



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (September 28, 2010)**

Media Contacts:

Peggy Malnati, SPE Auto. Div. Comm. Chair  
Malnati & Associates  
Phone: +1.248.592.0765  
eMail: [media@speautomotive.com](mailto:media@speautomotive.com)

## **PANEL CONSIDERS IMPACT OF HIGHER CAFE STANDARDS ON RECOVERING AUTO INDUSTRY AT 12<sup>TH</sup> SPE<sup>®</sup> AUTO TPO SHOW**

**TROY, (DETROIT) MICH.** – This year’s executive-management panel discussion at the twelfth-annual **SPE<sup>®</sup> Automotive TPO Global Conference** will explore the impact of a 42% increase in U.S. mandated corporate-average fuel-economy (CAFE) standards on an industry still reeling from the worst recession it has known in over a century of doing business and will debate how automakers can move forward to meet these standards by 2014 with a greatly diminished workforce. The panel, whose topic is *The New Normal: Challenges & Opportunities*, will be held from 12:45-2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 5, 2010 at the Best Western Sterling Inn, Sterling Heights (Detroit suburbs), Mich., and will be led by moderators, Bob Eller, president of Robert Eller Associates LLC, and Ron Price, president of Global Polymer Solutions. Confirmed panelists include ExxonMobil Chemical’s Simon Holmes, global marketing manager–Specialty Elastomers Business; Lawrence Sak, head of Materials, Fasteners & Material Standards, Chrysler Group LLC; Kathy Minnich, manager-North American Materials Engineering, Ford Motor Co.; Dale Gerard, Ph.D., senior manager-North American Materials / Corrosion / Fluids Engineering & Labs, General Motors Co.; Rose Ryntz, Ph.D., director-Advanced Engineering-Material Development, International Automotive Components Group; and Mike Bernas, general manager-Material Engineering Department-Vehicle Development, Toyota Motor Corp.

-more-

*Panel Examines Impact of Higher CAFE Standards*  
2-2-2-2

Panel moderator, Ron Price says, “We’ve seen a dramatic change in the automotive landscape over the past few years, particularly here in North America. After suffering a severe recession that has left all automakers financially stressed and has forced them to close numerous assembly plants and dramatically reduce their number of employees, the industry now has to make a huge step-change. We have just 5 years left to move from CAFE standards that have been in place for 20 years to new standards that require almost double the efficiency. That would be hard to do with normal staffing levels and fiscally healthy companies, and it will be very hard under the current conditions our industry faces. This year’s executive management panel discussion will explore ways automakers could tackle the multifaceted problem of reducing vehicle mass and increasing energy efficiency. Of course, we at SPE feel that more plastics and composites are the answer, but our OEM and tier supplier representatives may feel differently. The panel promises, as always, to offer a lively exchange of ideas.”

### **About the TPO Conference**

Since 1998, the ***SPE Automotive TPO Global Conference*** has highlighted the importance of rigid and flexible polyolefins throughout the automobile – in applications ranging from semi-structural composite underbody shields and front-end modules to soft-touch interior skins and bumper fascia. Polyolefins have been the fastest-growing segment of the global plastics industry for a decade owing to their excellent cost / performance ratio. The polyolefin supply chain has experienced major changes in recent years, which are providing both challenges and opportunities for OEMs and the entire supply community. Three special sessions have been developed for this year’s conference – will be held from October 3-6, 2010 at the Best Western Sterling Inn, Sterling Heights, Mich., in the suburbs of Detroit – to help processors and end users learn about the latest technologies available from the rapidly changing world of automotive olefins. These include: *Thermoforming* (returning for the first time since 2008), and completely new sessions on *Polypropylene Compounding* and *Olefin-Based Thermoplastic Elastomers & Vulcanizates (TPEs & TPVs)*.

The ***SPE Automotive TPO Global Conference*** is organized each year by a volunteer committee. The conference typically draws over 400 attendees from 20 countries on 4 continents. Roughly 35% of conference attendees work for an automotive OEM, with the balance made up of tier integrators and molders, resin suppliers, equipment OEMs, industry consultants, and members of academia. The event is held annually at the Best Western Sterling Inn ([www.sterlinginn.com](http://www.sterlinginn.com)) in Sterling Heights, Mich.

-more-

*Panel Examines Impact of Higher CAFE Standards*  
3-3-3-3

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 Detroit Section is active in educating, promoting, recognizing, and communicating technical accomplishments for all phases of plastics and plastic based-composite developments – particularly in the automotive industry. Topic areas include applications, materials, processing, equipment, tooling, design, and development.

For more information about the ***SPE Automotive TPO Global Conference***, to view the conference's program, or to register to attend the event, please visit <http://auto-tpo.com/> or [www.speautomotive.com/tpo.htm](http://www.speautomotive.com/tpo.htm) , or contact the group at +1.248.244.8993, or write SPE Detroit Section, 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.

# # # # #

*® SPE is a registered trademark of the Society of Plastics Engineers International. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.*