

The Official Newsletter of the Auto Body Association of Connecticut



## Take Your Business to the Next Level Know Your Numbers!

Part 2 of a 4 Part Series Sponsored by Albert Kemperle

**“In Unity There is Strength; In Knowledge There is Power”**

**Your Car, Your Choice** - Find us at [www.abaconn.org](http://www.abaconn.org)

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**AUTO BODY ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT**

# ABAC President's Message

## Bob Amendola

### Fund Raising Events To The Forefront



I wanted to utilize the President's Message space in this edition of ABAC News to highlight two upcoming events that I encourage everyone to attend.

The first event is our second annual Summer Social at Stony Creek Brewery in Branford at 6:30 on Friday August 22nd.

Hosted in the private upstairs section of the brewery with a deck overlooking the water, we have live music, pizza, drinks and great company. Last year was such a huge success and we're looking forward to another great night together this year.

As a thank you to our members and advertisers, the first two attendees per business are free: including 2 drink tickets and food. We encourage you to bring as many people as you'd like though- family, employees etc. are more than welcome! Additional attendees beyond 2 per business are \$20 per person. All attendees will automatically be entered into a raffle for a gift certificate for a stay in Mystic CT. This event is a great opportunity to connect with colleagues and enjoy a night out together. Don't miss it!

In the fall, we also have our fourth annual Golf Tournament & Social at Lyman Orchards Golf on Monday October 6th. For our golfers, the event begins at 11:00 with registration and a light lunch, and a shotgun start at 12:00. This year, we will be continuing the fun into the evening as a social event for everyone to attend. Non-golfers are encouraged to attend our social event beginning at 4:30 for dinner, awards and live music. This is a great event to unwind and connect with colleagues and industry professionals for a great cause. Golfers are \$150 per person and social event attendees are \$65 per person. Family, employees etc. are welcome. Join us for a nice evening at a great venue for a good cause! All proceeds benefit the Connecticut Tech Schools' Auto Body programs, and every attendee will be automatically entered into our raffle for the grand prize of a Blackstone Gas Griddle.

In conjunction with our quarterly membership meetings, social events and fundraisers like these offer a great opportunity for networking and promote the sense of camaraderie within our association that strengthens our industry. Attending these events is a great way to meet new people and enhance relationships with colleagues and employees.

The Golf Tournament and Social Event benefits the CT Tech School Auto Body Program- the more attendees we have at this annual event, the better we can support our future technicians/employees! I encourage everyone to attend and bring guests.

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Remember, outside influences would rather divide us but “in unity there is strength”. I hope to see everyone in August and October!

Sincerely,

*Bob Amendola*

Autoworks of Westville - President - Auto Body Association of Connecticut  
Autoworksofwestville@gmail.com

## Considering Legal Liabilities in Calibrating Advanced Driver-Assistance Systems



John M. Parese is a partner at the New Haven-based firm of Buckley Wynne & Parese

As vehicle technology advances, Advanced Driver-Assistance Systems (ADAS) have become standard in many modern cars, bringing new safety features like lane-keeping assistance, automatic emergency braking, and adaptive cruise control. While these technologies enhance driver safety, they are also creating new legal responsibilities for auto body repairers, especially when it comes to post-repair calibration.

ADAS systems rely on sensors, cameras, and radar units that must be precisely calibrated after many types of collision repairs, even seemingly minor ones like bumper replacements or windshield repairs. If these systems are not properly restored to manufacturer specifications, the vehicle’s safety features may malfunction, potentially leading to accidents and subsequent liability claims.

Legal risks exist for repairers, particularly if a repairer fails to recalibrate a vehicle’s ADAS systems after performing repairs. This can be so even if the shop is unaware that recalibration was necessary. It remains a best practice, and arguably an affirmative duty, to follow OEM procedures when it comes to ADAS calibration. If something goes wrong, you can bet the aggrieved party will be looking at the repairer.

This is an evolving technological environment, and by association, an evolving legal environment. With that said, I would recommend that all shops treat ADAS recalibration not as an optional service, but as a standard of care. This is necessary for a safe and proper repair, of course. But also, failure to recalibrate ADAS systems could open the door to a lawsuit, especially if a system failure results in injury or property damage.

Shops are best to stay current with OEM guidelines in this space, document all calibrations or sublets for calibrations, and invest in the training and equipment necessary to stay on top of this evolving landscape.

As more ADAS-equipped vehicles take up our roadways, shops need to be ever mindful of these systems and how a given collision, even a minor one, may compromise a vehicle’s safety system. By proactively adapting to technological shifts in the industry, and staying informed and vigilant, auto body repairers can reduce liability risks and maintain the highest standard of safety for their customers.

