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## **SPE<sup>®</sup> ANNOUNCES DATES, DEADLINES FOR 44<sup>TH</sup>-ANNUAL AUTOMOTIVE INNOVATION AWARDS COMPETITION & GALA**

**TROY, (DETROIT) MICH.** – The Automotive Division of the Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE<sup>®</sup>) today announced date, location, and theme for its 44th-annual *Automotive Innovation Awards Gala*, the oldest and largest recognition event in the automotive and plastics industries, and deadlines for the event's annual parts competition. This year's *Awards Gala* will be held **Wednesday, November 12, 2014** at Burton Manor ([www.burtonmanor.net](http://www.burtonmanor.net)) in Livonia, Mich., where winning part nominations (submitted by **September 10, 2014**) and the teams that developed them will be honored during an evening that celebrates automotive plastics innovation.

Jeffrey Helms, global automotive director, Celanese Corp. who returns as the 2014 *SPE Automotive Innovation Awards* chair said, "This is a time of both great challenge and great opportunity in the automotive industry. Automakers in all parts of the world are working very hard to reduce the weight and emissions, and increase the fuel efficiency of their vehicles to meet new legislative mandates for 2025, or to reduce the cost of ownership where regulations on fuel economy are secondary to market development. However, as they pursue these goals, they cannot afford to sacrifice durability, aesthetics, safety, or convenience, nor can they allow their component costs to increase more than the market will allow. The plastics and composites supply chains are uniquely positioned to help automakers achieve these goals by using the power of component integration, reduction in tooling investment, more efficient designs, and the weight and performance benefits of plastics in so many parts of the vehicle. This year's theme is *Plastics Pay Off*, emphasizing the balance of design efficiency and savings in tooling costs while meeting or exceeding customer expectations for the vehicles they buy. Events like the *SPE Automotive Innovation Awards Competition and Gala* have long highlighted the benefits offered by cutting-edge polymeric technologies in passenger vehicles and other forms of transportation."

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*SPE Announces Date, Theme for 44th-Annual Innovation Awards Competition*  
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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,
- Electrical Systems,
- Environmental,
- Hall of Fame,
- Materials,
- Process / Assembly / Enabling Technologies,
- Powertrain,
- Safety, and
- Vehicle Engineering Team Award (VETA).

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 competition need to be presented (in person or by webinar) by their nominating teams during the first round of **Automotive Innovation Awards Competition** judging, **October 2-3**. Finalists from that round will advance to a second presentation before a panel of Blue Ribbon judges on **October 13**. Winners of each part category, the Vehicle Engineering Team Award (VETA) winner, as well as a Hall of Fame winner will be honored during the **Automotive Innovation Awards Gala** on November 12. This annual event typically draws 600-700 OEM engineers, automotive and plastics industry executives, and media. Funds raised from the 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.

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*SPE Announces Date, Theme for 44th-Annual Innovation Awards Competition*  
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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 see <http://speautomotive.com/inno> and <http://speautomotive.com/awa>, or call +1.248.244.8993 extension 4, 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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**TROY, (DETROIT) MICH.** – For the 44th-time since 1970, the Automotive Division of the Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE®) has issued its annual call for part nominations and announced the date and location for the group's 2014 ***Automotive Innovation Awards Competition & Gala***, the oldest and largest recognition event in the automotive and plastics industries. This year's ***Awards Gala*** will be held **Wednesday, November 12, 2014** at Burton Manor ([www.burtonmanor.net](http://www.burtonmanor.net)) in Livonia, Mich., where winning part nominations and the teams that developed them will be honored during an evening that celebrates automotive plastics innovation. Shown above are members of the large team that developed last year's *Body Exterior* as well as *Grand Award* winner of the ***Automotive Innovation Awards Competition***, the all-olefinic liftgate on the 2014 model year *Nissan Rogue* cross-over utility vehicle produced by Nissan Motor Co.

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*Attn. Editors:* A large collection of SPE Automotive Division digital photography is available for download at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/speautomotive/collections>.