



World Wide Technology Raceway And Ranken Technical College To Partner On Local Drift Alliance Initiative

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ST. LOUIS REGION – Officials from World Wide Technology Raceway and Ranken Technical College today announced a partnership of the development of a grassroots drift initiative for the St. Louis region.

The partnership, known as the Gateway Drift Alliance presented by Ranken Technical College, was unveiled during this weekend's annual Formula Drift event at WWTR.

The GDR serves as a promotional program to further develop the sport of drifting in the Midwest and introduces the construction of purpose-built drifting vehicles into the motorsports program at Ranken Technical College. As part of the announcement, the track and school unveiled a specially-built Corvette that will be utilized for promotional use, as well as competition, with driver Austin Blair.

“World Wide Technology Raceway has been home to drifting events for many years, but this is a tremendous step in our efforts to actively engage the track, our marketing partners, and various drifting promotional programs in hopes of building a ladder system to the professional ranks of Formula Drift,” said Declan O’Neill, WWTR’s Vice President of Business Development. “Austin Blair not only will serve as the driver of the car for exhibition and competition purposes, but he also will act as our liaison to the drifting industry as we continue to grow our motorsports offerings.”

Ranken Technical College students built the 2004 Corvette over the course of two months with guidance from Ranken Automotive Division instructors. The car is equipped with a student-built and tuned supercharged General Motors 5.3L LS engine, custom-built roll cage, and fully tunable suspension system.

“Ranken Technical College has had a great relationship with World Wide Technology Raceway over the years and our students are excited about the drift program,” said Robert Callanan, Automotive Division Chair. “This exciting program will involve detailed conversion of various types of cars into drifting vehicles, at-track support, and technological development with others in the drifting industry. It’s an exciting program designed to attract students who have an interest in one of the fastest-growing forms of motorsports.”

Blair has participated in various forms of auto racing for more than 15 years.

“The St. Louis area already is home to great drifting car builders, mechanics, drivers, and team owners,” said Blair, WWTR’s Drift Alliance coordinator and driver. “Just as our Gateway Kartplex developed with the Ignite Indy program, we want to help develop area talent and work with local, regional, and national drift sanctioning bodies to showcase the sport at WWTR. This is the first time a track and its sponsors have partnered on a program to develop everything from events to participants, so the possibilities truly are endless.”

For more information on WWTR, please visit www.WWTRaceway.com or follow WWTR on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

About World Wide Technology Raceway

World Wide Technology Raceway is the home of INDYCAR, NASCAR and NHRA racing in the St. Louis region. Located just five minutes from downtown St. Louis and covering more than 600 acres, WWTR is the largest outdoor entertainment facility in the area. WWTR's facilities include a 1/4-mile drag strip, 1.25-mile superspeedway, a recently-expanded 2.0-mile road course, a state-of-the-art karting facility, a 14-acre, multi-purpose dirt off-road venue, and the Gateway Drive-In Theater at World Wide Technology Raceway (a drive-in entertainment venue able to accommodate 3,000 cars). WWTR acquired Gateway National Golf Links, adjacent to the speedway property, in 2019. WWTR was the recipient of the 2017 Outstanding Facility of the Year Award from the Race Track Business Conference and the 2017 Spirit of St. Louis Award from the St. Louis Attractions Association. In 2018, owner and CEO Curtis Francois received the Innovator Award from the St. Louis Convention & Visitors Commission in recognition of his work for restoring World Wide Technology Raceway (known then as Gateway Motorsports Park) to prominence. The 2021 season marks Francois' 10th year as owner and CEO of WWTR.