Enjoy your summer!

*John M. Parese, Esq. is a Partner with the law firm of Buckley Wynne & Parese and serves as General Counsel to the ABAC. Buckley Wynne & Parese maintains offices in New Haven, Hartford and Stamford, and services clients throughout all of Connecticut. The opinions set forth in Attorney Parese’s articles are for education and entertainment purposes only, and should not be construed as legal advice or legally binding. If you have any questions or concerns about the content of this or any of Attorney Parese’s articles, you are encouraged to contact Attorney Parese directly.*

## Take Your Business to the Next Level Know Your Numbers!

### ***Educational Presentation Featured at Recent ABAC Meeting is the Second of a Four-Part Series presented by Albert Kemperle Auto Paint, Body & Equipment***

The most recent Quarterly Meeting of the Auto Body Association of Connecticut was held this past May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at The Woodwinds in Branford.

Presiding over this meeting, ABAC President, Bob Amendola, welcomed everyone to the meeting thanking everyone for putting aside time to attend and talked of the night's agenda.

Bob then announced the Sponsors for the evening:

### **Primary Sponsor**

***Albert Kemperle Auto Paint, Body & Equipment  
Regional Manager - David Esposito***

***Sean Vandale – VP of Kemperle/Wesco  
Northeast Markets***

***Account Managers***

***Chris Masi - Brendan Gallagher - Mike Meneo***

***Kemperle Technical Team***

***Brandon Wooley - Cesar Soto - John Japs***

***Clips & Fasteners Team***

***An Tonietta - Zack Lane***

***Other Kemperle guests:***

***Joe Bavaro - John Falzone - Aaron Rock***



### **Co-Sponsor**

***Gates GMC Nissan***

***represented by:***

***Larry Pearson – Outside Sales Representative***



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## **Acknowledgment of ABAC News Sponsors**

President Bob Amendola took a moment to express sincere gratitude to the generous sponsors who continue to make ABAC events and initiatives possible.

*“These ABAC meetings would not be as successful as they are without the direct contributions of our sponsors,”* Bob stated. *“As I do at every meeting, I want to sincerely thank all our ABAC Corporate Sponsors and our ABAC News Supporting Advertisers. Their ongoing financial commitment helps sustain the efforts of YOUR Auto Body Association of Connecticut.”*

Bob encouraged all members to show their appreciation by supporting these businesses in return. *“Support Those Who Support You,”* he emphasized.

Special recognition was given to the current top-tier sponsors:

- ***Buckley Wynne & Parese – Platinum Sponsors of the ABAC News Advertisers Directory***
- ***Bald Hill Dodge Chrysler Jeep Kia – Gold Sponsor of the ABAC News Advertisers Directory***

*The ABAC extends heartfelt thanks to these and all supporting sponsors whose contributions strengthen the association and the industry as a whole,”* President Bob reiterated.

***“Tonight, we are asking for your cooperation as we are going to be studying the effect of DOI investigations. If you have had a particularly good or bad experience, or you have filed complaints without any enforcement action taken, we would like to know that,”*** said Bob Amendola.

Stepping to the podium was Past President Tony Ferraiolo saying, ***“We’re looking for information from all shops on all the complaints that you’ve sent into the DOI on issues such as:***

- *not sending an appraiser out*
- *mandating photo estimates*
- *lack of negotiations*
- *we are not paying for that*
- *we don’t care about mission statements*
- *AND anything else you’ve sent in*

***“We don’t care how far back you go. If you have information that could be helpful, we would like to know about it. We think there may be a pattern of inaction, a lack of ENFORCEMENT by the Department of Insurance. The DOI should be acting to protect consumers, and we haven’t seen that happen yet. You can send any information to Heather at [abacadmin.heather@gmail.com](mailto:abacadmin.heather@gmail.com),”*** continued Ferraiolo.



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## **Support for the CT Work-Based Learning Transportation Program**

Tony Ferraiolo took a moment to speak about the **Connecticut Work-Based Learning (WBL) Program**, which benefits directly from the proceeds of the annual ABAC Golf Tournament.

*“For those unfamiliar with the program,” Tony began, “please be sure to read the article on Pages 9-11 of this edition about how the ABAC works with the Tech Schools to help with transportation.”*

Work-Based Learning (WBL) is a part of the **CTECS Student Workforce**. WBL allows a student to work for an employer during their trade instructional time. Students not only receive credit toward their career technology but also get paid. Available at all CTECS schools, WBL fosters workforce readiness skills, such as punctuality, preparedness, teamwork, problem-solving, and critical thinking, facilitating a smooth transition from school to work.

