



TCC DEDICATES NEW HIGH-TECH AUTO CENTER

State-of-the-art facility has all the bells & whistles

HAMPTON ROADS, Va. – April 21, 2009 – In a special event held April 20, Tidewater Community College dedicated its new high-tech, 30,690 square-foot Regional Automotive Center (RAC) with a gathering of officials, guests and impressive vehicles, including a sampling of its 50-plus fleet – all under 3 years old – contributed by automotive manufacturers.

Hundreds of guests witnessed technology demonstrations in the high-tech shops and state-of-the art classrooms – as well as a prototype Toyota plug-in car displayed in the showroom area – after strolling by dozens of auto club cars, a monster truck and National Hot Rod Association driver Bobby Martin’s Top Alcohol Funny Car (Chrysler CAP Charger) parked outside.



President DiCroce drove through the finish-line ribbon, officially dedicating TCC's new automotive center.

During the event, the college announced a substantial new gift for scholarships from the Hampton Roads Automobile Dealers Association (HRADA). The association is giving \$100,000 to continue to support automotive-workforce education through [TCC's Automotive Technology and Diesel Technology programs](#).

“This substantial support for our students speaks to HRADA’s long-range vision in providing first-class education and training for the automotive industry’s future workforce,” says TCC President Deborah M. DiCroce. “Its increased investment in TCC, added to the generous support of major automotive manufacturers, illustrates the strength of public-private partnerships to prepare Hampton Roads’ workforce for success.”

Scott Smith, 2009 president of HRADA and general manager of Casey BMW, agrees, saying, "Even in today's economic crisis it's important for HRADA to support TCC in training future automotive technicians. Our citizens are driving their cars longer and need well-trained technicians in the dealerships to perform maintenance and solve complex problems with their vehicles.

"Today's technician has to be prepared for a technologically advanced environment in the automotive industry - and TCC provides their students the opportunity to train in a state-of-the art setting." Smith noted in his event remarks that the RAC was the only facility of its kind in the nation.

The RAC, developed in partnership with the city of Chesapeake, was designed with TCC faculty and industry input. Serving as an anchor in the city's newest business park, the RAC provides nearly 10 times more space for the TCC Automotive Technology and Diesel Technology programs.

President DiCroce noted in her remarks, "The TCC Regional Automotive Center in the city of Chesapeake's Oakbrooke Business and Technology Center is another jewel in the glitter of our city, the Hampton roads region and the Commonwealth of Virginia - there's nothing quite like it on the east coast. It fuels our regional economy and contributes to our economic vitality, and is yet another underpinning to TCC as a grand manifestation of education as the single greatest act of optimism that all of us have, as a nation, a people, a region. Education is truly a great equalizer and knowledge is the real power."



Classes include electronics and today's high-tech diagnostics. TCC's programs offer numerous certification and degree programs and career-studies credits that allow employees to remain current with technological advances.

The comprehensive automotive program also offers three specialized manufacturer programs: Chrysler CAP (College Automotive Program), Toyota T-TEN (Toyota Technical Education Network), and Honda PACT (Professional Automotive Career Training) - *TCC is one of only four colleges in the nation to offer all three manufacturers' programs.*



President DiCroce dedicated the new center.



Toyota loaned its prototype plug-in car for the event.

A well-established model for industry partnerships, TCC's automotive and diesel programs also boast an award-winning advisory board comprised of 32 members from all areas of the industry, including regional dealerships.

“It’s vital that we take an industry approach to supporting TCC,” explains Sean Brickell, executive vice president of HRADA and a TCC alumnus. “The Hampton Roads Automobile Dealers Association and TCC have enjoyed a long-lasting and mutually beneficial partnership in educating and training the automotive workforce of South Hampton Roads.”

TCC’s cutting-edge center – Hampton Roads’ only high-tech educational facility for today’s automotive industry – cost \$10.1 million. The project was included in the state’s 2002 bond referendum for higher education.

For more information about TCC’s Automotive Technology program, call the Information Center at 822-1122 or visit TCC’s web site, www.tcc.edu.