low dealer engagement and another 100 with even greater potential engagement opportunities. Because of the new capabilities of the portal, AYES will engage more dealers in the coming year. The portal has identified over 6,500 franchise dealerships residing within 15 miles of an affiliated school that are not engaged with their local AYES school. The OEM field organization will distribute a special AYES dealer engagement brochure to increase the opportunities for mentored internships this summer.

Perhaps the greatest value of the new portal is its relationship to the new online process that will reach all dealers of all franchises who are not served by a school affiliated with AYES. The features of this new tool are the critical component to the delivery of the AYES model and process to schools, to dealers served by local schools, and to dealers who are not served by an affiliated school. The new AYES e-learning online process will coordinate AYES and potential dealerships through the portal, and equally important, the portal will deliver the key pieces of the AYES model—the AYES curriculum, SkillsUSA PDP, CCAR, the AYES Exit Exam, the SmartCard authentication process, and more.

The bottom line is simply this: the work and focus of the last two and a half years is bearing fruit. AYES has a new portal process that allows accountability for the delivery of the model, and allows all stakeholders to work together to improve Return on Investment (ROI) through features that have never before been in place. The tools, business rules, and IT-based capabilities are now in place. The road has been bumpy, the delays and missed deadlines associated with these changes have been unfortunate. But we are "there" and the benefits and value will be magnified in the days and months ahead. The real value of the AYES model lies in its delivery to all students and all dealers of all franchises with a consistency of the brand that puts far more young men and women to work in dealerships.

AYES knows where it has been, and most importantly, where it is going.

The direction for the last two years has been to bring accountability for the process and to establish business rules to drive the procedures. Because of this, AYES began implementing a new Letter of Understanding (LOU) with its schools in 2005. This document is the agreement between AYES, the affiliated schools, state or metro Dealer Associations, and Department of Education partners. This document has renewed importance as it clearly establishes a mutual agreement that defines, "if you do this, AYES will do that." The purpose of the new LOU is not to eliminate schools, but to help schools by increasing dealer engagement, improving the delivery of the AYES model, engaging all schools and students with each part of the AYES process, and putting more young men and women to work in dealerships.

Because of the opportunities of the DOL grant, AYES retained the services of McDermott, Will, & Emery, a top 100 firm that specializes in IT law, intellectual property, copyright, and federal contracts. The initiative is particularly pleased that the AYES McDermott team's practice and experience comes through grant administration, patent, and intellectual property law. We also retained the services of Hans Meeder, former assistant secretary of education for vocational programs under the current Bush Administration. Meeder oversaw all state career and technical education plans and brings a working relationship to the table with key state CTE officials, particularly in the Perkins arena.

AYES continues to grow in its value to its stakeholders, to students, and to dealers. AYES will continue to impact more quality

AYES Satisfaction

Service Managers: Would You Recommend Your Dealership Participate in the AYES Program in the Future?

