



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (31 October 2010)**

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## **FORD MOTOR CO. RACKS UP THIRD SPE<sup>®</sup> VEHICLE ENGINEERING TEAM AWARD WIN WITH 2011MY EXPLORER<sup>®</sup> SUV**

**TROY, (DETROIT) MICH.** – As part of its 40th-annual *Automotive Innovation Awards Competition*, the Automotive Division of the Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE<sup>®</sup>) today announced that Ford Motor Co. is the 2010 winner of the group's *Vehicle Engineering Team Award (VETA)* for significant use of innovative plastics content on the 2011MY Ford<sup>®</sup> Explorer mid-size sport-utility vehicle (SUV). This is the third year the automaker has been awarded the prize, winning last year with the 2010MY Ford<sup>®</sup> Taurus sedan and the previous year with the 2009MY Ford Flex<sup>™</sup> cross-over-utility vehicle (CUV).

Unlike other SPE executive awards, the *Vehicle Engineering Team Award* recognizes the technical achievements of entire teams comprised of automotive designers and engineers, tier integrators, materials suppliers, toolmakers, and others whose work – in research, design, engineering, and/or manufacturing – has led to significant integration of polymeric materials on a notable vehicle. This is the fourth time in seven years that the award has been presented. The first winner was Porsche AG in 2004 for the '04MY Porsche<sup>®</sup> Carrera GT supercar. A representative from Ford will accept the award during SPE's annual *Automotive Innovation Awards Gala*, the oldest and largest recognition event in the automotive and plastics industries, on November 9, 2010, at Burton Manor in Livonia, Mich.

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*SPE Honors Ford Explorer with Vehicle Engineering Team Award*  
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Ford describes its newly redesigned Explorer truck as “defining the SUV for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” and says it provides class-leading fuel economy (comparable to that of mid-size sedans), industry-leading safety features such as the world’s first rear inflatable seatbelts, integrated communications services like SYNC™ and MyFord Touch™, and quality that sets the benchmark in the SUV segment. With over 6-million units sold since the model was launched in 1990, the Explorer is the world’s best-selling mid-size SUV. In its newest form, it is lighter, offers best-in-class fuel economy and the lowest CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of mid-size SUVs, plus makes extensive use of sustainable materials in keeping with the company’s focus on *green* technologies.

With numerous patents already filed on features that either debuted or were redesigned for the Explorer facelift, the vehicle makes extensive use of polymeric materials to improve fit and finish, reduce weight, and increase customer comfort and safety. In addition to winning the 2010 VETA award, seven components from the Explorer SUV were entered into the parts portion of SPE’s ***Automotive Innovation Awards Competition***, with four nominations achieving *Finalist* status:

- **Body Interior:**
  - Inside Handle/Tweeter/Bezel Wrap-Around – this wraparound inside door handle bezel with integral speaker tweeter and lock/unlock switch provides outstanding fit & finish and function,
  - Interior Trim with 3-D Appearance – decorative film over a textured surface creates a 3-D appearance on door appliques, while reducing cost and increasing design flexibility; ⚡
- **Materials:**
  - Reactor-Grade, Talc-Filled Polypropylene (PP) – eliminating secondary compounding and reducing the carbon footprint of the manufacturing process, reactor-grade PP is used to mold quarter trim panels in the rear cargo area while improving craftsmanship and lowering cost; ⚡
- **Performance & Customization:**
  - Dual-Lens Cup-Holder Light – a new one-piece design that integrate primary illumination surface with show-surface lens on cup-holder light rings improves perceived quality and enables vehicle occupants to customize interior lighting colors; ⚡
- **Safety:**
  - 4-way Adjustable EPP Headrest – a unique 2-piece EPP foam design allows for more comfortable, 4-way adjustable headrests that still comply with new safety requirements for rear impact conditions while facilitating assembly, reducing weight, and saving on tooling costs,
  - Inflatable Seatbelts – special tubular webbing used in the shoulder portion of rear seatbelts hides an inflatable airbag that is deployed when front driver and passenger airbags are triggered, protecting second- and third-row occupants, and particularly upper- and lower-percentage occupants, ⚡
  - Advanced, All-TPO Airbag Chute for Seamless Passenger Airbag (PAB) Systems – unique tool design allows a special “hook and window” feature to be created at the hinges of this advanced all-thermoplastic polyolefin (TPO) PAB chute, reducing squeak and rattle, improving airbag-to-chute alignment, reducing weight and cost, and making the entire assembly fully recyclable. ⚡

