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## **SPE<sup>®</sup> CALLS FOR PARTS, VEHICLE ENGR. TEAM NOMINATIONS FOR 42<sup>nd</sup> AUTOMOTIVE INNOVATION AWARDS COMPETITION**

**TROY, (DETROIT) MICH.** – The Automotive Division of the *Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE<sup>®</sup>)* has issued its annual call for parts and vehicle-engineering team nominations for the group's 42<sup>nd</sup>-annual *Automotive Innovation Awards Competition*, the oldest and largest recognition event in the automotive and plastics industries. Nomination forms for this year's competition are available at <http://speautomotive.com/inno> and are due **September 1, 2012** for applications and vehicles that must be available for commercial sale on or before November 1 of this year. Winners will be announced at this year's *Automotive Innovation Awards Gala* on **November 7, 2012** at Burton Manor ([www.burtonmanor.net](http://www.burtonmanor.net)) in Livonia, Mich.

### ***SPE Vehicle Engineering Team Award (VETA)***

***SPE's Vehicle Engineering Team Award*** recognizes the technical achievements of teams made up 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 sixth time in nine years that the award has been presented. Previous winners include Porsche AG for the 2004 model year (2004MY) Porsche<sup>®</sup> Carrera GT supercar, and Ford Motor Co. for three straight years with the 2008MY Ford<sup>®</sup> Flex<sup>™</sup> cross-over utility vehicle, the 2009MY Ford Taurus<sup>®</sup> sedan, and the 2011MY Ford Explorer<sup>®</sup> mid-size sport-utility vehicle (SUV); and last year's winner, Chrysler Group LLC for the Chrysler<sup>®</sup> 200 & Dodge<sup>®</sup> Avenger<sup>®</sup> sedans. Any automaker may nominate its eligible vehicles (and their innovative plastics content).

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### ***SPE Automotive Innovation Awards Parts Competition***

Since 1970, the ***SPE Automotive Innovation Awards Competition*** has highlighted the positive changes that polymeric materials have brought to the automotive and ground-transportation industries, such as weight and cost reduction, parts consolidation, increased safety, and enhanced aesthetics and design freedom. At the time the competition started, many OEM designers and engineers thought of plastics as inexpensive replacements for more "traditional" materials. To help communicate that plastics were capable of far more functionality than their typical use as decorative knobs and ashtrays indicated, members of SPE's Automotive Division board of directors created the competition to recognize successful and innovative plastics applications and to communicate their benefits to OEMs, media, and the public. Over the years, the competition drew attention to plastics as an underutilized design tool and made industry aware of more progressive ways of designing, engineering, and manufacturing automotive components. From its humble beginnings, the competition has grown to be one of the most fiercely contested recognition events in the plastics and automotive industries. Today, polymeric materials are no longer substitutes for more expensive materials, but rather are the materials of choice in hundreds of different applications throughout the vehicle. Without plastics, many of the auto industry's most common comfort, control, and safety applications would not be possible. Current competition categories include:

- Body Exterior,
- Body Interior,
- Chassis / Hardware,
- Environmental,
- Hall of Fame,
- Materials,
- Performance & Customization,
- Process / Assembly / Enabling Technologies,
- Powertrain, and
- Safety.

During the competition phase of the event, dozens of teams made up of OEMs, tier suppliers, consultants, and polymer producers work for months to hone submission forms and presentations describing their part, system, or complete vehicle module and why it merits the claim as the year's "***Most Innovative Use of Plastics.***" To win, teams must survive a pre-competition review and two rounds of presentations before industry and media judges.

There is no cost to nominate parts or vehicles. However, nominations that are accepted into the 2012 competition will need to be presented (in person or by webinar) by their nominating teams during the first round of ***Automotive Innovation Awards Competition*** judging, **September 27-28**. Part finalists from that round will advance to a second presentation before a panel of Blue Ribbon judges on **October 8**. Winners of each part category, the VETA winner, as well as a Hall of Fame winner will be announced during the ***Automotive Innovation Awards Gala*** on November 7 at Burton Manor in Livonia, Mich.

*SPE Calls for Parts, VETA Nominations for 42<sup>nd</sup> Automotive Innovation Awards Competition*  
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***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 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 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 ***SPE Automotive Innovation Awards Competition and Gala*** or to download nomination forms and rules for this year's competition, please visit the ***SPE Automotive Division*** 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*** or other society events, visit the ***SPE*** website at [www.4spe.org](http://www.4spe.org), or call +1.203.775.0471.

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Shown here are teams from Ford Motor Co., which won several categories including both the *Process/Assembly/Enabling Technology* and *Grand Award* at last year's *Automotive Innovation Awards Gala* for the microcellular-molded instrument panels for the 2012 model year Ford® Escape® SUV and Kuga® CUV.

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**Attn. Editors:** High-resolution digital photography of this and numerous other formal and casual shots from last year's *Automotive Innovation Awards Gala* is available for free download at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/speautomotive/collections/>.