



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (10/21/08)**  
**SPE-ACCE-06-08**

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## **SPE<sup>®</sup> AUTOMOTIVE COMPOSITES SHOW A SUCCESS DESPITE POOR NORTH AMERICAN, EUROPEAN AUTOMOTIVE MARKETS**

**TROY (DETROIT), MICH.** – Despite very-slow automotive sales in both North America and Europe throughout most of 2008, the SPE<sup>®</sup> **Automotive Composites Conference & Exhibition** (ACCE) held September 16-18, 2008 here, drew nearly 400 attendees from five continents and broke records for the most sponsorship in the event's eight-year history. Show organizers say this indicates a strong level of support for both the industry and this conference among automotive composites suppliers and processors, and that even as automakers struggle to reconfigure their current fleets, they are also looking to the future and are clearly evaluating the value proposition polymer composites provide.

Dale Brosius, of Quickstep Technologies Pty. Ltd. and the 2008 ACCE conference chair noted, "I've received a lot of positive feedback from attendees about the quality of this year's program with many saying it was our best yet. Although we didn't break a record for attendance, we held up well despite this year's significant economic challenges. I attribute this to the auto industry's urgent need to find proven solutions for improving fuel economy in response to recent petroleum price hikes and higher Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards that will kick in shortly. The lightweighting plus cost out that composites bring when effectively implemented place these materials high on the list of valid options for making our vehicles 'greener' without sacrificing design, safety, or convenience features."

Dr. Frank Henning, Fraunhofer Institut Chemische Technologie (ICT) and ACCE program vice-chair added, "Our conference's venue continues to offer just the right mix: it has the space for private conversations, but is compact enough for attendees to visit many technical tracks and exhibits in a single day. This, plus the international audience we attract, helps make it easy to network and build relationships across town and across continents."

-more-

Antoine Rios, the Madison Group and Fred Buck, Commercial Vehicle Group, were the event's technical program co-chairs. Speaking about this year's conference, Rios said, "We had a really solid technical program – our second largest ever – with speakers traveling from approximately 14 countries to update attendees on the latest technical breakthroughs and uses of composite materials. We were also fortunate to attract nine excellent and interesting keynote speakers. We had representatives from automakers and their tier suppliers, academia, government agencies and national labs, and OEMs from Formula 1 racing and high-performance bikes – all discussing current, near-term, and future capabilities of composite products."

Continues Buck, "At this year's show, we also held a government and industry panel discussion that proved to be quite lively, as all of our panels are. We also developed a special technical session to discuss how composite applications were being translated between the automotive and commercial truck markets – something new for our show. The diversity of the topics covered over these 3 days and the distance speakers, sponsors, and attendees traveled to attend confirms once again that our conference is indeed *the world's leading automotive composites forum.*"

Noting the year's record-setting sponsorship, Teri Chouinard of Intuit Group and ACCE sponsorship vice-chair added, "We keep working on new ways to bring greater value to our sponsors. The support we've seen year after year, even in difficult times like we're experiencing now, shows the level of commitment our sponsors have not only to this conference but also to this industry globally. People tell me they can meet more decision makers in a day at the ACCE than they can in six months of cold calling."

Next year's **Automotive Composites Conference & Exhibition** will be held September 15-17, 2009. The **SPE ACCE** has become the world's leading forum for automotive composites and draws exhibitors, speakers, and attendees from Europe, the Middle East, and Asia / Pacific as well as North America. Held annually in the suburbs of Detroit, the conference provides an environment dedicated solely to discussion and networking about advances in the automotive composites industry. Its global appeal is evident in the diversity of exhibitors, speakers, and attendees who come to the conference from Europe, the Middle East, and Asia / Pacific as well as North America and who represent transportation OEMs and tier suppliers; composite materials, processing equipment, additives, and reinforcement suppliers; trade associations, consultants, university and government labs; media; and investment bankers. The show is sponsored jointly by the SPE Automotive and Composites Divisions.

The mission of SPE is to promote scientific and engineering knowledge relating to plastics. SPE's Automotive and Composites Divisions work to advance plastics and plastic-based composites technologies worldwide and to educate industry, academia, and the public about these advances. Both divisions are dedicated to educating, promoting, recognizing, and communicating technical accomplishments for all phases of plastics and plastic-based composite developments, including materials, processing, equipment, tooling, design and testing, and application development.

For more information about the SPE **Automotive Composites Conference & Exhibition**, visit the Composites' Division website at [www.4spe.org/communities/divisions/d39.php](http://www.4spe.org/communities/divisions/d39.php), or the Automotive Division's website at [www.speautomotive.com/comp.htm](http://www.speautomotive.com/comp.htm), or contact the group at +1.248.244.8993, or write SPE Automotive Division, 1800 Crooks Road, Suite A, Troy, MI 48084, USA. For more information on the Society of Plastics Engineers International or other SPE events, visit the SPE website at [www.4spe.org](http://www.4spe.org), or call +1.203.775.0471.

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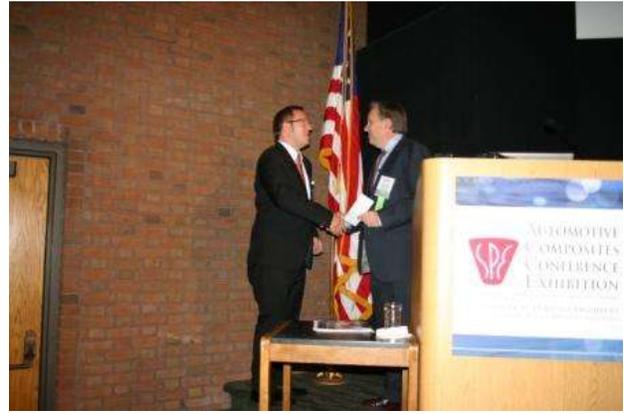
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**TROY (DETROIT), MICH.** – (left to right, top to bottom) Among the largest and most eye-catching parts on display at this year's SPE<sup>®</sup> **Automotive Composites Conference & Exhibition** (ACCE) demonstrating commercial uses of polymer composites were these four parts: the carbon-composite hood with see-through polycarbonate window for the '08MY Chevrolet<sup>®</sup> Corvette<sup>®</sup> ZR1 sports car from General Motors Corp.; the glass-reinforced polyester-based SMC composite hood for the '08 & '09MY Dodge<sup>®</sup> Viper<sup>®</sup> sports car from Chrysler LLC; the hood and fenders for the John Deere<sup>®</sup> 20 Series tractor from Deere & Company molded from a nylon/polyphenylene ether alloy; and tough, low-mass SMC hood assembly for the International<sup>®</sup> TranStar<sup>®</sup> Class 8 truck from Navistar, Inc.

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**TROY (DETROIT), MICH.** – (left to right, top to bottom) SPE® **Automotive Composites Conference** chair, Dale Brosius, gives opening remarks on September 16; Brosius presents an ACCE *Graduate-Level Scholarship* check to Tobias Potyra, Institut Chemische Technologie (ICT), who was one of two 2008-2009 scholarship award winners and who will present results of his research on automotive composites at next year’s conference; Brosius presents Edward Zenk of Navistar, Inc. with one of four *Best Paper Awards* for a paper Zenk and co-authors wrote entitled: *Case Study: Tough, Low-Mass Class A SMC* for the 2008 ACCE technical program; and government-industry panel discussion moderator, Derek Buckmaster (SABIC Innovative Plastics) fields a question from the audience that will be addressed by several panelists.

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