



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 22 FEBRUARY 2022

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SPE® ANNOUNCES “CALL FOR NOMINATIONS” FOR 51ST ANNUAL AUTOMOTIVE INNOVATION AWARDS COMPETITION & GALA – “PLASTICS: ENABLING AN EVOLUTION IN MOBILITY” (Nov. 2, 2022)

- **Most Innovative Use of Plastics Award Nominations (due by September 7, 2022)**
- **New Category for 2022: EV and AV Systems** – To recognize innovative polymer components for Electric and Autonomous Vehicles

TROY, (DETROIT) MICH. – The Automotive Division of the Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE®) is announcing a “Call for Nominations” for its 51st annual *Automotive Innovation Awards Gala*, the oldest and largest recognition event (established in 1970) in the automotive and plastics industries. This year’s Awards Gala will be held **Wednesday, November 2, 2022** at the Burton Manor (www.burtonmanor.net) in Livonia, Mich. Winning part nominations in 11 different categories, and the teams that developed them, will be honored with a **“Most Innovative Use of Plastics”** award. This year’s program will include a new category - **“EV and AV Systems”** – to recognize innovative polymer components for Electric and Autonomous Vehicles. Additional categories include: Additive Manufacturing, Aftermarket & Limited Edition/Specialty Vehicles, Body Exterior, Body Interior, Chassis/Hardware, Environmental, Materials, Powertrain, Process/Assembly/Enabling Technologies, and Safety. 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, 2022**) will be honored with a **“Hall of Fame”** award. Additional criteria for a HOF award is that the nomination be: game changing; very successful worldwide; innovative in materials, process and application; and still being used. The HOF committee consists of engineers, managers, executives, technical experts, SPE Fellows, SPE Honored Service Members and automotive industry technical experts having served at least 30 plus years in the industry.

Nominations must be submitted online via: <https://speautomotive.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/2022-SPE-Innovation-Awards-Program-Part-Nomination-Form-V1.pdf>

“Plastics have always enabled innovative advancements in automotive vehicle design, manufacturing and lightweighting,” said Jeffrey Helms, global automotive director, Celanese Corp., who returns as the 2022 *SPE Automotive Innovation Awards* chair. “Now plastics are enabling an evolution in mobility including electric and autonomous vehicles and other mobility applications,” added Helms. “We’re looking forward to recognizing the evolving automotive innovations made possible with plastics and returning to full attendance, 800 attendees approximately, at this year’s event,” continued Helms. “The last two years have been challenging due to COVID-19 and 2022 is looking promising.”

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 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 to the SPE Automotive Div. Board of Directors during the first round of ***Automotive Innovation Awards Competition*** judging, September 15 - 16, 2022 at Celanese Corp. 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 September 23, 2022 (also at Celanese Corp. in Auburn Hills, Mich.) 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 2, 2022. This annual event typically 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 Div., see <https://speautomotive.com/>. For more information on the Society of Plastics Engineers, see www.4spe.org.

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Shown above are members of the team that developed the 2021 Grand Award and Chassis/Hardware Category Winner – the Multi-Material Rear Leaf Spring on the 2021 Ford Motor Co. Ford F-150.

For more information:

<https://speautomotive.com/innovation-awards-competition-and-gala/>

Attn: Editors: A large collection of SPE Automotive Division digital photography is available for download at:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/speautomotive/albums/with/72157673717033072>

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