

## **Travis Reed Returns as One of the Top Refinishers in the Nation**

An early morning drive to BWI Airport, a first time flight, a little air sickness, seven hours of travel, and being nearly 1,118 miles from home was not going to get in the way of Travis Reed, who had just graduated from Washington and Lee High School, as he placed 6<sup>th</sup> in the nation at the Skills USA National Championships in Kansas City, MO where competed against forty eight other contestants in the Automotive Refinishing contest from June 20-June 26, 2009.

Travis traveled to compete in the five day competition with, Mr. Matt Ingram, Auto Body Instructor and Mr. David Ferguson, Assistant Principal of the Northern Neck Technical Center. Travis was part of the Virginia Delegation as the State Champion in Automotive Refinishing, which he won in Hampton, VA on March 28, 2009 following his District XI victory in February.

In regards to his champion, Matt Ingram said, "Travis takes pride in his work and shows maturity beyond his years."

Travis may be mature, but he was able to have some fun at the competition where there were nightly activities such as dances, trips to the local amusement park, and sight seeing around Kansas City, and winning the Army Strong Push Up contest for the state of Virginia with 48 Army Approved Push Ups as part of the Skills USA festivities.

Travis hit the ground running and didn't stop until he was back in the Northern Neck. The first day Travis had to take the Skills USA test, which tested Travis's knowledge on Skills USA and what the organization stands for. Travis was also required to take the same ASE Certification test that a professional in Automotive Refinishing field would take.

He then followed that with two days of orientation and professional development preparing for the contests he would be competing in. Travis then had to sit through mock interviews and present a completed resume as if he were applying for a position as an Automotive Refinisher.

The big day came at the expansive Kansas City Convention Center and Travis spent eight rigorous hours completing the following activities a panel repair, scratch repair, estimating, color theory, masking and a bare metal transformation to a finished product. In estimating Travis worked on estimating a damaged vehicle using the latest insurance industry standards. The color theory was plotting color for the best blendable color match for repair. Prior to the contest, Travis had taken a two day course at the PPG Business Center in Baltimore, MD, where he received the Blue Level Certification, which is the entry level certification needed for an Automotive Refinish Technician. Travis was the youngest participant in the course, which helped him in his preparation for Skills USA. Travis then completed a masking section, where he was required to tape a 2008 LT Impala with the latest industry standards for repair. These contests were judged by highly skilled and respected top professionals from the industry.

Friday evening a huge reception with over 20,000 people was held at the Kemper Arena where Travis learned of his sixth place finish in the nation. He was 2.5 points off of winning the competition. That small percentage shows the expertise and tenacity of both Travis and his fellow competitors.

“I was happy to place in the Top 10 and get to enjoy this opportunity,” stated Travis.

The few words spoken by Travis were built on by his teacher, Matt Ingram when asked of this year’s accomplishments and Travis.

“I believe it was an awesome experience and we improved in our second straight year in representing Virginia and the Northern Neck Technical Center. Being a small rural community and a small school competing with larger schools and cities with bigger budgets and access to more opportunities says something about Travis’s ability and willingness to learn and retain new techniques. I look forward to hearing more about his successes in life, Travis has a bright and successful future in front of him”, stated Mr. Ingram.

With instructors like Mr. Ingram, who has taken Virginia’s past two Automotive Refinishing champions to nationals, the Northern Neck Technical Center hopes to continue to build champions and produce productive citizens who can give back to their community along with their local schools.

Any students who are interested in attending the Northern Neck Technical Center need to speak with their school guidance counselors to schedule for a class.