Through legislation passed through the Connecticut Department of Labor, CTECS students 16 and older are permitted to work in all trades, including high-hazard trades. Each school has a dedicated WBL Coordinator to promote and provide support for student and industry partners throughout the process.

Tony announced that the **ABAC Board of Directors has unanimously voted to continue funding the transportation component** of the essential programming element that helps get students into local auto body shops. *“Many of these students don’t yet have a driver’s license, often due to the high cost of car insurance. Our donation helps offset those transportation challenges by covering **Lyft rides** to and from their job placements,”* he said.

*“This support is truly a **game changer**,”* Tony emphasized. *“It gives students not just exposure to the **collision repair trade**, but also an opportunity to build professional habits and learn directly from experienced mentors in a shop environment.”*

Tony also encouraged shop owners to consider hosting WBL students. *“These young people may not yet know exactly what they want to do, but they have an interest in the auto industry. When they’re placed in your shop, they gain invaluable hands-on experience. At the end of the school year, **you decide** whether to continue with the student, keep them in the program for another year, or even **hire them part-time**.”*

Tony concluded by urging everyone to **check with their local tech schools** about student placement opportunities and noted that a **list of schools is available on the ABAC website**.

*“Reach out to any Board member if you need assistance—and most importantly, **support our Golf Tournament**. The funds raised make this program possible,”* said Ferraiolo.

## **Golf Tournament Announcement**

### **Presented by Joe Cavallaro, Airport Road Auto Body**

Tony introduced **Joe Cavallaro**, one of the organizers of the upcoming **ABAC Golf Tournament**, to share details about this exciting annual event.

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Joe emphasized that this year's tournament promises to be another **great ABAC gathering**, encouraging everyone to participate, **whether as golfers or simply by attending the post-tournament dinner and social event**. *"We know not everyone golfs," Joe said, "but we want you there regardless. Join us for dinner, music, drinks, and raffles. It's going to be a great time."*



The event will once again take place at **Lyman Orchard**, and **flyers with event details were placed at each table** during the meeting. Joe urged attendees to **sign up early**, highlighting the many available **sponsorship opportunities**. *"We're aiming to surpass last year's donation, especially with growing demand from the **Work-Based Learning Program**, which benefits directly from the proceeds."*

The tournament is **open to all**, so Joe encouraged members to **invite friends and colleagues** for a day of fun and philanthropy. The schedule includes:

- **Golf Tournament Tee-Off:** 12:00 PM
- **Social Event and Dinner:** Begins at 4:30 PM

The post-golf festivities will include **dinner, drinks, music, and a raffle**, with the **top prize being a Blackstone Grill**.

Joe closed by reminding everyone: *"Sign up now, get involved, and help us make a difference for our students."*

### ***Auto Body Association of Connecticut – Election of Officers Announcement***

The Auto Body Association of Connecticut (ABAC) has conducted its annual Election of Officers. We are pleased to announce the following individuals will continue to serve for another term:

- **Bob Amendola – President**
- **Ashley Brunelle – Vice President**
- **Mark Wilkowski – Secretary**
- **Mike Wilkowski – Treasurer**

Looking ahead, both Mark Wilkowski and Mike Wilkowski have announced their intention to transition from their roles on the Executive Board after this term. As such, the ABAC is seeking two candidates interested in serving as Secretary and Treasurer beginning next year.

This is a great opportunity to get involved and contribute to the leadership of ABAC. Interested individuals are encouraged to reach out to Bob Amendola or Ashley Brunelle as soon as possible. Selected candidates will have the opportunity to work alongside Mark and Mike throughout the year to ensure a smooth transition.

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## ***Guest Speaker Summary - Akzo Nobel***

President Bob introduced the evening's guest speaker, **Sam Sherrill - Business Services Consultant Akzo Nobel**.

Sam delivered an insightful presentation covering several key topics relevant to business performance and growth:

- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** How to use them to assess the overall health of your business.
- **Technology in Production Management:** Leveraging digital tools to improve efficiency and output.
- **The Role of 20 Groups:** What they are and how they can benefit your business through peer support and shared best practices.
- **The Importance of Knowing Your Numbers:** How financial awareness can drive smarter decision-making and business improvement.
- **Recommended Training Courses:** Which classes provide the most value and the ideal sequence for taking them.
- **Support from Akzo Nobel:** Ways the company can assist with business growth and operational success.

