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NETWORKING, EDUCATION MARK 2001 iATN CONVENTION

Brea, CA — Automotive service professionals from more than 40 states and five countries gathered in Dearborn, Mich., Oct. 5–7, for the International Automotive Technicians' Network (iATN) 2001 Convention. The event provided a forum for face-to-face meetings and networking opportunities among iATN members who typically meet and share information online on the iATN web site (www.iatn.net). It also offered technical and business management sessions presented by a number of industry experts, including representatives from Ford Motor Company, General Motors and DaimlerChrysler Corporation.

“I just had to be here,” said Gil Sher, owner of Abes Safer Brakes, Sydney, Australia. Sher regularly uses iATN for technical solutions and participates in the network's weekly TechNight events. In addition, Sher credits his iATN colleagues with helping him correctly diagnose and repair a 1996 Mustang, an uncommon vehicle in Australia. Word-of-mouth about Sher's ability to repair vehicles traveled quickly. “Through my customer's recommendations from that day, I've had 30 new customers that I know of,” said Sher.

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The convention's technical presentations were on *The Basics of Fuel Control*, Paul Baltusis, Ford Motor Company; *The Anatomy of a Waveform*, Bill Fulton, Ohio Automotive Technology; *Realizing Your Potential*, Jorge Menchu, Automotive Electronics Systems (AES); *Chrysler Engine Diagnostics as Seen Through the Scan Tool*, Joe Di Fede, DaimlerChrysler Corporation; *The Not So Secret Weapon – Victories from the Battlefield*, Tom Roberts, AutoNerdz; and *OBD-II Vehicle Inspection Maintenance Program*, Jack Woodward, General Motors. Mark Warren, EASE Diagnostics, was the moderator for this technical forum.

Paul Nicastri, project leader at Ford Motor Company's Scientific Research Laboratory, Dearborn, Mich., gave a luncheon presentation on *42V PowerNet – Automotive Transportation's Future Electrical System*. In his presentation, Nicastri covered why the industry is considering changes to 42V, the current and proposed 42V architectures, information on the proposed voltage range specification, how wiring in vehicles could be impacted, and arcing at 42V and how that may impact the service community.

Management sessions covered service marketing, service advisor skills and communicating the value of diagnostics to customers. These sessions were taught by George Witt, George Witt Service Inc., Mark Hambaum, MDH Automotive Services, and Kelly Bennett, R.L. O'Connor and Associates, and earned credit toward the Automotive Management Institute (AMI) Accredited Automotive Manager (AAM) designation.

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The event concluded with a presentation, *The Nepal Journey*, by iATN member Jack Sparks, DMV Clinic. Sparks traveled to Kathmandu, Nepal, to help train and educate local automotive technicians. Sparks took to Nepal more than \$25,000 worth of donations and contributions from iATN members and sponsors.

“You know you’re in the company of some very dedicated people when it’s nearly midnight and there are still clusters of technicians sitting in the hotel lobby talking about diagnostic techniques and equipment,” said Brent Black, iATN founder. “When you consider that most of these technicians flew across the country at a time when others were avoiding air travel, it makes an incredible statement about their level of commitment to this industry,” said Black.

The 2001 Convention was jointly sponsored by ASE (www.asecert.org) and NAPA (www.napaonline.com). Despite recent events, approximately 260 of the 291 people who registered for the event attended.

For additional information about iATN, including the latest membership statistics, visit iATN at www.iatn.net.

iATN is supported by the automotive industry’s top manufacturers, information providers, suppliers, associations and publications. These industry sponsors, along with sponsoring shop and technician members, make iATN possible.

The iATN Mission of Excellence: To promote the continued growth, success and image of the professional automotive technician by providing a forum for the exchange of knowledge and the promotion of education, professionalism and integrity.