

"As automobiles become more and more complex, high quality technician training becomes an absolute necessity."

- Dr. Michael Regauld, director of office training for SkillsUSA,
- Bill Kersten, senior vice president of operations, National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence, and
- Julio Cardoza, director and owner of Vocational Technical School of South Gate, Calif.

The DOL's Allison suggested "developing an executive forum with the auto industry to identify champions to improve the industry, develop career awareness at earlier grades in the schools and assist instructors with the capacity to handle the diverse group of workers entering the industry." Allison added the DOL has designated automotive service as a "high-growth" profession, making it eligible for job training and apprenticeship programs.

Regauld of SkillsUSA said he "believes business and industry must work together to stay competitive."

Attendees posed questions for the panelists regarding language barriers, cultural issues and what the industry can do to work as a partner with the Hispanic community. One of the resounding themes was an industry effort to heighten educational opportunities for potential automotive technicians. Prospective automotive technicians must begin career preparations at an earlier stage in their school years. Spanish literature for students' parents regarding the automotive industry's career options also should be a top priority.

"The industry meeting was

very positive and we intend to continue working together to find solutions to the issues addressed. We are grateful to Sen. Chambliss and Rep. Rodriguez for placing a high priority on the betterment of a very diverse automotive technician marketplace," said Bob Redding, ASA's Washington, D.C., representative.

"The summit provided the industry and government partners the opportunity to explore what options are available and how best to work together in the future." Redding said. ■



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