

# ABRN

AUTOMOTIVE BODY REPAIR NEWS ■ THE VOICE OF THE COLLISION REPAIR INDUSTRY ■ WWW.ABRN.COM ■ JANUARY 2002

## I-CAR Education Foundation launches new training initiative

By Tina Grady  
Senior Associate Editor

The I-CAR Education Foundation officially launched at NACE its new training initiative, People for Actively Creating Employability thru Short-Term Task Training, or PACE+ST<sup>3</sup>. This is an effort aimed at developing a program that would ensure secondary and post-secondary collision repair students receive the education they need to hit the ground running at a repair facility by their junior year in high school.

The program grew out of State Farm's PACE program, which started in 1997 with a State Farm grant. "The PACE+ST<sup>3</sup> is building on this," said Ron Ray, executive director of the I-CAR Education Foundation, in an exclusive interview with ABRN at NACE.

At the SkillsUSA-VICA contest in June, the foundation's leaders talked about their long-range plan and began assessing whether the organization is meeting the current needs of the industry. After analyzing the results of its 2001 collision repair industry survey, the education foundation determined that it needed to change its focus from products and services, which the I-CAR Education Foundation has centered around for the past 10 years, to recruitment. The survey sparked this refocusing because year after year it revealed that shop owners like having their technicians knowledgeable in every area of repair. However, the survey also revealed that despite this, there are four skilled areas—R&R bolted parts, prep for paint, final detailing, and



Photo by Tina Grady

**Pictured left to right: Ron Ray, Sharon Merwin, Don Askew, Freda Thompson and Kim Beck, who are all involved with the new PACE+ST<sup>3</sup> training initiative through the I-CAR Education Foundation. They are working to implement a program that would ensure techs have the proper skills to work in a repair facility right out of school, including an internship in their junior year at a repair facility.**

dent repair—that they say technicians need to be able to do with little or no supervision, right out of school. The foundation then gathered together the Automotive Service Association (ASA), the Automotive Youth Education System (AYES), ASE, the Automotive Management Institute (AMi), National Automotive Technician Education Foundation (NATEF), SkillsUSA-VICA and other industry organizations to combine their resources and to develop a curriculum that would meet these needs. "We want to use the tools of every organization in the industry to establish a clearinghouse for everyone," said Don Askew, I-CAR Education Foundation chairman and director of distribution programs for PPG Industries.

The PACE+ST<sup>3</sup> initiative is to work with schools' instructors to ensure students are taught these four skills areas in their junior

year, so they can work in a shop during the summer before their senior year. This way the students will at least have the minimum skills needed to be a high-quality, entry-level technician. The additional skills can then be taught during students' senior year, and after graduation, they can be placed in a shop to work full time because they will not only have the proper skill set, but the experience and confidence from their summer work in an autobody repair facility.

Students will be able to earn I-CAR Gold Class points during their internship through the I-CAR Industry

Training Alliance. "We don't want our techs to go into the shops knowing a little of everything but really knowing nothing," stated Sharon Merwin, I-CAR Education Foundation vice chair, chair of the I-CAR Program & Service Committee, and director of ASA Collision Division. "We want them to be trained to do specific tasks in a competent manner."

In October, test programs were set up in Indianapolis and Alabama to validate this initiative. The I-CAR Education Foundation is providing the seed money to launch this initiative, but those involved with the initiative are counting on industry to help support this effort both financially and in a mentoring capacity.

Look for more details on PACE+ST<sup>3</sup> in an upcoming issue of ABRN. ■



©Reprinted from AUTOMOTIVE BODY REPAIR NEWS, January 2002 AN ADVANSTAR PUBLICATION Printed in U.S.A.

Copyright Notice Copyright by Advanstar Communications Inc. Advanstar Communications Inc. retains all rights to this article. This article may only be viewed or printed (1) for personal use. User may not actively save any text or graphics/photos to local hard drives or duplicate this article in whole or in part, in any medium. Advanstar Communications Inc. home page is located at <http://www.advanstar.com>.

I-CAR Education Foundation  
1-888-722-3787 Ext. 283  
[www.i-car.com/foundation](http://www.i-car.com/foundation)