



2024-2025 WATEA UPDATES

**DRIVING THE TRAINING
THAT KEEPS YOU RUNNING!**



A word from a 2025 scholarship recipient:

"This scholarship has helped take away the financial pressure of school, which allows me to focus on my school and stay on track with my goals. It's been a key part of making my educational journey more manageable and achievable." -Paige Sauter



WATEA: Driving the Future Forward Together

Kind of like the changing of a season, there is an inevitable recognition within us that things don't always remain the same. Just like the ebb and flow to every season, so does an entity change when structured in the way our WATEA organization is. This last year or so, we have engaged some very strong board members. Probably the best assembled board our organization has ever seen. Two years ago, last July we saw the organization hire a tremendous candidate as our executive director and she has solidified our leadership position amongst local non-profits. Driven, thorough, passionate about details AND about growing our vision, it has been a tremendous last twenty-four months working with her. Our organization has and does continue to develop programs, initiatives, develop new visions, and accomplish its goals effectively and timely. I am very proud of the whole team and the work we do.

It's not without challenges. It's never been without energy. And it's more demanding to be a difference maker in our community today than it's ever been. But collectively we are accomplishing just that. We've been recognized for our work. By the local Chamber of Commerce, by our state partners, but most of all, by the people we serve. Personally, I am proud to have been part of the leadership team for WATEA for the better part of the last quarter century. I think our organization is poised to continue to lead towards initiatives that the board recognizes and identifies as priorities. But we need all of you. As organization participants, as supporters, as volunteers, and as community members. Together, accepting our differences and energies, we can generate a collective power that will continue to evolve and accomplish things like we have in the past. I implore you to either get involved or become more involved. Today's competitive landscape for discretionary dollars to support worthy initiatives **REQUIRES** that collaborative support. And those folks who determine resource pathways reward organizations that focus on doing the greater good effectively and efficiently. The unfortunate truth is that this measuring stick is occasionally assessed from afar and can affect some valid and important initiatives.

Today our organization can celebrate meeting so many of our identified goals. Our Commute2Careers partnership with Mid-State was a resounding success. Our Collision training initiative with NorthCentral Technical College has graduated five co-horts into the industry. Our support of programs like Build My Future,

our K-12 involvement, and our career awareness is at its highest level ever. Our incumbent worker training program we developed has already exceeded the grants goals and we are only halfway thru the timing of the grant. We have already trained over 100 unique technicians in varying degrees and disciplines. Today we are working towards a partnership with the Children's Imaginarium that will increase awareness and potential in our youngest audiences and their families. We also still operate our Wheels to Work program, although that program has been affected a bit by this year's changes in funding distribution. These many programs and goals demonstrate the value of being a member and supporting our organization.

As I shared in the beginning, transition in any organization is sometimes similar to season changes. This year we will welcome a new Co-Chair, as I will be transitioning into more of a supportive role on the board. It's been a privilege to represent you in the varied positions and opportunities that I have served. We are a critical component of the community. As business leaders, supporters, advocates, and philanthropists. Please continue to support WATEA, increase your participation where you can, and help lead us for the next twenty-five years.

Thank you all for your dedication, hard work, and passion for our mission. Together, we are making a difference and building a brighter future for the transportation industry.

Kent Olson



Kent Olson
Olson Tire & Auto Service
Olson Auto Body & Paint
Owner/President



Cory Heckendorf
Swiderski Equipment Inc.
Store Manager

We have been working hard:

WATEA and its members...

