

News Release

Pennsylvania Automotive Association

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For Immediate Release

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Wallenpaupack Area High School Students Advance to Finals of National Automotive Technology Competition

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania – March 5, 2010: Mike Avissato and Ben Crandall, students at Wallenpaupack Area High School in Hawley, Pennsylvania, were the winners of the PAA Foundation sponsored Automotive Technology Competition held on March 3, 2010, at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center. The students will advance to the 2010 National Automotive Technology Competition to be held April 2-11, 2009, at the New York International Auto Show in Manhattan.

Avissato and Crandall, together with their instructor, Mark Watson, will proceed to the National Competition in New York. The auto industry's largest school-to-work initiative, the competition pits the nation's best high school automotive vocational education students against one another for the title of 'America's Top Technician'.

As the first place Central PA team, Avissato and Crandall also each received a \$2,000 scholarship from the PAA Foundation. Formed by Pennsylvania new car and truck dealers, the mission of the PAA Foundation is to support and promote the good works and charitable activities of the new retail motor vehicle industry in Pennsylvania and provide educational opportunities to young people affiliated with the industry.

"In addition to the valuable prizes and scholarships that these students win, the National Automotive Technology Competition is a tremendous opportunity for some of the best students in America to be introduced to various automobile manufacturers, auto dealers, auto industry suppliers, and college recruiters," said Marlin "Skip" Wagner, Manager, Service Department Operations & Training for the PAA Foundation. "These students represent the future of the industry and will become the single most important link between the manufacturer and the consumer."

"Over the past 17 years the National Automotive Technology Competition has established itself as a leader in automotive education, piquing the interest of thousands of students each year. It gives students the opportunity to develop their skills in a fun, competitive, and rewarding environment. With the increasing use of sophisticated technology in cars today as well as an aging work population, it's critical that the automobile industry attracts talented, young minds into this business," Mr. Wagner added.

The 20 competing students were selected for the competition through a written qualifying exam, in which a pool of 100 students from 17 schools participated. To prepare for the competition, students are trained at local new car dealerships. Avissato and Crandall worked with Maus, Inc.

to prepare for the competition. During the competition, each team of students is assigned an automobile that is rigged to malfunction.

Thanks to the generous support of local dealerships and industry suppliers, prizes were awarded to each of the competing teams. The PAA Foundation also awarded the students from the top three winning teams with scholarships to further their education in an automotive technology program at the post-secondary school of their choice.

The PAA Foundation has awarded more than \$965,000 in scholarships in the last 5 years.

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Left to Right: Mike Avissato and Ben Crandall of Wallenpaupack Area High School were the First Place Winners of the PAA Foundation Automotive Technology Competition, held March 3, 2010, in Hershey, PA. Together with instructor Mark Watson, center, and Marlin “Skip” Wagner, of the PAA Foundation on right.