⚡ = Category Finalist

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*SPE Honors Ford Explorer with Vehicle Engineering Team Award*  
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Other plastics intensive features on the vehicle include all TPV glass runs, molded-in-color metallic sparkle silver roof-rack end caps, structural composite radiator support, all-plastic lower intake manifold, illuminated nameplate, and direct LED forward and side lighting.

Ford Motor Company, a global automotive industry leader based in Dearborn, Mich., manufactures or distributes automobiles across six continents. With about 200,000 employees and about 90 plants worldwide, the company's automotive brands include Ford, Lincoln, Mercury and Volvo. The company provides financial services through Ford Motor Credit Company. For more information regarding Ford's products, please visit [www.ford.com](http://www.ford.com).

***SPE's Automotive Innovation Awards Program*** is the oldest and largest competition of its kind in the world. Dozens of teams made up of OEMs, tier suppliers, and polymer producers submit nominations describing their part, system, or complete vehicle module and why it merits the claim as the *Year's Most Innovative Use of Plastics*. This annual event typically draws 600 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.

The mission of SPE International 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 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 ***Automotive Innovation Awards Competition and Gala*** or to download nomination forms and rules, please visit the SPE Automotive Division's website at <http://speautomotive.com/inno> and <http://speautomotive.com/awa>, 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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**TROY, (DETROIT) MICH.** – For the third year in a row, a vehicle from Ford Motor Co. has been named winner of the **Vehicle Engineering Team Award (VETA)** at the SPE® Automotive Division's 40th-annual **Automotive Innovation Awards Competition**. This time, the 2011MY Ford® Explorer mid-size sport-utility vehicle (SUV) was recognized for significant use of innovative plastics content. Notable exterior applications on this year's **VETA** winner include all-TPV glass runs, molded-in-color metallic sparkle silver roof-rack end caps, a structural composite radiator support, all-plastic lower intake manifold, illuminated nameplate, and direct LED forward and side lighting. In its newest form, the Explorer SUV is lighter, offers best-in-class fuel economy and the lowest CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of mid-size SUVs, plus makes extensive use of sustainable materials in keeping with the company's focus on *green* technologies.

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**Photos courtesy of Ford Motor Co. High-resolution digital images are available upon request.**



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**TROY, (DETROIT) MICH.** – The *Vehicle Engineering Team Award (VETA)*, given by the Automotive Division of the Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE®) as part of its annual *Automotive Innovation Awards Competition*, recognizes the technical achievements of teams comprised of automotive designers and engineers, tier integrators, materials suppliers, toolmakers, and others whose work – in research, design, engineering, and/or manufacturing – has led to significant integration of polymeric materials on a notable vehicle. This year's winner is the 2011MY Ford® Explorer mid-size sport-utility vehicle (SUV) from Ford Motor Co. Numerous interior and safety features on the redesigned SUV relied heavily on plastics for functionality and form, including wraparound interior door handle bezels, interior trim with a 3-D appearance, reactor-grade talc-filled polypropylene rear quarter trim panels, customizable dual-lens cup-holder lighting, 4-way adjustable EPP headrests, all-TPO advanced airbag chute for seamless passenger airbag systems, and the world premier of inflatable seatbelts for rear passengers. The team will receive its award at the 40<sup>th</sup>-annual *SPE Automotive Innovation Awards Gala* on November 9 in Livonia, Mich.

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