

WELCOME

FROM THE 2006 ACCE CHAIR



On behalf of the Automotive and Composites Divisions of the Society of Plastics Engineers, International, welcome to the 6th-Annual **Automotive Composites Conference and Exhibition**. This year's theme, *Composites: Efficiency, Value, Performance,* reinforces the unique ability of polymer composites to improve all three factors in automotive design. A second theme of the conference might be "more" – more international, more speakers, more innovations, and more chances to learn and interact.

In a global environment of rising and ever-uncertain oil prices, a renewed focus on fuel economy is putting composites right back into the spotlight. No other materials category offers automotive designers as many options to lower mass, increase differentiation, and offer more functionality and performance. And this year's conference is replete with examples of these advantages.

So where are we offering "more" this year?

- ~ **SMC is back**, and in a big way! We have a whole day of sessions dedicated to SMC, plus a few extra papers spread among other sessions highlighting recent advancements in this important material.
- ~ **Three panel sessions**, once each day of the conference, covering *Growth in Thermoset Composites*, *Integrating Composites into OEM Operations*, and the important and popular OEM session, *The Future of Automotive Composites*.
- ~ **Eight distinguished keynote speakers** providing valuable perspectives, from Japan, India, and Europe, and from notable U.S. organizations like the American Plastics Council, Department of Energy, and Boeing.
- ~ **A record number of sponsors, exhibitors and technical papers** across multiple technologies and applications, including new sessions on *Analysis and Simulation* and *Novel Composite Solutions*. Two sponsored evening receptions provide further opportunities to network and explore the latest technology on display.

Additional sessions for this year's conference include *Long Fiber Thermoplastics*, *Enabling Technologies*, *Nanocomposites*, *Bio- and Natural-Fiber Composites*, *Structural Applications*, and *New Materials*. Authors hail from the U.K., Germany, The Netherlands, Malaysia, Japan, Australia, and North America, making this the most global conference dedicated to automotive composites.

This conference has become a year-round endeavor. The members of the SPE Automotive and Composites Divisions on the committee meet shortly after the conference to review participant feedback and begin planning the next year's event. Many of these volunteers have been associated with this conference for a number of years, a key reason it keeps getting better! I would like to personally thank each committee member for his / her contributions.

Of course, the conference could not exist without the support of our authors, presenters, keynote speakers, sponsors, and attendees, and I thank each of them as well. Since we are all here to learn as well as teach, I challenge each of you to seek out speakers and exhibitors in those areas that interest you and engage in a constructive dialogue about how their ideas and yours can come together to create solutions that are indeed *efficient, value creating, and high performance*.

Please enjoy the conference, and please contact any of our committee members if you have questions, need assistance, or to offer feedback to help us make next year's event even better.

Best Regards,

Dale Brosius

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