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**SPE-ACCE-10-11**

Contact:

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

## **SPE<sup>®</sup> ANNOUNCES STUDENT POSTER COMPETITION WINNERS FOR 2011 AUTOMOTIVE COMPOSITES CONFERENCE**

**TROY (DETROIT), MICH.** – SPE<sup>®</sup> today announced the winners of the third-annual *Student Poster Competition* held during the **SPE Automotive Composites Conference & Exhibition (ACCE) September 13-15, 2011** at the MSU Management Education Center in Troy, Mich., U.S.A. This year's contest, which showcased emerging technologies in the area of automotive and ground-transportation composites, featured separate undergraduate as well as graduate classifications and was 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 donated monetary awards totaling \$3,000 USD. Students from Tuskegee University, Michigan State University, and University of Alabama-Birmingham won the top three prizes.

The poster that ranked the highest in the competition was entitled *Effect of Montmorillonite Nanoclay on Degradation of Carbon Fiber-Reinforced Polymer Composite Exposed to UV Radiation*, by **Alfred Tcherbi-Narteh** of Tuskegee University. Second place went to **Anchita Monga** and Lawrence T. Drzal of Michigan State University with the topic: *Metal Doped Nanostructured Graphite Nanoplatelets as Anode Material for Lithium Ion Batteries for EV/HEV Applications*. And the third-place winner was **Melike Dizbay-Onat** of University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), whose poster was on *Reduction of Carbon Footprint by Natural Fiber-Based Activated Carbon Composites*. These three students not only were recognized on stage on the second day of the event with a plaque, but received monetary prizes of \$750, \$500, and \$250 USD respectively. Since no undergraduate posters were entered into the competition, the other 10 students each received \$150 USD to help cover travel expenses to and from the conference.

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Additional posters, students, and schools represented at the conference included: *Melt Processing of Self-Reinforced PP/Nylon Composites*, Sarang Deodhar, Georgia Institute of Technology; *Film Blowing from Linear Polypropylene Clay Nanocomposites*, Caitlin Kowalsky, Michigan State University; *Progressive Forming of Thermoplastic Composite Laminates*, John Smith, University of Alabama at Birmingham; *POSS-Sorbitol Interactions and their Effect on the Reinforcement of Polypropylene Spun Fiber*, Sayantan Roy, Byoung-Jo Lee and Sadhan C. Jana, University of Akron; *Plasticization and Anti-Plasticization Effects in Epoxy Networks Modified by Pendant Groups*, Katherine L. Frank and Jeffrey S. Wiggins, University of Southern Mississippi; *Algae- and Kenaf-Based Natural Fiber Composites for Automotive Applications*, Alejandra Constante, University of Alabama at Birmingham; *Effect of Natural Fillers on Thermal and Mechanical Properties of Polyurethane Foams*, Gregory Strawder, Tuskegee University; *Threaded Long Fiber Composites*, Danila Kaliberov, University of Alabama at Birmingham; *Recycled Carpet Composites for Transportation Infrastructure Applications*, Sarat Das, Oklahoma State University; and *Processing and Degradation Analysis of Biodegradable PLA/Canvas Fabric Composites*, Kent Moore, Winona State University.

The 2011 conference featured 13 students from eight universities, the competition's largest pool of entrants to date.

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.

The poster competition was 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). Judges made up of media, industry experts, SPE board members, and attendees reviewed posters for *content*, *presentation*, and *overall rank* vs. other posters and presenters. Kevin Richardson, market development manager, PPG Industries announced the winners at the start of the second day of the show.

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**About the SPE ACCE**

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, 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 SPE's Automotive and Composites Divisions.

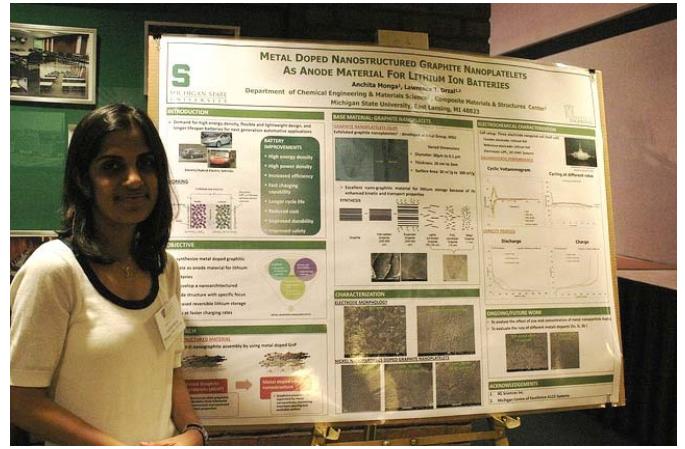
Sponsors and exhibitors for the 2011 show included: Ticona Engineering Polymers, Dieffenbacher GmbH, Magna Exteriors and Interiors, Continental Structural Plastics, RTP Co., Bayer MaterialScience, American Composite Manufacturers Assoc.'s (ACMA's) Automotive Composites Alliance (ACA), Addcomp North America, Inc., AOC Resins, Asahi Kasei Plastics North America, Inc., Toho Tenax America, Inc., PPG Industries, Acrolab, Ltd., OCV Reinforcements, Bulk Molding Compounds Inc., The Composites Group, Quantum Composites, Ashland Inc., American Chemistry Council - Plastics Div., Dassault Systèmes, BASF, e-Xstream engineering, Flow International Corp., Polystrand, Williams, White & Co., Plasan Carbon Composites, Mitsubishi Rayon Co. Ltd., Newport Adhesives & Composites Inc., National Research Council Canada (NRC), DASI Solutions, LayStitch Technologies, Core Molding Technologies, Inc., Plasticomp, LLC, Multimatic Engineering, Romeo RIM, Inc., *Reinforced Plastics* magazine, *Composites Technology* magazine, *High-Performance Composites* magazine, *CompositesWorld Weekly* eZine, *Ward's AutoWorld* magazine, *WardsAuto.com*, *Plastics Technology* magazine, Plaspec Global Plastics Selector, *Polymotive* magazine, *Automotive Design & Production* magazine, AutoField Blog, *China Plastics & Rubber Journal*, *China Plastics & Rubber Journal International*, *Plastics Engineering* magazine, *Automotive NewsWire* eZine, SAE International, *Automotive Engineering International* magazine, JEC Group, Composites Europe, and Modern Plastics India Magazine.

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](http://www.4spe.org), or call +1.203.775.0471.

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