Sam's presentation was both informative and interactive, with a lively Q&A session that allowed for valuable audience engagement. His insights, along with the resources and support available through Akzo Nobel, provided great value to all in attendance.



The evening continued with a 50/50 Raffle along with several gift cards provided by the Auto Body Association of Connecticut.

This meeting is just another benefit of membership. If you are not already a member, the ABAC would like you to strongly consider becoming a member today. The minimal cost of membership is immediately offset by attending just one meeting like this. We have several each year.

Before concluding our meeting for the evening, Bob reminded everyone, *"Our future in this industry depends on all of us working hard to find solutions. I recommend that you reach out to your friends and colleagues who are shop owners and invite them to join the Auto Body Association of Connecticut to help better their future to help better our industry.*

***The knowledge that you obtain when you attend these meetings is so invaluable."***

***Submitted by Don Cushing***

# **AkzoNobel**

## Spotlight on the WBL Transportation Program at Wilcox Technical High School

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We recently had the opportunity to speak with Cristina Stisser, Dean of Students and Work-Based Learning (WBL) Coordinator at Wilcox Technical High School in Meriden. Cristina provided valuable insight into the inner workings of the school's Transportation Program, which has benefited significantly from the support of the Auto Body Association of Connecticut (ABAC) through various fundraising efforts.

The transportation program is relatively new to us, but we already see it as a phenomenal initiative and a tremendous opportunity for our students—especially those facing transportation barriers that prevent them from participating in the Work-Based Learning Program.

Tony Ferraiolo and the Board of Directors at the Auto Body Association of Connecticut came up with the innovative idea of fundraising to provide transportation funding to schools. This allows students to use services like Uber or Lyft to get to their job sites. It's opened a new door for students.

### **This program addresses a real, pressing need: transportation.**

When students don't have access to a car, can't afford insurance, or haven't yet obtained a license, they often miss out on valuable work-based learning experiences. The transportation fund set up by ABAC changes that—it removes a major barrier and opens the door for more students to enter the workforce.

We began taking advantage of this opportunity around mid-year, and it's already made a meaningful difference. I've been actively promoting the program and encouraging other trades and their associated boards and committees to consider adopting a similar model. It's a simple yet powerful way to remove one of the most common barriers to student participation in the workforce—and it's helping us ensure that no student is left behind because of transportation challenges.

### **Expanding Transportation Access for Work-Based Learning: A Model Worth Following**

Our manufacturing cluster is actively working to engage more of our manufacturing associations by highlighting the outstanding work being done by the Auto Body Association of Connecticut (ABAC) in support of the auto collision trade. Their transportation initiative is a model that can be replicated across industries—and we believe it presents a tremendous opportunity for our students if other trades and associations get involved.

What makes this initiative especially impactful is that it doesn't just benefit the students. It also benefits participating organizations. With this support in place, employers can take on more students, help develop future talent and even increase their capacity to hire—all because they can now offer transportation solutions to students who need them.

The donations raised by the ABAC are placed into a fund that's accessible to Tech Schools across our region. Although we only began using the program mid-year, we've already seen its value—and we've also already used up this year's funds due to strong demand. Thankfully, the ABAC is planning another fundraising event to replenish the fund for next year, ensuring continued support.

The fact that fundraising is built into the model makes it even more sustainable. It allows us to actively support our students with a practical resource that directly impacts their ability to participate. Right now, for example, we have a junior student who is out in the field four days a week thanks to this program.

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I truly believe this is a great idea, and I've been sharing it in meetings with other organizations to encourage them to consider following the ABAC's lead. It's a solution that works—and one that could be transformational for students and industries alike.

## **Wilcox Tech's Work-Based Learning Program: Progress, Impact, and Vision**

### **Current Student Involvement**

We have a strong number of students currently participating in the Work-Based Learning Program. As of now, Wilcox Tech has 76 students placed in WBL across 13 different trade areas, including:

1. Automotive Technology
2. Carpentry
3. Automotive Collision Repair & Refinishing
4. Culinary Arts
5. Electrical
6. Robotics
7. HVAC (Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning)
8. Plumbing & Heating
9. Graphic Technology
10. Information Technology
11. Hairdressing, Cosmetology & Barbering
12. Health Technology
13. Precision Machining Technology

This level of engagement speaks to the program's success and the strength of our partnerships with industry.

### **Looking to the Future at Wilcox Tech**

Our goal is to see these numbers continue to grow. We're working hard to break down barriers—like transportation and access to opportunities—so even more students can benefit from real-world, hands-on learning experiences.

