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## **First students in Palm Beach Community College's automotive programs graduate**

(Lake Worth, Fla. - March 4, 2005) The first class of students to enroll in Palm Beach Community College's automotive programs graduated this week after about a year and a half of training on new state-of-the-art facilities in the college's Education and Training Center in Lake Worth.

Automotive Service Technology and Automotive Body Repair were among 45 adult job preparatory education programs that PBCC absorbed from the School District of Palm Beach County over three years beginning in 1998. But the college delayed beginning the automotive certificate programs until the new Education and Training Center opened fall 2003.

Most of the 14 graduates already have secured jobs in their fields.

"You're going to be our ambassadors out in the workforce. You carry the PBCC seal as far as how prepared you are," Salvatore Manuele, associate dean for trade and industrial programs at PBCC, told the graduates at a reception in their honor March 2. "We're very confident you're going to represent us well."

The reception also honored the first four students to train in the welding technology in the Education and Training Center. The college offered a welding program in Belle Glade, but this is the first class to graduate from the program in Lake Worth.

Casey Funk, who completed the Automotive Collision Technology program, started his new job at Gonz Collision Center in Lake Worth in late February.

"It's a good program. It helped me get a job," he said. "We got to learn on the best equipment, all state-of-the-art technology. The equipment here is better than anybody's shop, which says a lot about the quality of the program."

For information on these and others educational programs at PBCC, visit [www.pbcc.edu](http://www.pbcc.edu).

(more)

**Editor's note: For a photo of Casey Funk, a graduate of the program visit:**  
<http://www.pbcc.edu/crm/releasepics/autograd.jpg>

**Photo outline:** Casey Funk (left) and Jeff Lampila, who are among the first graduates of the automotive programs, work on a wrecked car in PBCC's auto body repair shop.

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