



NEW HAMPSHIRE AUTOMOBILE DEALERS ASSOCIATION

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NH AUTOMOBILE DEALERS TEAM UP WITH NH COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND DEALERS TO COVER FULL TUITION FOR AUTO TECH EMPLOYEES

*COVID-era Workforce Grant for Auto Industry Helps Local Employees
Improve Skills and Abilities*

Concord, NH – Through a unique partnership between the New Hampshire Automobile Dealers Association (NHADA) and the Community College System of New Hampshire’s Auto Tech programs, local workers are headed back to the classroom to boost their skills *free of charge*. The NHADA “NHADA’s Workforce Training Reimbursement Grant” will be tapped to send dozens of employees to various advanced automotive technology programs offered at school’s like Lakes Region Community College.

“This is a fantastic way to invest in workers locally and make sure our industry remains attractive to our employees,” explains Pete McNamara, President of the New Hampshire Automobile Dealers Association. “Our industry continues to scramble to find qualified people to fill the many positions we have open for high quality, good paying jobs. This is a great way to keep people from leaving for other jobs.”

Belmont’s Irwin Toyota is one of the first dealerships in New Hampshire to take advantage of the workforce grant program. Irwin is providing full tuition for one of its up and coming Toyota technicians. Jeremie LaPlante, a Belmont resident and 2nd year student in the Toyota Technician Education Network (Toyota T-TEN) program at Lakes Region Community College (LRCC). LaPlante will have his entire 2nd year of automotive coursework paid for by Irwin’s, which will be partially reimbursed by NHADA.

“We need to grow our own workforce and this grant program will provide customized training opportunities for entry-level workers, which helps meet consumer demand by preparing our people to better handle the rapid technological advancements occurring in the automotive industry,” says Chris Irwin, President of Irwin Automotive Group. “This program also opens the door to career advancement and increased wages, and to build employee and customer loyalty.”



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In recent years, several New Hampshire dealers have used this grant program to pay for a class here and there for workers, but Irwin is the first to take full advantage by going all in for Jeremie LaPlante. The Irwin family has been a strong leader in the Lakes Region and an important part of the local economy for nearly 70 years. Irwin's sponsors several local youth sports teams, supports many local charities and strongly encourages employee involvement in the community.

LaPlante started the program with no formal training in automotive service, but with a strong desire to learn, support from his T-TEN faculty and involved and dedicated Irwin management and technician mentors he has been able to turn his interest and curiosity of cars into a career. "As the youngest member of the 2019-2021 Toyota T-TEN class, Jeremy has shown a high level of maturity that we really appreciate. He did not come from an automotive background, but has risen to be one of the top students in his class. Jeremy is always one of the first students to complete the tasks assigned correctly and sees a difficult task as an opportunity not a road block." says LRCC T-TEN Instructor Brian Ellis.

Jeremie will leave the program in May of 2021 with an AAS Degree, a long list of Toyota training credentials, 2 years of on the job experience, a good paying job with opportunities for continued growth and best of all, thanks to Irwin's he will be virtually debt free.

"This year presents a unique challenge in awarding these scholarships to students around New Hampshire, so we are taking our good news on the road and going door to door to deliver the news, along with a little "sign of success" for their achievement," says Jessica Dade, Executive Director of the NHADA Education Foundation.

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About New Hampshire Automobile Dealers Association:

The **New Hampshire Automobile Dealers Association (NHADA)** is a statewide trade association, representing the interests of the motor vehicle retail industry. Membership consists of all of the new equipment, car, truck, motorcycle, snowmobiles, and on-road and off-road recreational vehicle dealers, as well as, independent dealers, motor vehicle service, auto body repair, and motor vehicle parts sales facilities.