We've already seen how transformational this can be. Some students who were previously struggling academically or with motivation found renewed purpose and direction through on-the-job training. They returned to school more engaged, more focused, and more successful—not just in their trades but in their academic performance and attendance as well. That's the power of this program.

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Our instructors do an incredible job preparing students with strong fundamentals. But once students step into the field, they gain exposure to new tools, challenges, and jobsite experiences that we simply can't replicate within school walls. They start to get it—seeing the value of what they've learned, applying it in real time, and realizing they're capable of even more.

## **Program Requirements**

To be eligible for the Work-Based Learning Program, students must meet three key district criteria:

1. **Grades** – Must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA in both trade and academic areas.
2. **Attendance** – Must be in good standing with attendance.
3. **Discipline** – Must be in good standing behaviorally, with no major disciplinary issues.

These requirements ensure that students are prepared to represent themselves, their trade, and our school well in the workplace.

## **My Role in the Program**

As the **Dean of Students and Work-Based Learning Coordinator**, I oversee all aspects of student attendance, policy and procedures, and the implementation of the WBL program. I work closely with local businesses, industry partners, department heads, and trade committees to build strong networks and ensure successful student placements.

From promotion and preparation to placement and follow-up, I am deeply involved in helping our students make the most of this opportunity—because we believe in the transformative power of learning by doing.

## **A Note of Appreciation from the Auto Body Association of Connecticut**

The Auto Body Association of Connecticut (ABAC) would like to extend our sincere thanks to **Cristina Stisser** for taking the time to speak with us during her busy day. We truly appreciate your insight, dedication, and the work you're doing to support students through the Work-Based Learning Program.

It's clear that the collaboration between ABAC and the Connecticut Technical Schools is creating meaningful opportunities for students, particularly by addressing critical barriers such as transportation. We are proud to be part of a partnership that not only supports workforce development but also empowers young people to gain real-world experience and pursue rewarding careers. For more information you can visit the CTECS website at <https://www.cttech.org/about/studentworkforce/work-based-learning/>

Programs like these are a testament to the power of partnerships between schools, communities, and organizations like the ABAC. Together, they ensure that students are not only career-ready but also confident in their paths forward.

We look forward to continuing to grow this program together—with the ongoing support and shared commitment of the Connecticut Technical Education System. Together, we're building a brighter future for students across the state.

Submitted by Don Cushing

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## Holding The Line



Like many of our colleagues, we have been having to charge the customer the difference for quite some time now. What started with a select few insurance companies that we regularly had an issue with has grown to a longer list now. As part of our standard operating procedure, we have the conversation upfront with our customers. We are honest and transparent, giving them the opportunity to understand the entire process and potential out-of-pocket expenses, and choose how they want to proceed. Most customers understand and opt to move forward with the repair regardless. Understandably so, some customers cannot afford a larger out of pocket responsibility or simply do not want to take that chance, but that happens less than one would expect. While we never want to turn anyone away, we no longer absorb the difference.

Our customers deserve a safe and proper repair, and in providing that service, we deserve to be paid in full for what we do. If a customer chose the cheapest insurance they could find, then unfortunately there comes a time when you learn that you get what you pay for. On the other hand, there are instances where a claimant has an out-of-pocket expense and in those instances, we do everything we can to advise them on how to go about getting reimbursed. We do not set out to charge customers the difference. We never want to hurt them, but we cannot take responsibility for an insurance company's short-pay.

This shift in mindsight and standard operating procedure has put the problem back where it belongs; between the insurance company and the vehicle owner. By doing so, we no longer feel caught in the middle. *What a breath of fresh air.*

By educating and informing our customers, it is my hope that they will be more selective when purchasing insurance going forward and protect their rights as a consumer. Furthermore, the more people that become aware and informed about the inner workings of insurance companies' claims practices, the better chance we have as an industry to expose this corruption.

If you've been considering this issue for a long time, then it may be time to make the change. The easiest component for a customer to understand is the difference in parts. We started there and will still do what we can to make it all work but when the appraiser/adjuster cannot get to the number, we have a practical backup plan in place now. The future of our business looks so much better for it.

*Ashley*

**Ashley Brunelle - Autoworks of Westville - ABAC Vice President**



## **Insurity: 1 in 5 consumers avoid filing insurance claim due to frustration with digital interaction**

Twenty-two percent or one in five consumers have avoided filing an insurance claim because they found the digital interactions too frustrating or complicated, according to a 2025 Digital Experience Index national survey conducted by Insurity.

The survey also found 64% of consumers would consider switching insurers for a better digital experience, a press release on the survey results says. It says the results reveal how poor interactions during the claims process can drive customers to competitors. “As insurers continue to advance their digital strategies in 2025 and beyond, prioritizing intuitive, user-centric digital experiences will strengthen retention and build long-term customer loyalty,” the release says.

