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FORD EXPEDITION SUV WINS 2025 VEHICLE ENGINEERING TEAM AWARD FROM SPE® AUTOMOTIVE DIV.

TROY, MICH. — Designed for real life with smart tech, versatility, and an adventurous attitude, the 2025 Ford Expedition turns school runs and road trips into premium, connected experiences powered by plastics engineering. In light of their advances, Ford Motor Co. (Dearborn) and its suppliers for the all-new, full-size SUV clinched the **Vehicle Engineering Team Award (VETA)** given by the Automotive Division of the Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE®). The joint team will be honored at the 54th **SPE Automotive Innovation Awards Gala** on **November 5, 2025**.

Created in 2004, the VETA award periodically recognizes the polymer-enabled technical achievements of full, cross-functional teams – including designers, engineers, tier integrators, materials suppliers, toolmakers, and manufacturing partners. Their research, design, engineering, and production work is the catalyst that creates significant, vehicle-level integration of polymer materials.



The 2025 Ford Expedition SUV joins past VETA winners, including:

- 2004 MY Porsche Carrera GT Supercar
- 2009 MY Ford Flex CUV
- 2010 MY Ford Taurus Sedan
- 2011 MY Ford Explorer SUV
- 2011 MY Chrysler 200 & Dodge Avenger Sedans
- 2013 MY SRT Viper Supercar
- 2018 MY Chevrolet Traverse SUV
- 2020 MY Chevrolet Corvette Stingray
- 2021 MY Ford F-150 Pickup
- 2022 MY Cadillac Lyriq Electric SUV
- 2023 MY Chevrolet Corvette E-Ray

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2025 SPE Vehicle Engineering Team Award Winner

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The 2025 Expedition team delivered a technology-forward, family-size SUV that layers everyday usability with premium driver-focused features. A new Tremor model in the line adds better control in off-pavement and challenging terrains, while updated exterior details and interior appointments sharpen the vehicle's look and feel. Inside every 2025 model, a 24-in. wide panoramic display centers the cabin experience. This expansive screen integrates navigation, media, and vehicle controls, and ties in zone lighting and accessory functions around the vehicle. Storage and versatility were stepped up with an all-new power sliding console, thoughtful hidden-storage solutions, and the introduction of the Ford Split Gate, which transforms the rear area into a table or seating. The illumination signature advances both inside and out: integrated roof-rail lamps support camping and tailgating, part of Ford's Linger Longer design plan. A new instrument-panel light pipe delivers a seamless, continuously lit line with a single component. Across these touches, polymers made it possible for the engineering team to consolidate parts, improve serviceability, control mass and cost, and maintain durability under real-world use - heat, UV, and repeated wear. The result is an SUV where the user-experience upgrades aren't bolted on. They're molded in.

As with prior VETA winners, Expedition's recognition reflects an exceptional number of vehicle-level innovations. Many of these advancements were also nominated across SPE's category competition this year. Together, they show how the team used plastics to raise function, finish, and serviceability in ways customers can feel, and include:

- Aftermarket & Limited Edition /Specialty Vehicles Category: **Cargo Shelf & Seat Back** – Versatile by design, the Expedition cargo management system transforms from a flat load surface into a seat back for tailgate bench mode, then stows in the rear bin without cutting into cargo volume. Engineering focus went into the seat-back function: the plastic structure was tuned to manage two people leaning back at once, eliminating a steel reinforcement and trimming 420 g. The single component aligns with adjacent parts to manage loads and packaging, simplifying system integration. Materials include PP and POM, selected for stiffness, durability, and wear at hinges and latch points. The result is practical flexibility for camping, tailgating, and everyday use, achieving benchmarks set for the new vehicle design. The *system supplier* was Genesis Group; *material processors* were Genesis Group & NYX LLC; the *material suppliers* were Washington Penn, PRET USA & Celanese; and the *materials* used were PPH5TF2 PP, 5132T-729-A3 PP, and Hostaform C9021 POM.
- Body Exterior Category: **Integrated Roof Rail Lighting** – Unified roof-rail lighting (part of the Linger Longer design initiative) on the 2025 Ford Expedition places high-mounted lamps within a bracket and cover, blending into the rail profile when off and acting as rear-focused lights for camping and tailgating when on. The system ties into the vehicle's 360 Zone Lighting and is controlled through the center screen. Thermal simulations guided material selection for this feature; a 45% glass-filled PP bracket and rear cover withstand up to 84 °C without a heat shield while maintaining gloss. Optimized packaging enables the lamp to ship and install as a separate end item. Serviceability stays simple: remove the rear cover, back out one screw, and unplug the harness. The *system supplier* was JAC Products; *material processor* Rebo Lighting & Electronics, LLC; the *material supplier* was Asahi Kasei Corp.; *material* used was Thermylene PP; and the *tooling supplier* was Mold Cam Tool & Engineering.

