



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 23 APRIL 2019

Media Contact: Teri Chouinard CBC, APR, SPE Automotive Div. Communications Chair 248.701.8003
teri@intuitgroup.com

SPE® AUTOMOTIVE DIV. INNOVATION AWARDS COMPETITION & GALA EXPANDS AFTERMARKET CATEGORY TO INCLUDE LIMITED EDITION AND SPECIALTY VEHICLES

- Most Innovative Use of Plastics Award Nominations (due September 6, 2019)

Categories include: Limited Edition/Specialty Vehicles and Aftermarket, Additive Manufacturing, Body Exterior, Body Interior, Chassis/Hardware, Environmental, Materials, Powertrain, Process Assembly and Enabling Technologies, and Safety

TROY, (DETROIT) MICH. – The Automotive Division of the Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE®) is expanding the aftermarket category to include limited edition and specialty vehicles. “New plastic technologies are enabling creative low-volume applications on limited edition vehicles, police cruisers, emergency vehicles, heavy truck applications and aftermarket parts and components,” said Dr. Jeffery Helms, global automotive sales director – engineered materials, Celanese and **SPE Automotive Innovation Awards Gala** chair. “Expanding the aftermarket category to include these low-volume applications will showcase plastic innovation in these areas while demonstrating how plastics are now also a practical and cost-effective manufacturing solution,” added Helms.

This year’s Awards Gala will be held **Wednesday, November 6, 2019** at the Burton Manor (www.burtonmanor.net) in Livonia, Mich. Winning part nominations (due by **September 6, 2019**) in 10 different categories, and the teams that developed them, will be honored with a “Most Innovative Use of Plastics” award. A “Grand Award” will be presented to the winning team from all category award winners. An application that has been in continuous use for 15 years or more and has made a significant and lasting contribution to the application of plastics in automotive vehicles (nominations due by **May 31, 2019**) will be honored with a “Hall of Fame” award. Nominations must be submitted online via:

<http://speautomotive.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2019-SPE-Innovation-Awards-Program-Part-Nomination-Form-V1.pdf>

“Polymer technologies are advancing mobility by enabling mass savings, greater design flexibility, enhanced performance and more,” said Jeffrey Helms, global automotive sales director, Celanese, who returns as the 2019 **SPE Automotive Innovation Awards** chair. “This led to the selection of *Plastics – Advancing Mobility* as our 2019 program theme. Plastics technologies are enabling automakers to provide the advanced performance and comfort features their customers want while meeting global regulatory and affordability targets. Plastics and composites are the leading material solution for automotive applications today and will be used even more in the future with the growth of autonomous vehicles with advanced communications and connectivity,” added Helms.

Since 1970, the **SPE Automotive Innovation Awards Competition** has highlighted the positive changes that polymeric materials have brought to automotive and ground-transportation industries, such as weight and cost reduction, parts consolidation, increased safety, and enhanced aesthetics and design freedom. At the time the competition started, in 1970, many OEM designers and engineers thought of plastics as inexpensive replacements for more “traditional” materials. To help communicate that plastics were capable of far more functionality than their typical use as decorative knobs and ashtrays indicated, members of the board of directors of SPE’s Automotive Division created the competition to recognize successful and innovative plastics applications and to communicate their benefits to OEMs, media, and the public.

Over the years, the competition drew attention to plastics as an underutilized design tool and made the industry aware of more progressive ways of designing, engineering, and manufacturing automotive components. From its humble beginnings, the competition has grown to be one of the most fiercely contested recognition events in the automotive and plastics industries.

Today, polymeric materials are no longer substitutes for more expensive materials, but rather are the materials of choice in hundreds of different applications throughout the vehicle. Without plastics, many of the auto industry’s most common comfort, control, and safety applications would not be possible.

During the competition phase of the event, dozens of teams made up of OEMs and suppliers work for months to hone submission forms and presentations describing their part, system, or complete vehicle module to support claims that it is the year’s **“Most Innovative Use of Plastics.”** To win, teams must survive a pre-competition review and two rounds of presentations before industry and media judges.

There is no cost to nominate parts; however, nominations that are accepted into the competition need to be presented (in person or via webinar) by their nominating teams during the first round of **Automotive Innovation Awards Competition** judging, September 26 – 27, 2019 in Auburn Hills, Michigan. Finalists from that round advance to a second presentation before a panel of Blue Ribbon judges made up of media, retired chief engineers, and other industry experts on October 4, 2019 (also in Auburn Hills, Michigan). Winners of each part category, the Grand Award, Hall of Fame, and Lifetime Achievement winner will all be honored during the **Automotive Innovation Awards Gala** on November 6, 2019. This annual event currently draws over 800 OEM engineers, automotive and plastics industry executives, and media. Funds raised from the event are used to support SPE educational programs including technical seminars and conferences, which help educate and secure the role of plastics in the advancement of the automobile.

The mission of SPE is to promote scientific and engineering knowledge relating to plastics worldwide and to educate industry, academia, and the public about these advances. SPE's Automotive Division is active in educating, promoting, recognizing, and communicating technical accomplishments in all phases of plastics and plastic-based composite developments in the global transportation industry. Topic areas include applications, materials, processing, equipment, tooling, design, and development.

For more information about the SPE Automotive Innovation Awards Competition and Gala see www.speautomotive.com/innovation-awards-gala.

For more information on the Society of Plastics Engineers, see www.4spe.org.

#####

® SPE is a registered trademark of the Society of Plastics Engineers.



Shown above are members of the team that developed last year's Grand Award and Powertrain category winner –the Vacuum Generation System for Brake Assist on the 2017 Ford F-150 pickup from Ford Motor Co.

Attn: Editors: A high resolution version of the photo above is included with the email distribution of this press release. A large collection of SPE Automotive Division digital photography is also available for download at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/speautomotive/albums>

Contact Teri@intuitgroup.com for assistance with photos.

SPE® is a registered trademark of the Society of Plastics Engineers. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.