- ◆ Strengthened board leadership and engagement, ensuring strategic direction and continuity during leadership transitions.
- ◆ Began strategizing for sustainable grant funding across multiple foundations to support long-term stability.
- ◆ Organized the 2025 WATEA Fore The Road Charity Golf event, raising critical funds to support scholarships, Wheels to Work and other transportation training programs.
- ◆ Participated in the highly successful Build My Future Event where over 1400 students attended.
- ◆ Transitioned the Commute2Careers shuttle program to Midstate Technical College.
- ◆ Trained over 100 unique individuals with CarQuest Technical Institute (CTI) training classes, providing advanced diagnostics, Hybrid/EV, and ADAS training at no cost to local shops and technicians.
- ◆ Continue to provide reliable transportation for individuals overcoming employment barriers through the Wheels to Work program. Received a grant from Associated Bank to help support the program in 2026!
- ◆ Made over 1500 contacts in the Wheels to Work program and provided over 200 referrals to partnering organizations in 2025.
- ◆ Provided nine zero-interest job access vehicle award loans and three zero-interest job access vehicle repair loans to our Wheels to Work clients. 11 loans have been paid off in 2025.
- ◆ Attended over a dozen career fairs & workforce events to promote the industry.
- ◆ In collaboration with Midstate Technical College, the Commute2Careers shuttle program provided over 375 unique students with more than 6,000 one-way trips over the three-year program to get to classes.
- ◆ Launched a new collaborative transportation partnership with The Children's Imaginarium to reach thousands of children and parents each year!

.....And we are energized and ready for an even bigger year in 2026!





Current WATEA Members

Abbyland Trucking, Inc.	Haas Sons, Inc.	Olson Auto Body & Paint
Advance Auto/Carquest	Joe Rader Towing	Olson Tire & Auto Service
AkzoNobel	JX Truck Center	Patriot Auto Repair LLC
Ascendance Truck Service	Karl's Transport CDL Training School	Pat's Auto Body
Auto Select, Inc.	Kerber Rose	Pieper Power
BRB Auto Body	Kocourek Chevrolet	Schierl Inc
Brickner Motors, Inc.	Kriete Truck Centers- Stevens Point	Sternot Auto Repair
Brickners Park City, Inc.	Kriete Truck Centers- Tomahawk	Stewart Ave Collision & Repair
Brickners of Antigo & RV Center	Little Wolf Automotive	Swiderski Equipment Inc- Wausau
Brickner's of Wausau	Lube-Tech	Transport National
Bull Falls Harley-Davidson of Wausau	Menke Automotive	Truck Country
Car Connection Central LLC	Merrill Steel	UniFirst
City of Wausau	Midas (Wausau)	Van Horn Nissan Stevens Point
County Materials	Mid-State Technical College	Volk's Auto LLC
Dahl Chrysler Dodge Jeep RAM Stevens Point	Midwest Parts Advantage-MPA	Wausau School District
Dahl Honda Stevens Point	Mosinee Area Chamber of Commerce	West Side Automotive Service
DC Everest School District	Motors Service & Supply	Wheelers Family Auto Group
ECP INC. / Auto Armor	MPEC/NAPA Auto Parts	Wipfli LLP
E.L.M Repair & Refrigeration	National Coating and Supplies	Wisco Cooperative
Envoy Logistics	Northcentral Technical College	Wisconsin Collision Repair Professionals
Griesbach Auto Service	O'Malley Automotive Inc.	Wisconsin Kenworth
	O'Reilly Auto Parts	Yachs Body & Custom

Membership & Sustainability

Fore the Road Charity Golf Event

The Sponsors Who Kept WATEA Running in 2025

WATEA was supported by more than 134 unique sponsors who helped the organization raise over \$130,000 to sustain its initiatives – a new record! And this was in addition to the \$50,000 raised by the popular Fore the Road New Vehicle Raffle – a combined total of over \$195,000 raised in 2025!

