-5%), Subaru (-6%), Chevrolet (-10%), and Ford (-13%). Luxury and electric brands generally faced steeper losses, with Audi down 31 percent, Cadillac down 26 percent, Volvo down 25 percent, and Tesla down 15 percent. Wash DC Aug 26 Data

Toyota remained the region's top-selling brand, capturing 17.4 percent of the market, followed by Honda at 14.0 percent and Ford at 7.5 percent. Kia, Hyundai, Chevrolet, Tesla, Subaru, Lexus, and BMW rounded out the top ten.

Looking at recent momentum, several brands improved performance during the summer months. Tesla led all major brands with a 20.6 percent increase in registrations during June through

August compared with the preceding three months, followed by GMC (19.3%), Volvo (18.5%), Kia (15.2%), and Audi (15.2%). While year-to-date results remain below last year's pace, these gains suggest certain manufacturers may be finding traction as the market adjusts to changing consumer demand. Wash DC Aug 26 Data

Overall, the Washington market remains challenging, but dealers continue to demonstrate resilience while adapting to evolving consumer preferences and an increasingly hybrid-oriented vehicle landscape.

Download and view the full Auto Outlook report [here](#).

In addition to the Auto Outlook sales report, WANADA also warehouses local registration data from S&P Global Mobility (formerly RL Polk). To access Polk data, [click here](#) and log in with your WANADA membership email and password. If you need assistance setting up your WANADA login credentials or resetting your password, contact Kathy Teich at kt@wanada.org.

Maryland MVA Updates

The following bullets are excerpted from Maryland MVA's April 2026 "Talking Points" newsletter. We hope you find this information useful, and if you have a topic, you'd like us to cover in a future newsletter, please send it to Kristin Orlando-Dillahunt at korlando@mdot.maryland.gov.

Vehicle Services - Tips & Reminders

- It has come to our attention that the excise tax rate for Virginia is on the MVA website as 5.3%. This is being updated to reflect the current rate of 4.15%.
- Upcoming Legislation – Implementation 10/1/26
 - **SB111/HB212 Vehicle Laws Out of State Vehicles – Improper Legislation**
 - Effective October 1st, the MVA will notify Maryland residents suspected of registering their vehicles in another state. These vehicle owners will have 60 days to title and register their vehicles in Maryland, obtain a non-resident permit, or submit documentation for an administrative decision.
 - A bulletin will be issued to address this bill in detail.
 - **SB125/HB251 - Vehicle Laws- Transfer of Used Vehicles – Repeal of Notarized Bill of Sale Requirement**
 - Effective October 1, 2026, a notarized bill of sale will no longer be required for the transfer of a used vehicle less than 7 years old for a private party sale. Title transactions will be taxed on the reported purchase price if within \$500.00 of the JD Power value. Customer Connect will use the JD Power value to determine taxes if the reported price is more than \$500.00 lower than the JD Power value.
 - A bulletin will be issued to address this bill in detail.
 - **SB145/HB174- Motor Vehicles and Marine Vessels - Transfer-on-Death Designations**
 - Effective October 1, 2026, a beneficiary may be designated on a jointly owned vehicle. Since the designation is made prior to the death of the

individual or last surviving owner, the vehicle will not be considered part of the estate, therefore Letters of Administration will not be required for transfer.

Business Licensing & Compliance Updates & Reminders

- Reminder- The business portal has been updated to allow dealers to report multiple Dealer Tags lost/stolen. You must submit each request separately, but it will allow you to submit multiple in the same time period.
- Upcoming Legislation - Implementation 10/1/26
 - **HB1120/SB418 - Professional Licensing Portability- Members of the Foreign Service and Spouses**
 - Effective October 1st, 2026, the MVA will allow a member of the US Foreign Service or spouse who relocates to Maryland because of an assignment or detail and holds a license in another state to practice in Maryland for the duration of the orders if the member/spouse submits an application with proof of assignment/details, is in good standing, actively used license in last 2 years, and complies with standards of practice, discipline and fulfillment of continuing education requirements.
 - This review will be completed by the Business Licensing & Compliance Division.
 - **SB0242 – Modernizing Civil Relief for Service Members Act**
 - Effective October 1, 2026 the MVA will allow an active service member or spouse who relocates to Maryland because of orders and holds a license in another state to practice in Maryland for the duration of the orders if the member/spouse submits an application with proof of orders and other docs, is in good standing, has no disciplinary action and no investigation, and has not voluntarily surrendered the license while under investigation; If licensing authority can't complete process within 30 days of application, may issue temp license; authorizes licensing authority to conduct criminal history check.
 - This review will be completed by the Business Licensing & Compliance Division.

Investigations

- Continue to be cautious with out of state buyers of expensive vehicles. We are experiencing an increase in Lien washing when there are issues with registering the vehicle in their home state. Please continue to update WANADA when fraud or possible fraud occurs.

If you have a topic, you'd like us to cover in a future newsletter, please send it to Kristin Orlando-Dillahunt at korlando@mdot.maryland.gov.

Entertainer Ronnie Chieng to Headline WANADA Annual Meeting

WANADA's Annual Meeting will be returning to The Ritz-Carlton in Tysons Corner, VA this year. This year's event will begin at noon on Thursday, November 12 and feature comedian Ronny Chieng.

Ronny Chieng is an Emmy Award-winning stand-up comedian, actor, and host on The Daily Show. He starred in Crazy Rich Asians, Marvel's Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings, Disney's Doogie Kamealoha, M.D. and American Born Chinese, NBC's Young Rock, M3GAN, and Hulu's Interior Chinatown. He has three stand-up comedy specials on Netflix, including the recently released Ronny Chieng: Love to Hate It, which was named the New York Times 2024 Comedy Special of the Year. He will next be seen in the upcoming Peacock series The Miniature Wife. He was recently announced to voice the character of Khan in the King of the Hill revival for Hulu.

More details will be released soon, but be sure to mark your calendars now! For any kindred-line members interested in sponsorship for the 2026 WANADA Annual Meeting, please contact Bob Storin at (301) 335-8289 or RS@wanada.org.



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