How You Received Your Rawhide Cookies Yet?

Barb Starr once said “I can’t think of a better legacy to leave our children than contributing to Rawhide and giving youth and families a future.” As an automotive or truck dealer, you have a great opportunity to do just that, by spreading the word about Rawhide’s vehicle donation program, and placing Rawhide videos and other messages on your websites, email campaigns, social media, printed newsletters, or any other marketing or advertising you choose. You can choose to embed one of our videos, images/graphics, and text to your dealership website or other marketing you choose. To learn how to get involved, visit Rawhide.org/WATDA.

If you have any questions or just want to receive your complimentary box of cookies, please call Patty at 877-959-2201.

A Green Light for Green Skills in Wisconsin

Four years ago, the Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance approached Jobs for the Future (JFF), a leading national workforce development nonprofit organization, with a proposal to enhance JFF’s expertise in green sector training programs. The concept was to create a career pathway providing green technology training programs for lower-skilled adults in several cities across the country. The national fund directors approached the U.S. Department of Labor with this proposal and created the Green Jobs Innovation Fund to support programs based in Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Seattle, and Washington, DC.

Only two of these programs, Milwaukee and Boston, have an automotive technology component. Milwaukee’s program included the Foundation of WATDA based on our success at attracting and educating aspiring technicians in our industry. Our partnership includes ADAMM, and its Tech Train education program, the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee as the project’s finance manager, Milwaukee Area Technical College as an education service provider and Milwaukee Community Service Corps as recruiting and placement managers.

When we hit the ground with this concept back in early 2011, our industry was still in recovery mode and many whom we thought could be key partners in Compressed Natural Gas and Hybrid technology were a bit skeptical about the future of this green technology. That changed as MATC’s automotive instruction team led by Associate Dean Becky Alsup-Kingery, former Chrysler, Detroit, along with instructors Craig Kuehl, Bob Schultz, Dave Schwid, Scott Fisler and Dan Kolminsa in conjunction with our dealer-based advisory team led by Dan Wooster of the Foundation’s Team Wisconsin and Brian Davis, Service Director at Andrew Chevrolet collaborated to design a fast-track lesson plan aimed at providing entry level students with a comprehensive overview of all the basic elements of vehicle maintenance with emphasis on alternative fuel and hybrid systems. Two new members, Linda Reinke and Jay Groser joined the instructional team this year.

The Green Jobs grant partnership grew as our advisory committee made up of Jeff Tews from the City of Milwaukee, Brian Davis, Dan Kolminisa from Concours Motors, Steve Hero of ADAMM, Becky Alsup-Kingery, Craig Fornal of Hudge Truck, Shirron Jude-Boyd from the Service Corps, Jon Lebese of Amato Automotive, Bob Fitzgerald of Snap-on Tools and Lament Smith from Urban Strategies began to tackle the business of scholarships for grads entering automotive degree and diploma programs as well as making job connections for them.

One of these grads is Marcie Thomas who completed the summer 2013 Alternative Fuels introductory course at MATC. She was awarded first-year tuition and the complete technician’s tool set from Snap-on. Marcie is currently employed at Amato Hyundai as a general maintenance technician. This says, “Thanks to everyone in this program that made it possible for me to start my career in the automotive industry. I will always be grateful to all of you.”

Mike Kneumy from the City of Milwaukee Housing Authority said, “The end result of WATDA’s leadership and commitment to the Green Jobs partnership means that young people, who can “driving” and at risk to be a burden on society, are offered the opportunity to access training, connect with mentors, feel valued and most importantly, cultivate the necessary vision to develop and maintain a successful career and life.”

This project has now reached far beyond the Milwaukee city limits. Statewide teach-the-teacher workshops have been instituted by MATC through another grant secured through Wisconsin DOA and Sandra Schmit one of our newest board members who coordinates all transportation technology programs for the Wisconsin Technical College System. Schmit says, “It was the specialized diesel/CNG training equipment that was procured for the Green Jobs grant, a big investment by MATC that made this training possible.” Becky Alsup-Kingery of MATC commented, “We are proud and pleased to be able to share our Green Skills experience with the rest of the Wisconsin Technical College System.” It appears that the green light is on for alternative fuel cars and technology here in Wisconsin.