

Vocational Students to Test Skills at New AAPEX 2025 Student Competition

Teams of auto techs-in-training will race to assemble and disassemble a Chevy 350 engine in new student competition and raise awareness of talent shortage

LAS VEGAS , NV, UNITED STATES, June 24, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Automotive Aftermarket Products Expo ([AAPEX](#)) is unveiling the details behind the new student engine assembly competition at this year's event. Teams of vocational students, who are training to be auto technicians, will race to disassemble and reassemble a Chevy 350 engine. Each competing team will be provided with

complimentary access to AAPEX 2025, gratis lodging and \$1,000 per team for travel expenses.



Joe's Garage is a staple of the continuing education at AAPEX with 10 fully operational service bays.

The timed event will take place in Joe's Garage – a staple of the continuing education and

technical training program at AAPEX – with 10 fully operational service bays. Each team will be provided with the same professional tools and evaluation standards. Prizes include a \$1,000 Snap-On gift card and a Premium Milwaukee M112 Fuel Ratchet Combo Kit.

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Bernard Tansey, owner, Euro Clinic

“Milwaukee Tool is proud to sponsor the Student Engine Assembly Competition at AAPEX,” said Milwaukee Tool Senior National Account Manager Jody Grimsle. “As part of our commitment to empowering the professional trades and driving innovation across the automotive industry, we are excited to support an event that celebrates skill, collaboration, and the advancement of technicians in the

aftermarket.”

He continued: "This sponsorship reflects our ongoing dedication to investing in the next generation of industry leaders, fostering diversity and inclusion in the trades, and recognizing the remarkable talent shaping the future of auto care."

The labor shortage of auto techs is projected to grow

The student competition is among several new features at AAPEX 2025, which opened [attendee registration](#) recently. The competition is an extension of a long-standing AAPEX student program, which is designed to engage and connect more young talent within the industry.

It also comes as the shortage of auto technician talent grows more worrisome. For example, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) estimates the automotive aftermarket will fall short by an average of 68,000 auto technicians annually for the decade.

Another analysis from TechForce Foundation has a more dire outlook. The non-profit's data projects a cumulative shortage of more than 400,000 auto technicians by 2026.

Implications for choice, waiting times and repair costs

Collectively, the aftermarket accounts for the vast majority of the post-warranty repair capacity in the U.S. About 80% of which rests with independent repair shops, according to the 2024 Joint Channel Forecast by MEMA Aftermarket Suppliers, the Auto Care Association and S&P Global.

That means the labor shortage will hit American consumers hard. They will have fewer choices in repair shop options, longer waiting times for repairs and invariably experience higher costs as employers boost compensation in an effort to attract and retain skilled auto technicians.



Teams of auto techs-in-training will race to assemble and disassemble a Chevy 350 engine in new student competition to build skills and raise awareness of talent shortage



The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) estimates the automotive aftermarket will fall short by an average of 68,000 auto technicians annually for the decade.

“In a sense, this is good news for students aiming to lay the groundwork for their future careers,” said Bernard Tansey, who is a competition judge and the owner of Euro Clinic, an independent repair shop based in Santa Clara, Calif. “There are many employers with immediate openings, with great pay and benefits and just entering the student competition demonstrates the initiative hiring managers most desire in job candidates. It demonstrates that a candidate is investing in themselves.”

Competition registration and sponsors

Teams will be composed of three people – two students and one instructor. Students must be high school graduates (or equivalent) and enrolled in a vocational school or technical training program for aspiring auto technicians.

The application is simple: Teams interested in participating must make a short video to be selected for the competition. That video must be submitted through the [AAPEX student competition registration page](#), along with the required data fields on that page. Up to eight teams will be chosen from among team applicants by a panel of judges who will also officiate the student competition.

The competition is made possible through the support of AAPEX partners, including AutoZone, Inc., Dorman Products, Euro Clinic, Milwaukee Tool, Motor Age Training, which offers ASE training and test preparations, and Ratchet & Wrench, a trade publication.

Questions about the competition or student program should be addressed to the student team at aapexstudent@aapexshow.com. Businesses interested in sponsoring the competition or student program should contact Chris Kalousek at chris.kalousek@aapexshow.com.

About AAPEX

AAPEX unites the more than \$2.3 trillion global automotive aftermarket industry and historically draws more than 2,700 exhibiting companies from around the globe that display innovative products, services and technologies that keep the world’s 1.6 billion vehicles on the road. AAPEX provides advanced technical and business management training for professionals to maintain excellence and take their businesses to the next level. Industry buyers include automotive service and repair professionals, auto parts retailers, independent warehouse distributors, program groups, service chains, automotive dealers, fleet buyers and engine builders.

AAPEX recently received the prestigious Trade Show Executive (TSE) award for “Fastest-Growing Gold 100 Transportation Show in 2023 by Blended Percentage of Growth.” It was also recognized by TSE as one of the 50 fastest-growing trade shows that took place in the United States in 2023, marking the second consecutive year for the event to earn its place on TSE’s Fastest 50 Class.

AAPEX is a trade-only event and is closed to the general public.

AAPEX is co-owned by the Auto Care Association and MEMA Aftermarket Suppliers. For more information, visit AAPEX 2025 or e-mail: info@aapexshow.com. On social media, follow AAPEX at #AAPEX25.

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