Consumers find poor claims experiences as a loss of trust and it reduces customer loyalty, the release says. “This insight comes when insurers are under increasing pressure to modernize core systems, enhance operational performance, and deliver greater value to policyholders,” the release says. “While many carriers have made significant progress in digital transformation, the findings make clear that technology investment must be paired with a strong emphasis on user experience.

Those investments may fail to deliver meaningful returns without intuitive, efficient, and responsive interactions, especially during critical moments like claims.” Insurance companies should prioritize reducing friction in their digital infrastructure this year, Sylvester Mathis, Insurity chief insurance and chief revenue officer says in the release. “A clunky or disconnected claims process frustrates customers and risks sending them elsewhere,” Mathis says. “When someone avoids filing a claim, despite having coverage, it signals a fundamental breakdown in trust. If policyholders feel friction, uncertainty, or inflexibility, they’re less likely to file a claim, and far more likely to leave.” The survey was conducted online in April with more than 1,000 adult participants randomly selected, the release says. It says participants were asked a series of 19 questions ranging from multiple choice to scale base.

Collision repair businesses have expressed frustrations with the use of AI and photo estimating in the claims process in recent years. For example, in 2023 the Washington State Office of the Commissioner (OIC) asked for feedback on why auto and home insurance complaints had been on the rise since 2021. Kreidler said most of the complaints were about auto insurance carriers using photo estimating to produce very low repair estimates, not sending adjusters to conduct in-person damage inspections, and not thoroughly explaining why they disagreed with estimates policyholders were given.

OIC said it asked multiple insurance company vendors that develop and use photo software and artificial intelligence (AI) to create repair estimates to participate in the workshop. None of them responded to the request.

The OIC Consumer Advocacy Program received 467 complaints in April 2023, up from the historic average of 287 a month — a 63% increase. During a workshop held by OIC in July 2023, the Washington Independent Collision Repairer’s Association (WICRA) questioned the office’s accountability. According to WICRA’s survey data, only 6.9% of nearly 1,100 photo-based claims were paid in full by insurers without supplements and only 26 of them were accurate.

The survey was on photo estimating — its accuracy, the claims handling process, and the length of time from keys to keys. Questions were sent to more than 65 independent collision repair shops and 30 responded.

**Source: [www.RepairerDrivenNews.com](http://www.RepairerDrivenNews.com)**

# Members/Guest Sign-up



# 4TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT & Social Event



**6TH OCTOBER 2025**

## LYMAN ORCHARDS GOLF CLUB

- ☑ Golfers \$150
- ☑ Social Event \$65

### DON'T GOLF?

Unwind and connect with your fellow auto body professionals at the social event following the tournament. This will be an opportunity to network, share industry insights, and build lasting relationships. Enjoy some music, refreshing drinks, and great company. **Everyone who joins us for the social event will automatically be entered into the raffle for our grand prize of a Blackstone Gas Griddle.**

### AGENDA

- 11:00 AM** Golf Registration & Lite Lunch
- 12:00 PM** Shotgun Start
- 4:30 - 7:00 PM** Dinner, Awards, Social Event

**ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE CT TECH SCHOOL AUTO BODY PROGRAMS**

Reach out to Joe Cavallaro to Register Today!

Joe Cavallaro | 860-729-4766 | joe@airportroadautobody.com

# Sponsorship Opportunities



## 4TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT & Social Event



**6TH OCTOBER 2025**

**LYMAN ORCHARDS GOLF CLUB**

- ☛ Golfers \$150
- ☛ Social Event \$65

### SPONSORSHIPS

<del>Event Platinum Sponsor</del>	<del>\$4,000</del>
<del>Diamond Dinner</del>	<del>\$3,000</del>
Gold Grand Prize	\$2,500
Silver Lunch	\$2,000
Hospitality	\$1,850
Beverage Cart	\$1,500
Longest Drive	\$850
Closest to the Pin	\$850
Hole Sponsor	\$500
Tee Sign Sponsor	\$150

- 8 Golfers | Banner at Registration Table | 2 Tee Signs
- 4 Golfers | Banner in Main Tent | 2 Tee Signs
- 2 Golfers | Banner in Grand Prize Area | 2 Tee Signs
- 2 Golfers | Banner at Breakfast | 2 Tee Signs
- 2 Golfers | Banner in Hospitality Area | 1 Tee Signs
- 2 Golfers | Banner on Beverage Carts | 1 Tee Signs
- 1 Golfer | Signage on Longest Drive Hole | Only 1 Available
- 1 Golfer | Signage on Closest to the Pin Hole | Only 1 Available
- 1 Golfer | Exclusive Signage on a Hole
- Signage on Tee Box

Reach out to Joe Cavallaro to Sponsor Today!

