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Maricopa Community Colleges Continue Automotive Industry Tradition

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Automotive instructors from three of the Maricopa Community Colleges that offer post-secondary degree and certificate automotive programs banded together to present the challenge, which replaces a similar competition co-hosted for 22 years by Ford Motor Company and AAA. The Auto Challenge will rotate between Mesa Community College (Southern and Dobson Friday, April 22, 2016), GateWay Community College (2017) and Glendale Community College (2018).

"In the past, automotive high school instructors relied on the Ford/AAA competition to showcase their top students in a hands-on experience," said Mesa Automotive Instructor Bryce Bond. "As of Sept. 1, 2015, the Ford/AAA competition was sadly ended, leaving a huge void.

"Historically Ford/AAA would offer employment," he added. "We will offer education through scholarships."

The high school and postsecondary Automotive Technology instructors see this as an opportunity to get students excited about the latest advances in the automotive technology field.

"Automotive technology changes rapidly and the Auto Challenge will give students a real-life experience diagnosing and repairing vehicles using the most current

technology," said Steve Folks, GateWay Community College Automotive program director. "It also highlights the importance of encouraging talented young people to pursue Automotive Technology associate degrees and certificates, and careers as automotive service technicians."

The Challenge qualifying exam will be administered online Jan. 27, 2016. It is formatted specifically to provide students the experience of sitting for the ASE (Automotive Service Excellence) certification tests, the industry standard. The top ten qualifying schools will send a team of two seniors and one alternate to Mesa Community College to participate in the on-site portion of the competition in April. During this portion of the Challenge students will demonstrate their automotive diagnosis and repair skills by fixing a "bugged" vehicle.

"With three well-respected automotive programs that focus on domestic and imported automotive technologies, manufacturer's certifications and high levels of job placement, hosting the Auto Challenge aligns with our goal of encouraging students to pursue college degrees and certificates in this field," said Glendale Community College Ford Asset Instructor Don Davis. "It's a three-way win scenario: scholarships for students mean more trained, workforce-ready graduates who become contributing employees to the local economy."

Additional information and the link to register for the exam may be found online at mesacc.edu/autochallenge

Awards, tools and scholarships will be presented to students during the event.

Contacts:

Mesa Community College, Dawn Zimmer, 480-461-7892,
dawn.zimmer(at)mesacc.edu

Glendale Community College, Heidi Capriotti, 623-845-3805,
heidi.capriotti(at)gccaz.edu

Gateway Community College, Christine Lambrakis, 602-286-8227,
lambrakis(at)gatewaycc.edu

GateWay Community College is a fully accredited public institution of higher education located in Phoenix. Offering more than 125 certificate and associate