



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**NJ CAR CELEBRATES GRADUATING AUTO TECHNICIANS  
TO HELP FILL VACANCIES IN THE STATE**

*Critical Workforce Initiative Addresses Statewide Technician Shortage*

**HILLSIDE, NJ** — The New Jersey Coalition of Automotive Retailers (NJ CAR) today celebrated the completion of its latest Technician Advancement Program (TAP) class, congratulating the students who are graduating from the free, dealership-based workforce training initiative designed to address New Jersey’s critical shortage of automotive technicians.

Students, dealership leaders, and state officials gathered at Route 22 Toyota in Hillside to recognize the TAP students, who completed **18 weeks of hands-on instruction** inside a dealership service department. TAP is provided at no cost to students. In fact, they receive a \$200 weekly stipend and \$3,000 worth of tools upon graduation to start their career. This vitally important program creates a direct pathway into paid apprenticeships and long-term careers without the burden of student debt.

New Jersey will need **12,500 new automotive technicians in the next few years** to replace retiring workers and meet growing demand driven by increasingly advanced vehicle technology. NJ CAR’s TAP was developed in partnership with the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development and supported by a Pre-Apprenticeship in Career Education (PACE) Grant. TAP fulfills the classroom requirement for entry into a registered Level 2 apprenticeship under the state’s Automotive Technician Apprenticeship Program (ATAP). Graduates transition into paid apprenticeships at dealerships across the state through an earn-while-you-learn model that combines mentorship, technical training, and on-the-job experience.

“TAP students make a commitment to learn a highly-skilled trade that allows them to step into careers that offer stability, advancement, and real earning potential — all without taking on student debt,” **said Laura Perrotta, President of NJ CAR.** “TAP is building the next generation of automotive professionals right here in New Jersey.”

**NJ CAR Chairman Andy Shapiro, Owner of Hudson Auto Group**, said the program represents a long-term investment in New Jersey’s workforce. “Our dealerships are deeply rooted in the communities we serve, and we know, firsthand, how urgent the technician shortage has become,” said Shapiro. “TAP allows us to open our service bays as classrooms and invest directly in people who want to build meaningful careers at New Jersey auto and truck dealerships. This program strengthens our businesses, supports our customers, and creates opportunities across the state.”

“NJ CAR’s Technician Advancement Program is a great example of what can be achieved when state government and industry work together with a shared purpose to build a strong workforce pipeline,” **said Lt. Governor Dr. Dale Caldwell**, who joined students and industry leaders at the Hillside event. “The partnership between NJ CAR, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and the State is building a sustainable pathway for top-notch careers that align training with real employer demand. TAP reflects New Jersey’s commitment to strengthening our economy by connecting residents to high-quality, in-demand careers.”

**Assemblyman Michael Venezia**, who also attended the Hillside event, said, “The success of TAP proves that when we invest in practical, hands-on training, aligned with industry needs, everyone benefits. This model creates opportunity for workers, strengthens local businesses, and helps ensure New Jersey remains competitive in a rapidly evolving economy.”

Over the 18-month PACE grant period, NJ CAR is eligible for up to \$664,500 to expand TAP statewide, supporting participant stipends, instruction, materials, and program operations.

A TAP class launched January 19<sup>th</sup> at Manahawkin Chrysler Jeep Dodge Jeep Ram, and another is scheduled to launch at Burns Honda on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. NJ CAR plans to continue expanding TAP throughout New Jersey — strengthening the Garden State’s automotive workforce, while providing residents with free, high-quality training and access to in-demand careers.

For more information, visit [https://www.njcar.org/njcar\\_tap/](https://www.njcar.org/njcar_tap/).

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