Joe Cavallaro | 860-729-4766 | joe@airportroadautobody.com

## ABAC Government Relations Update



Andy Markowski, Esq.  
Statehouse Partners, LLC  
ABAC Lobbyist

### ***2025 State Legislative Session Adjourns State Budget, Major Towing Reforms, Among Significant Legislation That Passed In The End***

Every legislative session is unique in its own way. The 2025 state legislative session began with an abnormally large number of proposed bills put forward by lawmakers, even when compared to other “long” sessions. In just the first two and a half weeks of the legislative session alone, more than 2,500 proposed bills were filed by legislators.

Prior to its start, legislative leadership revealed some of the key issues they intended to tackle this session. These issues included the cost of supply of electricity for consumers, finding an additional source of funding for childcare initiatives (possibly through changes to the state’s budgetary controls aka “fiscal guardrails” that were extended in the 2024 session), incentivizing the creation of more housing, and the state’s role in providing healthcare for small businesses.

However, as change continued to come from Washington, D.C., the focus shifted to the potential impact on Connecticut’s budget. The state had been flush with federal dollars over the past few years, and some of those dollars were used to expand state government and programs. As federal uncertainty continued, there were calls for Governor Lamont to declare a statewide fiscal emergency. Governor Lamont continued to advocate for fiscal restraint and a “wait and see” approach.

In the final days of the session, legislative leaders hit an impasse with Governor Lamont on a budget deal, with parties only \$200 million apart on a \$55.5 billion dollar budget. The Governor opposed various efforts proposed by legislative leaders to circumvent the spending cap. One idea included excluding from the spending cap the dollars used to settle a labor dispute with a union of home and nursing home workers that had planned a strike.

Ultimately, they were able to come to terms by instead using a tactic that had previously been used in budget negotiations in 2017 - prepaying a portion of the state’s obligations towards teachers’ pensions a year in advance, providing the needed \$200 million in cap space for the coming two year budget. They also created a new off-budget account to fund child care with current year surpluses and opted to underfund contractually guaranteed health care for retired state employees.

This year’s budget bill, House Bill 7287, contains nearly 500 sections and reads almost 700 pages long.

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The summary alone covers over 250 pages, and the legislation not only appropriates state dollars for the next two years but also implements various programs, policies and legislative proposals that were ultimately incorporated into the massive legislative package. Fortunately, most residents and businesses were spared from any major tax increases for now.

Throughout the 2025 legislative session, there were nearly 4,100 bills and resolutions introduced, and Statehouse Partners tracked more than 49 bills on behalf of the ABAC. A few significant bills concerning towing reforms and the insurance department's arbitration process passed the General Assembly and are detailed below. Other bills of interest to ABAC members will be covered in future editions of the *ABAC News*.

### **Towing Reforms - House Bill 7162 (Public Act 25-55)**

This new law reforms Connecticut's towing regulations to enhance consumer protections and introduce a clear Consumer Bill of Rights (to be developed by the DMV and the Attorney General) for vehicle owners in nonconsensual and private property towing situations. Among several provisions, the bill allows towing companies to act as a property owner's agent to authorize tows under certain conditions; explicitly authorizes municipalities to adopt ordinances on nonconsensual towing and parking facility management; modifies nonconsensual towing rate provisions and adds provisions setting temporary rates and also establishes a Police-Ordered Towing Council; creates a working group to study the vehicle disposal process; and contains provisions on disabled vehicle owners having a choice of tower.

### **Insurers To Now Pay For Arbitration Costs - House Bill (Public Act 25-87)**

Another new law will shift the burden of arbitration hearing costs away from the state and onto certain auto insurers—but only in specific situations involving disputes over repair claim amounts. Under the legislation, when there's a disagreement between an auto body customer and their insurer over a repair claim: If the arbitrator rules in favor of the customer, and the customer didn't reject a prior insurer offer that was at least equal to the arbitration award, then the insurance company must reimburse the Insurance Department for the administrative costs of the arbitration hearing.

This positive legislative change concerning arbitration costs could be impactful. Hopefully insurers will now be motivated to present more equitable pre-arbitration offers, potentially expediting the resolution of claims and ensuring smoother settlements for customers. Also, the removal of arbitration costs from the state's burden, in specific scenarios, should alleviate pressure on customers, discouraging insurers from prolonging disputes with inadequate settlement offers.

