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SPE[®], PPG INDUSTRIES CO-SPONSOR STUDENT POSTER COMPETITION AT 2011 AUTO COMPOSITES CONFERENCE

Graduate, Undergraduate Students & their Posters Compete for Recognition, Cash Prizes at Leading Automotive Composites Event

TROY (DETROIT), MICH. – For the third time in three years, the ***SPE Automotive Composites Conference & Exhibition (ACCE)***, which will be held **September 13-15, 2011** at the MSU Management Education Center in Troy, Mich., U.S.A., will host a student poster competition showcasing emerging technologies in the area of automotive and ground-transportation composites. This year's competition will feature separate undergraduate as well as graduate classifications and is being co-sponsored by SPE's Automotive and Composites Divisions (who co-organize the conference) and PPG Industries (<http://www.ppg.com/en/Pages/home.aspx>), which has donated monetary awards totaling \$3,000 USD that will be given to the top three poster topics in both graduate and undergraduate categories.

Judges made up of media, industry experts, and SPE board members will review all posters on the first day of the conference. Students and their posters will be judged on 10 aspects, including ***content*** (student and poster demonstrate clarity of topic, objectives, and background; motivation for research and technical relevance to conference theme; methodology and approach to problem; quality of proposed research results/findings; conclusion are supported by information presented); ***presentation*** (display aesthetics are pleasing; there is a logical flow between sections; presenter has a good grasp of the subject; plus poster is understandable and effective even without student being present to explain it); and ***overall rank*** vs. other posters and presenters. Kevin Richardson, market development manager, PPG Industries will announce this year's winners on the morning of the second day of the show.

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PPG, SPE Co-Sponsor Student Poster Competition at 2011 ACCE
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For the last three years, the poster competition has been organized by Dr. Uday Vaidya, SPE Composites Division board member and Education chair, and professor and director-Engineered Plastics & Composites Group in the Department of Materials Science & Engineering at University of Alabama-Birmingham (UAB).

Currently, 14 students from nine universities – the largest pool of entrants yet – have submitted paperwork to participate in this year’s competition (Auburn University, Georgia Institute of Technology, Michigan State University, Oklahoma State University, Tuskegee University, University of Akron, UAB, University of Southern Mississippi, and Wright State University).

In 2010, 10 posters from six schools (North Dakota State University, Oklahoma State University, Tuskegee University, UAB, University of Michigan-Dearborn, and University of Mississippi-Oxford) were entered into the competition and both monetary prizes and plaques were donated by SPE. The three winners that year were Alfred Tcherbi-Nateh, Tuskegee University (first place); Shaun Crawford, UAB (second place); and K. Lakshminarayan, Oklahoma State University (third place).

In 2009, the first year of the competition, 11 posters from five schools (North Dakota State University, Tuskegee University, UAB, University of Michigan-Dearborn, and University of Mississippi-Oxford) were entered and the winners were: Michael Fuqua, North Dakota State University and K. Balaji Thattai, UAB (tied for first place); Tiffany Nelson, Tuskegee University (second place); and Shiva Shankaran, University of Michigan-Dearborn. That year, Dow Chemical donated monetary prizes of \$500 USD, which were split among the four winners, who also received plaques to honor their efforts.

Held annually in suburban Detroit, the SPE ACCE typically draws 400+ speakers, exhibitors, sponsors, and attendees from 14 countries on five continents and provides an environment dedicated solely to discussion and networking about advances in transportation composites. Its global appeal is evident in the diversity of exhibitors, speakers, and attendees who come to the conference from Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia / Pacific as well as North America and who represent transportation OEMs -- traditional automotive and light truck, as well as agriculture, truck & bus, heavy truck, and aviation – 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.

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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 Automotive Division's website at <http://speautomotive.com/comp.htm>, or the Composites' Division website at <http://compositeshelp.com>, 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 or other SPE events, visit the SPE website at www.4spe.org, or call +1.203.775.0471.

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Attention Editors: High-resolution digital photography is available upon request.