



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2024.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

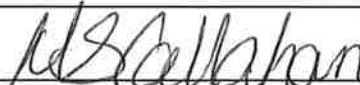
PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: County of Henrico
Program Title: Students Build Race Car at Richmond Raceway
Program Category: Community & Economic Development

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Monica Smith-Callahan
Title: Deputy County Manager for Community Affairs
Signature: 

Program Overview

In July 2023, students who had just graduated a few weeks earlier from Henrico County Public Schools had the opportunity to team up with local business partner, Richmond Raceway and help build a street legal Toyota Camry from the ground up with West Coast Customs. West Coast Customs is most noted for their prime-time appearance as the company featured in MTV's "Pimp My Ride," which ended in 2007 after six seasons. Students from HCPS' auto body, auto technology, precision machining, diesel technologies and welding programs all participated in the event.

Within 48 hours, the car was transformed from bare bones to a running "street legal" car designed by West Coast Customs with the help of HCPS students as part of their technical program of study. Richmond Raceway, located in Henrico County, was a direct business partner for the event. This program gave students the opportunity to show off their talents as well as build long-term relationships.

Henrico County Public Schools recently launched a new motor sports program and the event at Richmond Raceway offered students and staff members the opportunity to talk with experts from Richmond Raceway and West Coast Customs, a firm nationally acclaimed for their auto body program. While the event was successful, our goal is for the event to continue at Richmond Raceway, as well as the partnership between HCPS staff and students and the professionals at West Coast Customs. Our teachers have been in contact with West Coast Customs on various opportunities to help support the division's new motor sports program.

Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality

Students in Henrico County Public Schools had a unique opportunity to participate in a program with one of the division's business partners, Richmond Raceway. Richmond Raceway had been working with West Coast Customs for several months on setting up an event at their July race that involved building a street legal Toyota Camry from the ground up during a race weekend. Students were able to gain firsthand knowledge of the motor sports world through participation in an event at Richmond Raceway. They also had the chance to network and learn about some crosscurricular fields of study such as fabrication, decals, wrapping, painting, body work and welding. Another success of this program is the partnerships formed among our staff and the personnel at Richmond Raceway and West Coast Customs. While the partnership between Richmond Raceway already existed, it didn't necessarily translate to the classroom level, in this case, motor sports. There are many more possible opportunities for further partnership and development along those lines.

West Coast Customs was established in 1993 by founder and CEO Ryan Friedlinghaus, who rose to fame with the nationally acclaimed television show "Pimp My Ride", which premiered on MTV in 2004. After the show ended, the company was featured in shows "Street Customs," "Inside West Coast Customs" and "West Coast Customs" from 2007-18. The company's regular customers include Shaquille O'Neal, will.i.am, Sean "Puffy" Combs and Justin Bieber.

According to conversations the school division had with Friedlinghaus, he had been trying to organize a NASCAR event for more than 10 years. Once the agreement between Richmond Raceway and West Coast Customs was in place, Richmond Raceway contacted Henrico County Public Schools about including students in the inaugural event. West Coast Customs wanted nine students to be part of this program and work side-by-side with them to build the car.

Richmond Raceway afforded the students the opportunity to stay for the race that night and to come back the next day so that they could see the car that they worked on take a lap around the track before the Cookout 400.

While this was a rewarding and unique experience for our students to team up with West Coast Customs through Richmond Raceway, the possibility for future collaboration is most exciting. The teachers of the program have been in communication with both Richmond Raceway and West Coast Customs on ways to continue the partnership and provide more authentic experiences for students in the years to come. Motor sports is an exciting field and this project was an excellent way for our students to be introduced to it.

How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria

The program is an innovative way to immerse students in the work of motor sports, using unique community partnerships. West Coast Customs is considering expanding the event to other tracks, where other businesses and school divisions could easily replicate it. This project is unique and outside the everyday scope of learning. It epitomizes strong business partnerships; Henrico County Public Schools, Richmond Raceway and West Coast Customs provided a unique experience that will continue to affect students for years to come.