<p>Presenting Sponsor</p> 	<p>Diamond Sponsor</p> 	<p>Media Sponsors</p> 		
<p>Platinum Sponsors</p> 		<p>Gold Sponsors</p> 		
<p>Exclusive Hole Sponsors</p> 	<p>Course Sponsors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance Auto Parts • Club X to C Golf Course & Restaurant • Culver's • Furniture & ApplianceMart • JX Truck Center • Ken Colden Enterprises • River Valley Express • Rock Oil Refining Inc • The Gaffaney Otte Group (Baird) • The Portage County Bank • Two's Company • Urban Construction Company • Wickersham Jewelry 			
<p>Cannon Hole Sponsor</p> 	<p>Driving Range Sponsor</p> 	<p>Putting Green Sponsor</p> 	<p>Beer Tent Sponsor</p> 	<p>Registration Sponsor</p> 
<p>Reception Sponsors</p> 	<p>Golf Cart Sponsor</p> 	<p>Porta Potty Sponsor</p> 	<p>Band Sponsor</p> 	<p>Beat the Semi-Pro Sponsor</p> 
<p>Volunteer Sponsor</p> 	<p>Lunch Sponsor</p> 	<p>Beverage Station Sponsors</p> 	<p>Golf Ball Sponsor</p> 	<p>Dessert Sponsor</p> 
<p>Raffle & Auction Tent Sponsor</p> 	<p>Bloody Mary Bar</p> 	<p>Coffee & Bottled Water</p> 	<p>Santa's Executive Sleigh Sponsor</p> 	<p>Dessert Sponsor</p> 

ANNUAL CAR SHOW



D.C. EVEREST TRANSPORTATION PATHWAY

WANT TO WORK TOGETHER?

PLEASE CONTACT: AARON
HOFFMAN @ 715-432-5806



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



DUAL
ENROLLMENT



YOUTH
APPRENTICESHIP



AUTOMOTIVE



DIESEL



POWER
SPORTS



Wausau School District TRANSPORTATION PATHWAY

AUTOMOTIVE ■ AUTO COLLISION ■ DIESEL TECH



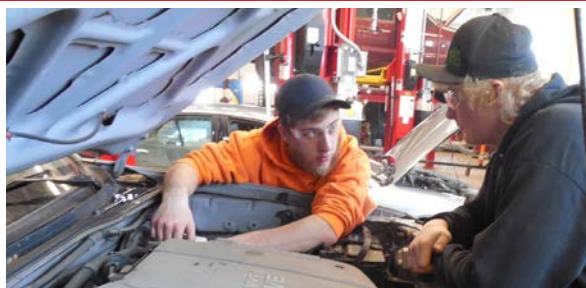
- 8,000 Square Foot State of the Art Facility
- Veteran Instructor Mark Poppe: Auto Mechanics Instructor, Technical College Dual Credit Instructor, and Technology Education Department Chair
- Dual Credit Agreements with Northcentral Technical College and Fox Valley Technical College
- Strong Partnership with the Wisconsin Automotive and Truck Education Association (WATEA)
- Auto Career Expo Partnership with NTC, WATEA, and Brickner Family Auto
- East High School is the Current Home for Northcentral Technical College Auto Collision Program
- Diesel Mechanics and Auto Body and Collision are taught in our classes



TRANSPORTATION COURSES OFFERED IN THE WAUSAU SCHOOL DISTRICT:

- Introduction to Power Mechanics
- Auto Awareness
- Occupational Mechanics I
- Occupational Mechanics II
- Students enrolled in Youth Apprenticeship - Transportation Pathway

For more information please contact:
Jon Winter ■ Career & Technical Education Coordinator ■ 715-261-0568 ■ jwinter@wausauschools.org





SCHOOL OF APPLIED TECHNOLOGY

ON THE ROAD TO SUCCESS!

