

Automotive Technicians are in big demand across PEI

by Heidi Riley

Employers are facing a challenge in finding enough people interested in pursuing the automotive technician trade. That's the message from **Connor Barrett**, an owner of **Vision Auto and Tire** on North River Road in Charlottetown.

"For us, it is always a challenge to find someone willing to come into the trade who we can develop as they go through the apprenticeship process and earn their Red Seal," says Connor. "It is also challenging to find people who are interested in continuing to learn and keep up with changing technology in the industry."

"We have a small pool of candidates to draw from, and most auto service centres would say they would take a Red Seal Technician and one or two apprentices immediately."

"I would like to see a change in the public perception of the automotive industry, because it is such an amazing industry now. There are rapid changes in computer diagnostics and software, and new hybrid and fully electric cars are coming on the market. It is a much less physical job than it was in the past, and a lot more high-level digital technology and intelligence is required in every aspect of diagnosis, service and repair."

"It is a very lucrative career, and it is not a long process to go through the Apprenticeship program to become an Automotive Technician. The opportunities are infinite."

How to apply

Send a resumé and cover letter to connor@visionautoandtire.com or call 902-628-2277 to make an appointment to speak with **Connor Barrett**. Visit www.visionautoandtire.com



Connor Barrett, Vision Auto and Tire.
Submitted photo



Education/training required

The apprenticeship program starts with working a specific number of hours under the supervision of a Red Seal Technician.

Then apprentices take about six weeks of education through the block release program, write a test, and if they pass, they go back to the job, work the required hours, and go back for the second, third, and fourth block release sessions.

Another option is the two-year Holland College Automotive Service program.

Hiring needs

"We could always use at least two more second, third or fourth-year apprentices or Red Seal Technicians," says Connor. "We usually have one employee who is new to the industry. We are prepared to develop someone to become an apprentice and work towards their Red Seal."

"I am proud to be able to help someone get into the industry, help them along, and provide them with the requirements they need."

For the complete interview, visit www.employmentjourney.com and search **Vision Auto and Tire**.



Celebrating the many trade skills taught in high schools and post-secondary

by Heidi Riley

The 2019 Skills Excellence awards night in April celebrated the achievements of the participants of the provincial Skills Canada-PEI competitions, which were held across PEI this spring.

"Skills Canada-PEI is part of a national non-profit organization," says **Tawna MacLeod**, Executive Director, Skills Canada-PEI. "Our mandate is to promote training and careers in the trades."

"This year, because of the tireless work of so many people, 390 high-school and post-secondary students competed at the provincial level on PEI in 41 competition categories."

"The future of the North American economy of is all about skills," says **Dr. Sandy MacDonald**, President, Holland College. "The number of people in skilled trades and at the skills competitions has never been higher. Interest in skills on the part of government, industry and post-secondary education has never been greater."

For more information, visit www.facebook.com/skillscanadapei/



Some of the gold medal winners who went on to the National Competitions in Halifax

Drew Acorn, grade 12 student at Bluefield Senior High School, won gold in Graphic Design at the secondary level. "This is something I always wanted to do," says Drew. "I really like art, and Graphic Design is a way to make a career out of art."

"Last semester, I did an OJT co-op placement at a print shop in Kensington. They really helped me a lot. I made ads and business cards, and learned how to print and how to use Adobe creative software, which we needed for the competition."

"I have been accepted into the Fundamental Arts program at Holland College, and hopefully that will help me decide if I want to go into the Graphic Design program."



Drew Acorn.

Sean Augustine Gonzales

and **Robert Greenan** from Kinkora Regional High School won gold in Mobile Robotics, secondary level. "Back in the Philippines, I was taking robotics, and I liked the idea of building a robot," says Sean. "I think the problem solving skills I learned will be helpful in the future."

"My favourite part is coming across so many challenges when I am building the robot," says Robert.

Both Sean and Robert planning to study engineering at the University of New Brunswick this fall.



Sean Augustine Gonzales and Robert Greenan.

Jennifer Gallant was awarded gold in Esthetics. She studies at the Private School of Hair Design in Charlottetown, and is from Souris.

"For the competition, we had to do a facial, manicure with nail art, and a pedicure. I competed against seven people. The judges were previous students from the school. Winning at the provincial level makes me feel great, and it will look great on my resumé," says Jennifer. "It is like the Olympics of the trades," says Esthetics Instructor **Deanna Clow**.

"I already have a job lined up at Luxe Beauty Bar, a local esthetics shop, which will build my skills and experience," says Jennifer. "I hope to have my own shop some day."



Jennifer Gallant.

Irene Pak, who studied Pastry Arts at the Culinary Institute, won Gold in Baking.

"I love making breads and sweets and cakes, and I want to concentrate on baking tasty foods for people with allergies," says Irene, who is from South Korea.

"I chose to take the one-year program at the Culinary Institute because I wanted to improve skills and it has a good curriculum. I plan to find a job as a Pastry Chef in Canada."



Irene Pak.