

Northwood University President to Moderate Keynote Breakfast Featuring Wayne Gretzky at AAPEX 2025

"Skate to where the puck is going," a quote attributed to Gretzky, is a recognized metaphor for business that is especially relevant in times of uncertainty

LAS VEGAS, NV, UNITED STATES, October 7, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Automotive Aftermarket Products Expo ([AAPEX](#)) announced today that Northwood University President Dr. Kent MacDonald will moderate the [AAPEX 2025 Keynote Breakfast](#). The session, which is titled "Getting into the Hall of Fame: What it Takes," features the professional hockey legend Wayne Gretzky this year.

Dr. MacDonald will facilitate a discussion centered on lessons Gretzky learned during his remarkable career in the National Hockey League (NHL). Principal among them is the notion that Gretzky used his intelligence to outperform "bigger, stronger, faster" competitors.

Rather than merely chasing after a hockey puck against opponents who had the athletic speed to reach it faster, Gretzky strived to "skate to where the puck is going." That idea has become a widely recognized metaphor for business leaders and is especially relevant in times of uncertainty.

The automotive aftermarket – a [\\$2.3 trillion market globally and a \\$435 billion U.S. market](#) – has faced increased uncertainty over the last few years. That ambiguity stems from a variety of trends, including a persistent shortage of skilled labor, supply chain disruptions and technological innovations.

For example, the modern vehicle has evolved from a traditionally mechanical construct into 'computers on wheels.' As Auto Care Association CEO Bill Hanvey recently wrote in an opinion piece for Ward's Auto, an industry trade publication, "Some modern vehicles have more lines of software code than even a Boeing 787 Dreamliner."



Northwood University President Dr. Kent MacDonald

For his part, Dr. MacDonald, who is currently in his second term at the helm of Northwood University, also has a unique background that's tightly related to this theme. First, despite the global pandemic, which upended academia, and a devastating flood that wreaked havoc on the school's campus, enrollment has grown under his leadership. Notably, this has occurred during a time when many higher education institutions are facing declining enrollment.

Second, as a Michigan-based institution, the university has deep roots in the automotive industry. Many of its academic programs have a unique focus on the automotive sector. For example, the school offers an undergraduate degree in automotive aftermarket management and an automotive & mobility MBA. It's also home to the University of the Aftermarket, which offers aftermarket-focused management and leadership education for motor vehicle aftermarket professionals.

Northwood University and AAPEX have developed a close relationship over the years. The school brings a cohort of students to the show as part of the AAPEX Student Program. Students gain first-hand exposure to the industry through sessions, training, exhibitor engagement, and networking events. Student participants consistently described the experience as invaluable.



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AAPEX 2025

Separately, it's worth noting that the school has also produced an impressive automotive show of its own – the Northwood University International Auto Show (NUIAS). It recently celebrated its 62nd year and is an entirely student-led program. The NUIAS provides students with hands-on learning opportunities and exposes them to the rapid pace of innovation in the automotive market.

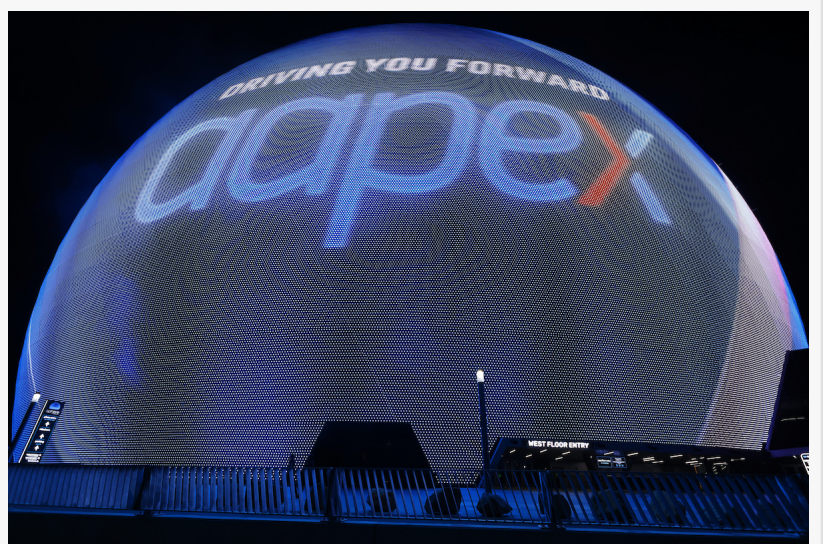
Registration and show information

AAPEX 2025 will be held at the Venetian Expo & Caesars Forum in Las Vegas from November 4-6, 2025. Registration for the show is open exclusively to automotive aftermarket professionals. Show passes cost \$100.

The keynote breakfast is a ticketed event and will take place on Tuesday, November 4, 2025, from

6:30 a.m. until 8:45 a.m., at The Venetian Hotel, Palazzo Ballroom. Individual tickets to the Breakfast are priced at \$200, and table reservations, which seat 10 people, cost \$2,000 (POC: Chris Kalousek, chris.kalousek@aapexshow.com).

AAPEX strongly recommends that attendees staying overnight secure hotel reservations as soon as possible, using onPeak, the official AAPEX housing partner.



The AAPEX logo on the Las Vegas Globe

Members of the media may be eligible for a complimentary pass to AAPEX. A limited number of complimentary media passes to the Keynote Breakfast are available to registered media.

About AAPEX

AAPEX unites the nearly \$2.3 trillion global automotive aftermarket industry and historically draws more than 2,600 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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