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3-3-3-3

- **Body Interior Category: Power Sliding Console** – A redesigned power sliding console mechanism and structure delivers best-in-class 32.4 L storage (open or closed). Executed in 35% glass- and talc-filled PP, the Flex Powered Console replaces cast magnesium with a POM bracket and PP upper retainer with integrated third rail that trims mass by 2 kg ($\approx 20\%$ vs. direct competitors), cuts part count in half, and saves about \$20 per vehicle while maintaining rigidity. The console travels 200 mm, adds a locking feature to protect valuables, and places an intuitive power switch ahead of the armrest. Hidden storage sits beneath the cupholders/media tray, with 47% recycled resin used in the upper retainer/rail. The *system supplier and material processor was Summit Polymers, Inc.; the material suppliers were Washington Penn and Celanese Corp.; materials used were Pro-Touch 8665 PP/EPDM and Celcon M90 POM; and the tooling supplier was Commercial Tool & Die, Inc.*
- **Body Interior Category: Integrated Light Pipe Carrier and Lens** – An ambient-light pipe carrier and diffuse lens are injection molded into one polycarbonate part attached to the IP substrate. The result is a continuous, segment-free appearance across a long run using only three LEDs, vs. the 40 to 50 LEDs typical of acrylic light-pipe applications, while maintaining uniform intensity without hot spots. Optical geometry in the PC guide manages coupling, mixing, and cutoff in tight packaging, and the resin's clarity and UV stability suit the high-load IP zone. Consolidation trims parts and assembly steps, contributing to $\sim 33\%$ cost savings versus the prior multi-piece stack. Fewer interfaces also improve perceived quality by eliminating visible part-line breaks. The *system supplier was Methode Electronics Automotive Solutions Group; material processor and tooling supplier was CY Molds Limited; the material supplier was Covestro AG; and the material used was Makrolon 2407-021532 PC.*
- **Body Interior Category: Split Tailgate Flipper/Scuff and Liftgate Panels** – Enhancing bench-mode functionality required a revised flipper/scuff and liftgate trim that could manage wear, illumination alignment, and closeouts without metal reinforcements. Injection molded TPO and PP substrates with tuned textures were developed to meet scratch and mar resistance for repeated ingress and egress, while maintaining flexibility at low temperature. The molded Ford Split Gate keeps gaps and flush consistent in open and closed positions and supports adjustable lighting alignment within the liftgate space. Molded-in attachment points simplify assembly and reduce loose hardware. The system delivers durable surfaces where customers load gear and sit, sustaining finish quality and fit while trimming mass and part count compared to plastic-metal hybrid solutions. The *system supplier and material processor was NYX, LLC; tooling suppliers were HS Inc. & D.S. Mold, LLC; material suppliers were Advanced Composites, Inc., Sumika Polymers North America, ExxonMobil; and the materials used were ADX5017 TPO TF20, CHN-210 TPO TF20, and PP7855E1 PP.*
- **Safety Category: Integrated Dual Brightness Enhancement Film** – Designing a car-forward display created safety concerns due to windshield reflection. The team employed ALCF A5+ film from 3M, which integrates its Light Control and Dual Brightness Enhancement Films, other layers, and LCD panels to remove that reflection. In this first application of the hybrid film, a 28-inch display is viewable over the steering wheel with a narrowed viewing angle. A PC louver

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4-4-4-4

layer tilts toward the driver eye box by 3 to 5 degrees while another layer maintains display efficiency. Consolidation trims parts and assembly for a \$10/part cost savings. 3M uses roll-to-roll microreplication along with other processes to create the hybrid film. **The system supplier was AUO Corporation; material processor, material supplier, and tooling supplier was 3M Company; and the materials used were PET and PC.**

- **Sustainability Category: Molded-in-Color Door Handle** – This is the first known production use of color-mastered, molded-in-color, post-consumer recycled PA for class-A trim. The Expedition’s new door handle also meets appearance, scratch and mar, UV, stiffness, and strength requisites while remaining cost-neutral to virgin material. The formulation delivers consistent gloss and hue without secondary paint, avoiding VOCs and paint-shop variation. As implemented, each handle assembly contains 25% PCR content, with four assemblies per vehicle, diverting an estimated 131.8 metric tons of PA waste from landfills annually at a one-million-vehicle scale. Molded-in color also improves durability in high-touch areas by eliminating chip-prone coatings and paint. The *system supplier* and *material processor* was Novares Group; the *material supplier* was BASF; *material* used was Nypel 6035GM RC25 BK23220 PA.

