Pennsylvania Department of Education

Education Workforce Leadership Award

Congratulations, Central Westmoreland CTC and Smail Auto Group
Westmoreland County

The Pennsylvania Department of Education’s Bureau of Career and Technical Education is pleased to announce that the education and industry partnership between the Central Westmoreland Career and Technology Center (CTC) of New Stanton and the Smail Auto Group of Greensburg, both in Pennsylvania, has been selected as the winner of the 2017 Pennsylvania Education Workforce Leadership Award.

Through the efforts of auto technology instructors Thomas Yoder, Brian Pegg, and Michael Castelli, the Central Westmoreland CTC has built a mutually beneficial industry partnership with the Smail Auto Group through Automotive Youth Educational Systems (AYES).

The AYES involves business and education partnerships between high school automotive technology programs and automotive dealers, as well as aftermarket service employers. The goal of the AYES model is a 320-hour internship opportunity, which can take place during the summer between students’ junior and senior years. During this internship, students work beside a trained and qualified mentor – usually an ASE-Certified Master Technician – to help prepare them for entry-level career positions or advanced studies in automotive technology.

The Smail Auto Group has embraced the AYES school-to-work initiative at Central Westmoreland CTC for 13 years as the best career path for successful automotive careers. As such, student interns become loyal dealership employees. Over 50 percent of former AYES interns (11 of 21 interns) are still employed with Smail Auto Group. In fact, several now serve as AYES mentors.

The partnership benefits the Central Westmoreland CTC students through job shadowing opportunities and internships at one of the many Smail original equipment manufacturer stores, including GM, Ford/Lincoln, KIA, Mazda, Acura, Honda, and Mercedes. Additional benefits to Central Westmoreland CTC students include participation in the Snap-On /AYES Tool Scholarship Program, the availability of cooperative education placement during the student’s senior year, the opportunity to acquire manufacturer-specific training and certification, and possible employment with Smail Auto on graduation.

The Central Westmoreland CTC looks forward to many years of ongoing partnership to prepare students in a rewarding field with gainful employment possibilities.