FALL 2025 ENROLLMENTS



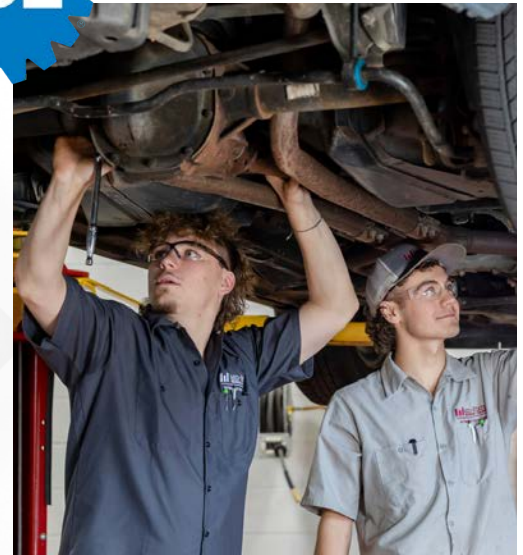
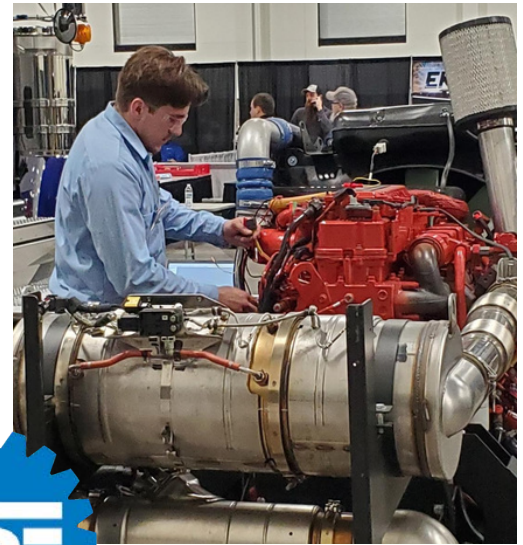
24 AUTOMOTIVE
TECHNICIAN STUDENTS

DIESEL & HEAVY
EQUIPMENT
TECHNICIAN STUDENTS **27**

NEW PROGRAM COMING SOON
AUTO COLLISION

SHUTTLE SERVICE STATISTICS

- Over 375 unique students received at least one shuttle ride.
- Over 150 unduplicated students were frequent riders.
- Provided more than 6,000 one-way trips over 3 years (averaged over 800 per semester - Fall, Spring, and Summer).
- 23 Students received at least one shuttle ride since the beginning of the Fall 2025 semester.



AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY



- 18 first semester students starting Fall 2025
- 15 third semester students continuing in Fall 2025
- 9 Flex students completing first semester classes
- ✓ Program retention has improved this year after updates
- ✓ New 3rd semester classes launched this Fall for the first time
- ✓ Technology improvement continuing (Transportation 4.0)
- ✓ Now halfway through our WTCS Core Industry Grant

❖ Contact: **Iain Cameron** – Dean, School of Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing
cameron@ntc.edu or 715-803-1235

AUTO COLLISION FUNDAMENTALS



- Fall 2025 Cohort to start **October 14th, 2025**
- 49 students have completed the program over the last four years
- Additional funding for students now available via Workforce Development Board!
- ✓ Registration is currently open!
- ✓ Classes run Tuesday and Thursday evenings, plus one Saturday per month
- ✓ Program is possible through partnership with WATEA, K-12 and Industry partners

❖ Contact: **Sharon Ruff** – Project Manager, Workforce Training & Professional Development
ruff@ntc.edu or 715-803-1965

DIESEL TECHNOLOGY



- 19 first semester students starting Fall 2025
- ✓ Diesel Apprenticeship now entering its third year
- ✓ Dedicated CNG maintenance bay completed and in use
- ✓ Technology improvement continuing (Transportation 4.0)
- ✓ WTCS Grant applications planned for 26/27 academic year

CDL

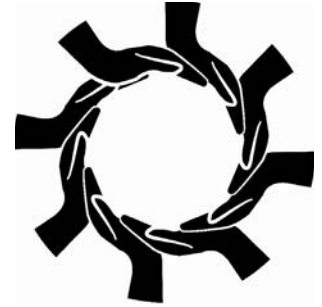


- ✓ Accelerated Class A and Class B training offered
- ✓ Public Safety Center of Excellence in Merrill expanded for increase student capacity
- ✓ CDL Center now includes additional maintenance space
- ✓ Expanded scenario training now available including Hazmat and Driver Refresh

❖ ❖ Contact: **Greg Cisewski** – Dean, School of Agriculture, Utilities and Transportation
cisewski@ntc.edu or 715-803-1454

