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**Cardinal Legacy
Towing Group**

Leading Towing Forward: The Next Chapter Begins

American Towing & Recovery Institute Joins the Newly Formed Cardinal Legacy Towing Group

By Megan Bruns, Director of Marketing & Public Relations

A new era has begun in the towing and recovery industry. The American Towing & Recovery Institute (ATRI) — long recognized as one of the most respected names in tow-operator education — has officially joined forces with the newly formed Cardinal Legacy Towing Group, a powerhouse network uniting eight towing companies stretching from Kansas City to St. Louis, Missouri, and all the way to Naples, Florida.

Together, they're creating something the industry has never seen before — a training and operations network built on shared experience, innovation, and a passion for elevating every level of towing professionalism.

A Legacy of Learning and Leadership

Founded with a mission to elevate industry standards, ATRI has spent decades training thousands of operators nationwide — from light- and heavy-duty recovery to advanced rotator operations, EV safety, and complex incident management. Wes Wilburn, the original founder of the American Towing & Recovery Institute, has been a driving force in the towing and recovery industry for more than 35 years. Known nationwide for his hands-on teaching style, deep technical knowledge, and passion for professionalism, Wes has trained thousands of operators across North America. His commitment to

raising industry standards and fostering a spirit of collaboration has made ATRI a trusted name in towing education and safety.

Now, under the Cardinal Legacy Towing Group umbrella, ATRI is expanding its reach and updating every aspect of its training library. New courses, modernized materials, and the addition of multiple new instructors mean that towing professionals will have access to the most state-of-the-art, up-to-date training available anywhere in the country. JT Reasor represents the next generation of towing education — a seasoned rotator operator with nearly two decades of hands-on experience in heavy recovery. Known for his precision, professionalism, and ability to teach complex techniques in a practical, approachable way, JT brings a fresh energy to ATRI's instructor team. His real-world expertise and passion for advancing the industry make him a key part of shaping the future of towing training.

“We’re taking everything great about ATRI and amplifying it,” says Jeff Bauer, President of Cardinal Legacy Towing Group. “Our goal is to prepare operators not just to work — but to lead.”

The Birth of the Cardinal Legacy Towing Group

The formation of the Cardinal Legacy Towing Group marks a bold move toward unity in the towing world. By combining eight respected companies — each with decades of experience and unique expertise — this new group brings together a powerhouse of talent, equipment, and operational excellence.

At the helm of this vision is Kurtis Barks, Founder of Cardinal Legacy Towing Group and CEO of several successful towing and automotive businesses across the Midwest. With more than 30 years in the industry, Barks built his companies on a foundation of professionalism, innovation, and community connection. His mission is to move the towing industry forward by bridging the gap between technical skill and true leadership development — creating opportunities for drivers, dispatchers, and managers to grow beyond the truck. Through his leadership, the Cardinal Legacy network continues to embody integrity, teamwork, and a deep respect for the people who keep America's roads safe.

Together, Kurtis Barks and Jeff Bauer have spent years building and acquiring some of the most trusted names in towing and recovery across the region. What began with Complete Auto Body & Repair grew into a family of companies that now includes A&A Towing, A2B Towing & Recovery, Bolin Services, Cardinal Towing, Lazer Tow in Kansas City, and Bald Eagle Towing in Naples, Florida. Each company brings its own legacy of excellence, community service, and reliability, now united under one shared vision: to elevate the towing profession through collaboration, education, and leadership. The

creation of the Cardinal Legacy Towing Group cements that vision, aligning experience and innovation across every division.

With a footprint that spans the Midwest to the Gulf Coast, Cardinal Legacy's companies represent the full spectrum of towing services: heavy-duty recovery, light-duty assistance, roadside support, specialized transport & equipment hauling, and more. Together, they're not only shaping the future of towing operations but also investing in the people behind the trucks.

"Our people are our greatest asset," Barks adds. "We want to create a culture where leadership, teamwork, and professionalism are just as important as technical skill."

Introducing Leadership Training for the Towing Industry

In 2026, ATRI and Cardinal Legacy will roll out an all-new Leadership Series, designed and led personally by Jeff Bauer, a Certified John Maxwell Trainer. This innovative two-day course will focus on personal growth, communication, and business leadership, for not only the towing and recovery industry, but for leaders of all industries.

Bauer's down-to-earth, relatable style has already earned him respect across the industry. His sessions blend humor, storytelling, and actionable lessons that every tow operator, dispatcher, and manager can apply immediately — both on and off the job.

"Leadership isn't about titles — it's about influence," Bauer says. "We're teaching real-world skills that help people lead themselves, their teams, and their companies with integrity and confidence."

The Road Ahead

With updated training programs, new certifications, and a renewed focus on professional development, ATRI and Cardinal Legacy Towing Group are charting a new course for the industry. From the shop floor to roadside, from apprentices to seasoned operators, the message is clear: Leadership. Legacy. Lifelong Learning.

The combination of both hands-on training and leadership development positions this partnership as a true industry game-changer — and the road ahead has never looked brighter.

“This is just the beginning,” says Barks. “We’re not slowing down — we’re expanding, innovating, and investing in the people who will carry this industry forward for generations to come.”

Learn More

For upcoming class dates, certifications, and leadership events, visit amtowsignup.org or go to cardinallegacytowing.com to learn more about the Cardinal Legacy Towing Group or to apply to be a part of our team!

Together, we’re leading towing forward — One Company, One Driver, One Class at a Time.