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TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT: AN UNBEATABLE COMBINATION

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Guided by the belief that training and recruitment are interconnected, AEDF is helping dealers and manufacturers attract and develop a workforce that will keep the industry viable well into the 22nd century.

Now that The AED Foundation (AEDF) is directing its efforts at two specific targets—professional education and workforce development—questions will surely arise about why we are doing both and how the two are related.

After all, it seems that just one of these missions is enough to keep a small foundation busy. However, AEDF's leaders believe there is an inseparable connection between professional education and workforce development that compels every player in the industry not only to do both, but to create programs and activities that are more effective and comprehensive than in the past.

Therefore, our goal is to encourage and provide expanded training for the current workforce and, at the same time, to recruit and motivate young people to become tomorrow's distributor and manufacturer technicians, managers and executives.

We are well past the point of having to explain the importance of this two-lane highway. Virtually every industry company, from the smallest to the largest, understands the burgeoning demand for education and recruitment. But recognizing the need is one thing; doing something concrete about it is another—and that's where the foundation fits in.

AEDF is charged with developing and implementing simple but powerful programs to jump-start individual companies and local organizations. The following are some examples of methods the foundation is using to impress on current and future employees the importance of continuous learning.

Encouraging a "Commitment to Knowledge." Equipment distributors are signing on to this relatively new program, whose message applies equally to manufacturers, builders and contractors, and suppliers of every sort. When it signs on to a "Commitment to Knowledge," a company pledges to give each of its employees the opportunity to acquire at least 40 hours of training every year.

Response among AED's distributor members has been overwhelming. Nearly 150 companies are already enrolled, representing some 20,000 employees. Not only is this working as a motivational program for current employees, it is sending a strong signal to people making career choices that the construction equipment industry is serious about constant training.

Using the power of the Internet. Tapping the potential of cyberspace to train and recruit people is well under way. An AEDF Web site called *AEDUniversity.com* is building a library of training programs and educational options for employees to use.

Say you want information on branch management training. Soon you will be able to browse this Web site for available seminars, online programs, published materials, etc. Another new Web site, called *Construct Your Future*, developed by AEDF in cooperation with the Construction Industry Manufacturers Association (CIMA), will introduce students and other potential employees to the construction equipment industry, its career advantages and opportunities. Yet another planned Web site will provide businesses with model programs and best practices for recruiting prospective employees

These sites will all be linked electronically, just as the topics of training and recruitment are linked intellectually.

Technical training. A multidimensional initiative to improve the educational process for your people preparing for careers as equipment technicians is gaining momentum and adding partners industry wide. AEDF is leading an effort to improve the quality of technical education in post-secondary institutions.

For example, its technical standards are now being used in nearly 150 trade/vocational schools and community colleges. By the end of this year,

schools that have equipment technology programs can apply for accreditation through AEDF and The Equipment & Engine Training Council (EETC)

Another part of this initiative is looking at ways to combine unique high school programs—such as the foundation’s Equipment & Technology Institute at Chicago’s Gage Park High School—with accredited college programs so future equipment technicians will have at least five years of academic and technical training before entering the industry workforce. Improved programs at the college level will also present training opportunities for employees who may not have had access to formal training.