Membership & Sustainability

WATEA Membership



Working With WATEA

As a WATEA member, you are a part of the solution to improve and sustain the transportation workforce pipeline across Wisconsin. Your membership:

- ▶ Supports WATEA's efforts to inform students & the general public about the education, training and resources needed to meet the industry's ever-evolving needs
- ▶ Enables WATEA's staff and Board to take action to develop and sustain a thriving transportation industry workforce pipeline; and
- ▶ Contributes to the sustainability of key community support programs like Wheels to Work and Industry 4.0 Training

Benefits of WATEA Membership

As a WATEA member, you receive:

- ◆ **Enhanced Access to New Employees and Workforce Programs**
 - » *Get timely communications about prospective new employees, Youth or Registered Apprenticeship candidates, technical college training programs, regional job fairs, and other workforce engagement activities.*
- ◆ **Higher-Quality (and Quantity!) Employees**
 - » *Hire confidently knowing WATEA is working on your behalf to ensure there are sufficient active and up-to-date transportation training programs in our regional K-12 schools and technical colleges to ensure a sustainable and skilled workforce pipeline.*
- ◆ **Influence Over the Industry's Future**
 - » *WATEA provides its members with opportunities to join topic-specific task forces, workforce development teams, and WATEA boards/committees, where participants guide the content and direction of transportation-industry trainings and workforce development initiatives alongside a wide variety of industry partners.*
- ◆ **Strategic Business Marketing Opportunities**
 - » *Let WATEA distribute your business' branded products and information at regional job fairs & events, and/or secure prominent sponsorships at WATEA's popular annual golf outing event.*
- ◆ **Industry-Specific Relationships**
 - » *Network with other industry professionals at WATEA's Annual Meeting, then grow your new relationships while collaborating at job fairs or enjoying WATEA's annual Fore the Road Charity Golf Fundraiser.*
- ◆ **Appreciation from Program Participants & Your Community**
 - » *Your membership helps sustain critical community workforce programs like the Wheels to Work vehicle loan program. This program helps low-income residents access jobs, gain stability, and get their lives back on track. Our Industry 4.0 training equips technicians with advanced skills to deepen their knowledge and grow their careers in the transportation industry.*
- ◆ **...AND MUCH MORE!**

Membership & Sustainability

WATEA Membership

Become WATEA's Newest Member Today!

Ready to join? Sign up using one of the below easy options and get your company on the road to a better workforce!



STEP ONE: Pick Your Membership Level

- ◆ \$349 for single membership
- ◆ \$329 each for two or more rooftop businesses under the same ownership
- ◆ \$299 for three or more rooftop businesses under the same ownership

STEP TWO: Choose Your Registration Method

- ◆ Option 1: Register Online! Visit <https://watea.square.site/shop/membership/3> to quickly register and pay online.
- ◆ Option 2: Request an Invoice: Email admin@watea.org or call (715) 581-9283 to request an invoice.
- ◆ Option 3: Mail In Your Registration: Fill out the below information and mail it (or a copy) with your payment to WATEA, 617 Forest Street, Wausau, WI 54403



New WATEA Member Registration Information

Organization Name: _____

Primary Contact Person: _____ Title: _____

Email Address: _____ Phone: _____

Mailing Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Authorizing Signature: _____ Date: _____

THANK YOU! *Your support benefits all of WATEA's programs and initiatives, including training opportunities for new & incumbent workers, scholarships for individuals in transportation sector training programs, local high school and college automotive programs, the Wheels to Work program, and so much more!*



DRIVING THE TRAINING THAT KEEPS YOU RUNNING!

Website: www.WATEA.org

Phone: 715-581-9283

Email: exec@watea.org

Office: 617 Forest Street
Wausau, WI 54403



A word from a 2025 scholarship recipient:

"I am truly grateful to be awarded the WATEA scholarship. This support is helping me pursue my education and career goals in the trades without as much financial stress, allowing me to focus fully on building my future. Knowing that the WATEA community believes in me inspires me to keep working hard and give back to others along the way." – Noor Matie