How Program Was Carried Out

As we began to work with Richmond Raceway to identify students to participate, we decided to select a mix of students from various related programs. Participants came from HCPS auto body, auto technology, diesel technology, precision machining and welding programs. As part

of preparation for the project, West Coast Customs asked for students' shirt sizes and presented each student with a one-of-a-kind West Coast Customs crew shirt to work in.

Leading up to the event, Richmond Raceway was our main contact. We worked with teachers of the various programs to identify student participants. We provided students' families with a detailed schedule for the weekend, which included a Friday orientation and a three-hour Saturday work shift. The West Coast Customs team would be working throughout the evening on getting the car "street-ready" and running by Sunday morning. The goal was to prepare the car for a lap around the track before Sunday's Cookout 400 NASCAR race.

Once the car was ready and had taken a lap around the track, the car was given to the NASCAR Foundation to be auctioned via a raffle. Tickets were \$25 for a chance to win the car. The winner was announced in November 2023. All proceeds went toward the NASCAR Foundation, described on its website as "a leading charity that works to improve the lives of children who need it most in our NASCAR communities through the Speediatrics Children's Fund and the Betty Jane France Humanitarian Award." The foundation has helped more than 1.7 million children and given more than \$43 million dollars to the cause.

On July 28, the Friday before the event, each student and some instructors came to Richmond Raceway to attend an orientation program. The West Coast Customs crew got to know the students and teachers, fitted them for their uniforms, went over safety measures, learned students' level of expertise and assembled a plan for the next day. The engagement among students, teachers and West Coast Customs crew was amazing and created a dynamic, intimate experience for everyone involved. The group consisted of about 25 people in total, a far cry from the hundreds and thousands of fans that would be coming through the next day.

Work began Saturday, July 29 at 9 a.m. Students spent the next nine hours working side-by-side with West Coast Customs. The day featured interactions with media, interviews, photo-ops and more. The students enjoyed the opportunity to work with West Coast Customs. They had the opportunity to perform a variety of different automotive tasks including wrapping bumper panels, detailing, installing headlights, customizing tires and installing custom West Coast Custom decals.

Financing and Staffing

This event did not cost Henrico County Public Schools anything. The event was put on by Richmond Raceway and the division was offered the opportunity to participate, using existing staff members.

Program results

This program provided numerous results and successes. Students were able to gain firsthand knowledge of the motor sports world through participation in an event at Richmond Raceway. They also had the chance to network and learn about some crosscurricular fields of study such as fabrication, decals, wrapping, painting, body work and welding.

Another success of this program is the partnerships formed among our staff and the personnel at Richmond Raceway and West Coast Customs. While the partnership between Richmond Raceway already existed, it didn't necessarily translate to the classroom level, in this case, motor sports. The opportunities for further partnership and development along those lines are endless.

During the event, the teachers also received some on-the-job training from the personnel at West Coast Customs. They offered advice and expressed a desire to continue the partnership moving forward. HCPS is planning ways for West Coast Customs to continue working with our students in some capacity whether it be a virtually or the possibility of company representatives making another trip to Richmond.

West Coast Customs is nationally acclaimed; to have our motor sports program collaborate with them is a great recruiting tool for future students looking to get a start in the industry.

Brief Summary

In July 2023, students who had just graduated from Henrico County Public Schools had the opportunity to team up with local business partner Richmond Raceway and help build a street legal Toyota Camry from the ground up with West Coast Customs, a company most noted for its appearance on MTV's "Pimp My Ride." Students from HCPS' auto body, auto technology, precision machining, diesel technologies and welding programs all participated in the event.

Within 48 hours, the car was transformed from bare bones to a running "street legal" car designed by West Coast Customs with the help of HCPS students as part of their technical program of study. The program gave students the opportunity to show off their talents as well as build long-term relationships.

Henrico County Public Schools' new motor sports program and the event at Richmond Raceway offered students and staff members the opportunity to talk with experts from Richmond Raceway and West Coast Customs.

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HCPS not only got the chance to continue its partnership with Richmond Raceway, but form a new one with the professionals at West Coast.

Students Build Race Car at Richmond Raceway Supplemental Material

Video - [West Coast Customs & CTE Students at Richmond Raceway \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)



