



PRESS RELEASE: Automotive Management Receives \$5,000 Donation from Bridgestone/Firestone

Sandy C Gholston to: Archive

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Included below is a release announcing the latest \$5,000 donation from Bridgestone/Firestone to Ferris State University's Automotive Management program. The \$5,000 gifts have been annual from the Bridgestone Americas Technical Trust Fund and, to date, the donations amount to a total of \$25,000. Any media requests regarding this release can be directed to Sandy Gholston, News Services and Social Media Manager.

To read the online version of this story, visit:

<http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/archive/2013/december/firestone.htm>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Automotive Management Receives \$5,000 Donation from Bridgestone/Firestone

BIG RAPIDS – The Bridgestone Americas Technical Trust Fund’s generosity toward Ferris State University’s Automotive Management program is reflected in its now annual donations of \$5,000.

To date, the fund’s donations to Automotive Management amount to \$25,000 and that includes \$5,000 installments in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013.

“This wonderful partnership between the trust fund and Ferris State University is really a win-win situation for everyone involved,” said Mike Ropele, who was a faculty member for more than 25 years in Ferris’ Automotive Management program in the College of Engineering Technology. “We are very fortunate and grateful to have this important partnership with Bridgestone/Firestone.”

Automotive Management graduates enter the workforce with a technical foundation in automotive service, auto body, heavy equipment as well as industry-specific management knowledge. Graduates earn a Bachelor of Science in Automotive Management. Ropele noted that, since the program’s start in 1971, it has produced approximately 2,500 graduates. Pathways for graduates include: aftermarket, customer service, fleet management, parts management, sales management and service management. Other pathways include: working for vehicle/equipment manufacturers, insurance companies, as well as technical assistance hotline engineering and warranty administrative positions.

“The demand for highly-skilled graduates in these areas has always been strong,” Ropele said. “We’re so thankful that Bridgestone/Firestone has recognized the quality of a Ferris graduate and is invested in helping to strengthen educational opportunities for future students.”

Ed Bokhart, a Ferris alumnus with more than 30 years of employment experience at Firestone as a master ASE (Automotive Service Excellence) with L1 and C1 certifications, is intimately involved in this partnership between his employer and his alma mater. Bokhart, representing Firestone, appreciates the collaboration with Ropele and Dan Wanink, program coordinator for Automotive Management and Heavy Equipment Technology.

“It is a great partnership between Firestone and Ferris,” said Bokhart, who works in Grand Rapids and graduated from Ferris with a degree in Business and Marketing Sales in 1980. “We’ve hired several people from Ferris out of the Business and Automotive programs. Our company has hired Ferris grads who are working all over – not just in Michigan.”

“This partnership will enhance student learning as we upgrade facilities so our Auto Management students will have access to the latest in technology,” said Wanink, who noted that the university’s launch of an online option for the B.S. in Automotive Management is providing worldwide access to this program.

In 1988, Bridgestone purchased the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company and today is known as Bridgestone Americas, Inc.

For more information about Automotive Management at Ferris, visit:
<http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/colleges/technolo/auto-heet/amgt/homepage.htm>

To learn more about Bridgestone/Firestone, visit:
<http://www.bridgestone-firestone.com/corporate/howeare/index.html>

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