“Plastics-driven materials innovation helped unlock many of the advances in the all-new Ford Expedition and Lincoln Navigator,” said Adrian Aguirre, Expedition and Navigator Chief Engineer. “It enabled best-in-class, flexible storage with our power sliding console and a clearer, car-forward 24-inch display using integrated dual brightness enhancement film, while trimming mass, part count, and cost. We’re honored to receive SPE’s Vehicle Engineering Team Award. This honor reflects our cross-functional teams’ and supplier partners’ commitment to innovation-elevating capability, safety, and the overall customer experience.”

The OEM and supplier teams that worked on the 2025 Ford Expedition SUV will be honored at this year’s SPE Automotive Innovation Awards Gala on November 5th at Laurel Manor in Livonia in the Detroit suburbs. That event begins with a VIP Cocktail Reception sponsored by Celanese starting at 4:00 p.m. At 4:30 p.m., the main exhibit area opens for general admission guests to review the Automotive Innovation Awards part nominations and vehicle displays. Dinner begins at 6:00 p.m. and the awards program itself runs from 7:00-9:00 p.m. The evening concludes with an Afterglow Reception from 9:00-11:00 p.m.

SPE’s Automotive Innovation Awards Program is the oldest and largest competition of its kind in the automotive plastics industry. Dozens of teams made up of OEMs, tier suppliers, and polymer producers submit nominations describing their part, system, or complete vehicle and why it merits the claim as the Year’s Most Innovative Use of Plastics. This annual event typically draws up to 800 OEM engineers, automotive and plastics industry executives, and media. As is customary, funds raised from this event are used to support SPE educational efforts and technical seminars, which help educate and secure the role of plastics in the advancement of the automobile.

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2025 SPE Vehicle Engineering Team Award Winner

5-5-5-5

SPE's mission 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 for all aspects of plastics and plastic-based composites developments in the global transportation industry, including applications, materials, processing, equipment, tooling, design, and development.

For more info on the SPE Automotive Innovation Awards Gala: <https://speautomotive.com/spe-automotive-div-innovation-awards/#media>

For more info on the SPE Automotive Division: <https://speautomotive.com/>

For more info on the Society of Plastics Engineers: <https://www.4spe.org/>

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TROY, MICH. — On **November 5**, a team from Ford Motor Co. and its suppliers that developed the 2025 MY Ford Expedition SUV will be honored as winners of the 2025 **Vehicle Engineering Team Award (VETA)** given by the Automotive Division of the Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE®) at its 54th-annual ***SPE Automotive Innovation Awards Gala***. This year's model, dubbed the All-New Ford Expedition, is tech-forward and geared for active family adventures as well as busy everyday schedules. In one new feature, a redesigned **Power Sliding Console** contributes best-in-class 32.4 L storage, incorporates a locking feature, and uses a polymer-intensive mechanism and structure to replace metal content while cutting mass and part count. Executed in PP and POM with a molded-in third rail, the assembly travels 200 mm and adds hidden storage beneath the cupholders/media tray.

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Photography courtesy Ford Motor Co. For high-res digital art, please contact Teri Chouinard.



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TROY, MICH. — Expedition's **Integrated Roof Rail Lighting** packages high-mounted lamps into a bracket/cover that blends into the rail when not in use and supports camping and tailgating when powered on. Tied into the vehicle's 360-degree zone lighting and controlled through the center screen, the design uses a glass-filled PP bracket and rear cover validated for heat and gloss retention without a heat shield. This element is part of the Linger Longer design initiative aimed at enabling customers to extend vehicle use after the sun goes down, whether they're camping, tailgating, or traveling at night.

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TROY, MICH. — Interior innovations in this year’s VETA award vehicle include an above-the-steering wheel-display that employs an **Integrated Dual Brightness Enhancement Film**, which narrows viewing angle to reduce windshield reflection while maintaining efficiency. This film combines Light Control and DBEF layers from 3M in a large, first-of-its-kind hybrid film execution for automotive. Consolidation trimmed parts and assembly steps to improve economics.

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