

ATEA Silver Star Letter of Recommendation Chattanooga State TCAT Automotive Toolkit Initiative

It is with great pleasure to write a letter of recommendation for the group of automotive dealers that created the Chattanooga State Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) Automotive Toolkit Initiative for the ATEA Silver Star Award. It would be an honor and a source of extreme pride and privilege for the group of automotive dealers to receive the ATEA Silver Star Award for creating the Chattanooga State TCAT Automotive Toolkit Initiative. This initiative impacts today's students and can potentially impact students for years to come wanting to enter the automotive industry as technicians.

Everyone in education and industry knows there is a shortage of skilled technicians. Seven automotive groups representing over twenty automotive brands united to remove barriers that challenge potential students wanting to become automotive technicians. They approached the college, asking how they could help the students of the TCAT automotive program. The TCAT leadership and the instructor identified the cost of attending school and purchasing tools as barriers to the students.

These leaders asked the program instructors to create a toolkit for the students to develop the skills needed to enter the automotive industry as technicians. The service managers in the dealership reviewed the toolkit and made additional suggestions. The leaders of the automotive groups knew it would not be inexpensive, but they felt it was the best for the industry's future. The TCAT Automotive Toolkit Initiative partners stepped forward to raise the \$81,000 needed to jump-start this initiative in a record two weeks!

The donated \$81,000 is to purchase fifteen completely stocked toolkits for the Automotive Technology program for students to utilize and learn their desired trade. Students will be able to start working in the shop on the first day of class because they are not waiting on their financial aid and the tool suppliers to deliver their tools. The concept is that two students will be assigned to use and maintain toolkits while developing their skills. In addition, the students will develop improved ideas of team teamwork.

In addition to launching this program, the automotive dealers will hold job fairs in which they will send representatives (ex, Service managers, parts managers, and lead technicians) to meet the current students. During the job fair, the dealers will also have food and drinks available for a casual meal and some much-needed discussions and conversations about pressing issues in the automotive industry. These automotive partners will offer the student a work-study program where they can work at one of the dealerships during their second and third semesters. During this time, they will be making a fair wage until they graduate. These dealers are discussing the possibility of supplying toolkits for the students to use at the dealership while participating in the work-study program


The Toolkit Initiative is essential to remove a barrier for current and future students. This program fundamentally changed the automotive program for the better by opening access and removing the hardship and struggle of having to purchase upwards of \$5,000 in tools required to develop the automotive industry's technical skills. Toolkits are necessary for students to develop the skills needed to enter the automotive industry as a technician.

This collaboration of administration, industry leaders, and industry professionals is an excellent example of people working together to improve the industry's future and create opportunities for more students. That is why it is an honor and privilege to recommend this group of industry leaders to be this year's recipient of the ATEA Silver Star Award.

The seven key automotive partners involved in this initiative are:

Brad Cobb, Bowers Automotive Group
Jim Meyers, Crown Automotive Group
Brent Morgan, Integrity Motors
Clay Watson, Mountain View Auto Group
Dan Baird, Sonic Automotive Group
Bill Stout, Acura

Sincerely,

 _____ Date 1/15/2023

Jimmy Jones Transportation Department Head Master Instructor II
Tennessee College of Applied Technology Chattanooga State
4501 Amnicola Highway
Chattanooga, TN 37406