

# Welcome

## to ACCE 2008

On behalf of the Automotive and Composites Divisions of the Society of Plastics Engineers, International (SPE®), welcome to the 8th-Annual **Automotive Composites Conference and Exhibition** (ACCE). This year's theme, "**The Road to Lightweight Performance**," highlights the progress transportation OEMs, tier suppliers, and composites producers have made in taking weight out and improving vehicle performance by replacing metal and glass with lightweight, impact- and corrosion-resistant polymer composites. Given sustained high oil prices and the pressures to improve fuel economy, engine technology and alternative powertrains can only go so far. Making vehicles lighter without sacrificing safety, aesthetics, and fun can substantially assist in meeting market needs, as many of the displays, papers, and keynote addresses presented at this year's conference demonstrate.

Over the course of the last eight years, we have established the ACCE as the *World's Leading Automotive Composites Forum*, attracting presenters and attendees year after year from Europe, Asia-Pacific, the Middle East, and the Americas. No other conference provides the breadth of topics related to composites for ground transportation as the one you are attending.

In the past two years we have implemented a number of improved features, based on feedback from participants, and in 2008 have continued the best of them, including:

- ~ A vibrant program that includes over **70 technical papers and keynote presentations** across multiple technologies and applications, including speakers from outside the automotive industry providing alternate perspectives about the value of composite materials.
- ~ Recognizing the increasing importance of partnering in solving future fuel-economy issues, we have developed a **panel discussion on government-industry collaboration** in automotive composites, featuring representatives from the U.S. Department of Energy, the Automotive Composites Consortium, and the supply community. We anticipate this panel session to be both entertaining and informative, particularly in light of our usual "active" audience participation.
- ~ All displays in a single large room to facilitate booth visits and improve traffic flow during breaks, making it easier to obtain food and beverage. Please visit our sponsors, whose generosity allows us to host this event each year. Two sponsored evening receptions provide further opportunities to network and explore the latest technologies on display.
- ~ Awarding **two scholarships** this year to graduate students performing research in the area of composites for ground transportation. The winners of last year's scholarships are presenting the results of their graduate work at this year's conference. This year's winners will present their work in 2009.
- ~ **Best Paper Awards** in the categories of *New Materials, Processing / Enabling Technologies*, and *New Composite Applications*. The winning entries were selected from among written papers submitted for peer review, and the authors will be recognized at the start of the conference.

A year-round effort by members of the SPE Automotive and Composites Divisions on the planning committee allows us to seamlessly pull together an excellent program for this important learning and sharing event. Many of these team members have been committed for a number of years, and I would like to personally thank each committee member for his / her contributions.

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.

I encourage you to take advantage of this unique confluence of automotive composites knowledge to forge new relationships and strengthen existing ones as you seek answers to your most challenging questions.

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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