



Bonita Unified

SCHOOL DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bonita Unified Auto Shop Students Hone Technical Skills, Restore Vintage Truck for Community

LA VERNE/SAN DIMAS – Bonita High School advanced auto shop students are getting a glimpse of La Verne's past as they learn skills for the future, working in partnership with the La Verne Historical Society to restore a 1938 International D-35 pickup truck in time for the city's 2022 Fourth of July parade.

The vintage truck has a long and colorful history, representing a time when La Verne served as a hub for southern California's booming citrus industry, and future three-time All-American halfback Glenn Davis led Bonita High to an undefeated season and its first football championship in 1942.

Under the guidance of Bonita High auto shop teacher Rob Zamboni, students are working toward a full restoration of the truck throughout the school year, rebuilding the engine and transmission, adding new tires and brakes, and refurbishing the interior and flatbed. The truck's rustic exterior will be preserved to retain its authenticity. The restoration is a full one-year project.

"The students have done restorations before, but nothing quite like this," Zamboni said. "For 50 minutes a day, Monday through Friday, our kids are focused and engaged on their project, making a little bit of progress every day. This is a true community collaboration. Many of our students have families that go back several generations in La Verne, and everyone is excited to see the truck get back on the road."

At the beginning of the year, students from each of Zamboni's two advanced Auto 102 classes were divided into three teams, with each team responsible for restoring one part of the truck: the rear, which includes the axle; the middle, which includes the transmission; and the front, which includes the engine and suspension. During the year, Zamboni will bring industry restoration professionals to the classroom to mentor the students.

For Bonita High sophomore Rylan Blancett, the restoration serves as an opportunity to collaborate with his classmates and strengthen his problem-solving skills, all of which is necessary to investigate the inner workings of a vehicle that was constructed in a different era of transportation.

"One of the biggest challenges has been to remove the cab. It was welded in place by the owner. We use grinders and saws to get the old bolts off," Blancett said. "This class has already taught me a lot. Mr. Zamboni is a great teacher. We are all motivated to see what the truck will look like when it is fully restored."

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In past years, Bonita Auto 102 students have worked to restore a 1965 Mustang and a 1946 Cushman scooter. Overall, nearly 150 Bonita students are part of the auto shop program.

Zamboni brings a wealth of experience to his position; prior to coming to Bonita in 2019, Zamboni worked at the Peterson Auto Museum in Los Angeles and for Icon 4x4 auto restorers in Chatsworth, as well as teaching a community auto shop class at the Pomona Fairplex.

“Bonita began its auto shop class in 1963. Things have changed quite a bit since then,” Zamboni said. “We blend old and new technologies and use a variety of current and retro tools. We have sample vehicles, and the students also bring in their own cars to work on. Kids today are interesting in the technology. They see the connection between their smart phone and touch screens and how it plays into modern auto manufacturing.”

When the truck is fully restored and the wooden flatbed stakes installed, the names of all the students who worked on the project will be engraved onto the stakes. The students will also be invited to participate in La Verne’s 2022 Fourth of July parade, sitting in the back of the pickup.

“Thank you to the La Verne Historical Society for your partnership in providing our students with the opportunity to restore a piece of La Verne history and gain a valuable, hands-on learning experience,” Superintendent Carl J. Coles said. “We are excited to see our students developing technical skills that will help them live their purpose, and look forward to the day when the International is back on the road.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS

BUSD_AUTO1: Sparks fly as Bonita High School auto shop students work toward restoring a 1938 International pickup truck. Working in partnership with the La Verne Historical Society, students will spend the school year completing a makeover of the vehicle, with the goal of featuring the truck in the 2022 La Verne Fourth of July parade.

BUSD_AUTO2: The cab of a vintage 1938 International pickup truck rests in the Bonita High School auto shop garage, as part of a restoration effort in partnership with the La Verne Historical Society. Guided by Bonita auto shop teacher Rob Zamboni, students in past years have also restored a 1965 Mustang and a 1946 Cushman scooter.

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