

**For immediate release:**

### **AIDC and GEP support auto body repair students with tooling kits**

**Winterveld, Pretoria (29 January 2016):** The Automotive Industry Development Centre (AIDC), along with small business development agency partner, Gauteng Enterprise Propeller (GEP), brought some late festive cheer to 33 students who recently completed their NQF Level 2 training in either Panel beating or spray painting at the AIDC's Winterveld Enterprise Hub.

Each Student received a tool kit combo to the value of R9,000, which comprised of a 100L compressor, a 10m hose with couplers, an angle grinder, impact drill, a body file holder, sanding block, a wooden hand sander, a 1.4mm spray gun and a 117 pc toolbox.

The Winterveld Enterprise Hub was established by the AIDC and Gauteng Provincial Government in 2014 as a state-of-the-art auto body repair training facility and workshop; equipped with a spray booth, paint mixing room, chassis straightening equipment, panel beating bays, preparation bays, polishing area, a final inspection area and a quotation system that reduces the risk of underquoting and optimises profit.

The facility employs qualified Master Artisans who provide mentoring and training to trainee artisans, as well as auto body repair SMMEs within the Winterveld community. NQF Level 2 students are trained in spray painting techniques, metal prep techniques, polishing and paint finishing techniques, paint-mixing and colour matching, business acumen and quotation accuracy, amongst others.

Speaking at the handover ceremony, Neeraj Kessery, Department Manager of the Incubation Programmes Department at the AIDC, highlighted that the hub has played a pivotal role in upskilling artisans, and supporting the growth of automotive SMMEs in the Winterveld region.

“Winterveld has always had a strong, yet informal automotive presence, with informal artisans who have received little or no skills development and training,” Kessery explained. “In two years, we’ve successfully trained and mentored students on proper panel beating and spray painting techniques,” he added.

Kessery added that due to the cost of purchasing equipment, many of the students who graduate from the facility are unable to pursue entrepreneurship opportunities in the auto body repair sector. “Without proper tools, it is very difficult to operate in an ever-evolving automotive landscape. We are extremely grateful to GEP for their contribution towards our students,” said Kessery.

Dr David Masondo, CEO at the AIDC, said that he believes that the partnership between the AIDC and GEP will help to unlock numerous opportunities for artisans within Gauteng. “We hope to increase the skills base of the Province to ensure economic growth as outlined by MEC Lebogang Maile’s Township Revitalisation project to transform, modernise and re-industrialise townships,” Masondo added.

Phumlile Tshiredo, Regional Ops Manager at GEP, said that the organisation wants to encourage people in Gauteng to grab these windows of opportunity with both hands and to put every effort into proving their worth with the tool kits.

“We want you to build a better future for yourselves and for others within your community,” said Tshiredo. “We want to alleviate poverty, contribute to and facilitate revitalisation of Gauteng’s township economies, increase the participation of SMMEs and cooperatives in the province’s mainstream economy, and contribute to the growth and development of the key priority sectors,” she explained.

SMMEs directly affiliated to Winterveld Enterprise Hub each received tooling to the value of about R40,000 and will receive continued marketing support from GEP.

To date, 105 trainee artisans have successfully completed NQF Level 2 training at Winterveld Enterprise Hub, with 91 being male and 14 female, highlighting transformation in the automotive sector largely dominated by males.

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**About the AIDC:**

From its humble beginnings in April 2000, the Automotive Industry Development Centre (AIDC) has evolved into a leading implementation agency within government, having pioneered numerous world-first automotive projects and being the recipient of several business accolades. It was established as a government support centre to increase the local automotive industry's global competitiveness and to promote Gauteng as the automotive industry investment destination of choice. Having met all of these objectives, the AIDC prides itself as a world-class organisation which specialises in Skills Developments and Training, Enterprise Development, Incubation Programmes, Management of Incentive Programmes, and offers state-of-the-art manufacturing support facilities. The organisation has expedited economic growth within the automotive sector by partnering with key stakeholders such as industry leaders, government, and non-government agencies, among others.