*For information regarding legislation, regulations, or if you have questions or need further details on any issue, please reach out to ABAC Lobbyist Andy Markowski. He can be contacted at (860) 707-3620 or via email at [andy@statehouselobbying.com](mailto:andy@statehouselobbying.com).*

**By Andy Markowski, Esq.**  
**Statehouse Partners, LLC ABAC Lobbyist**

\*Information provided in this article is for educational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice.

## SkillsUSA identifies 5 legislative recommendations to advance career and technical education



SkillsUSA recently announced five federal legislative recommendations that it says will advance opportunity through career and technical education.

“Career and technical education (CTE) equips students with the skills, confidence, and real-world experiences they need to succeed in today’s rapidly changing economy,” a SkillsUSA flier says. “Whether they are just beginning their education journey or returning to the classroom to re-skill or upskill, CTE learners are preparing for the jobs that power our communities and strengthen our future.”

The five recommendations include:

- Invest in the nation’s CTE infrastructure
- Protect and support the role of CTE in public education
- Improve postsecondary CTE access
- Strengthen CTE’s connection to workforce development systems
- Grow the pipeline of skilled CTE instructors

SkillsUSA suggests increased funding in the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Act’s (Perkins V) Base State Grant as an investment in the nation’s infrastructure. It says that the grant is a cornerstone of federal support for CTE, yet current funding levels remain well below what is needed to meet current needs and growing demand.

It also asks for support in funding CTE systems and programs that connect learners to growing sectors of the American economy and support diverse geographic areas throughout the nation.

“Congress must increase funding to support real-world learning experiences, expand access in both rural and urban communities, and help students stay current with the tools and technology shaping today’s workplaces,” a SkillsUSA blog post says.

Funding of innovative CTE programs, such as artificial intelligence and broader technology advancements, is another need to support the infrastructure, the flier says.

SkillsUSA asks for the federal government to maintain a commitment to public education systems that offer CTE, oppose efforts to divert funds away from the schools and institutions that deliver high-quality, skill-based education, and ensure that dedicated federal CTE investments remain targeted to public education systems.

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“We believe it’s critical to protect CTE’s role in public education,” the blog post says. “Public high schools and community colleges are where most students encounter CTE opportunities, and we cannot allow those opportunities to erode. That means maintaining robust support for these institutions and ensuring that all learners, regardless of zip code, can access high-quality CTE programs.”

The organization also urges Congress to expand federal Pell Grant program eligibility for high-quality, shorter-term CTE programs and dedicate funding for open-access postsecondary institutions, such as community and technical colleges and area technical centers.

Congress is asked to promote legislation that supports the alignment and coordination between Perkins and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and establish consistent standards and definitions of youth apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, and registered apprenticeship programs.

Lastly, Skills USA asks Congress to support policies that make teaching a competitive and attractive option for skilled trade professionals, expand access to CTE-specific teacher training and professional development, and encourage state licensure reciprocity to increase instructor mobility.

“CTE programs depend on skilled, passionate instructors, but attracting and retaining professionals from the trades into the classroom is an ongoing and persistent challenge,” the blog post says.

Earlier this week, CBS spoke with Philadelphia-area students and graduates who expressed concerns about federal government plans to pause Job Corps centers across the country by June 30. The program helps young adults earn a high school diploma while receiving hands-on job training in the field. The program was established under the WIOA.

Sincere Shaw, 17, was months away from graduating when his program email and account access were deactivated, according to CBS.

Shaw said he was skipping class before joining the program. However, that behavior changed when he started a carpentry track through Job Corps.

“I just feel like it’s a big difference for me, and I really love it here, and I hope it [doesn’t] change,” he told CBS.

The U.S. Department of Labor issued a press release last week that says the Job Corps program has faced significant financial challenges under its current operating structure, including a \$140 million deficit.

A Jobs Corps transparency report found the average graduation rate for WIOA to be 38.6%, the release said. It also states that the average annual cost per student is \$80,284, and the average total cost per graduate is \$155,600.

“Job Corps was created to help young adults build a pathway to a better life through education, training, and community,” said Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer, in the release. “However, a startling number of serious incident reports and our in-depth fiscal analysis reveal the program is no longer achieving the intended outcomes that students deserve. We remain committed to ensuring all participants are supported through this transition and connected with the resources they need to succeed as we evaluate the program’s possibilities.”

**Source:** [www.RepairerDrivenNews.com](http://www.RepairerDrivenNews.com)

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(860) 283-4154 abacadmin.heather@gmail.com

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