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SPE[®] ANNOUNCES DATES, DEADLINES FOR 45TH-ANNUAL AUTOMOTIVE INNOVATION AWARDS COMPETITION & GALA

TROY, (DETROIT) MICH. – The Automotive Division of the Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE[®]) today announced the date, location, and theme for its 45th-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 11, 2015** at Burton Manor (www.burtonmanor.net) in Livonia, Mich., where winning part nominations (submitted by **September 15, 2015**) and the teams that developed them will be honored during an evening that celebrates automotive plastics innovation.

"Plastics and composites have never looked better to automakers as they work to increase fuel efficiency and decrease greenhouse-gas emissions ahead of new legislative mandates for 2025," explains Jeffrey Helms, global automotive director, Celanese Corp. who returns as the 2015 **SPE Automotive Innovation Awards** chair. "In the U.S., we're coming up on the midpoint assessment period for our 2025 CAFE (corporate average fuel economy) standards, and during the next year or two, regulators will be taking a close look at how automakers are doing in getting weight out and increasing fuel-efficiency ratings. Given these pressures, last year's SPE Automotive Innovation Awards Competition had the highest attendance in our history and we expect that trend will continue in 2015 as well, which is reflected in this year's theme: *The Future Looks Light*. With powertrain and electrification plans already in the 2020 plans, automotive manufacturers will need to validate and test alternatives in the next few years in order to meet the 2025 requirements without sacrificing cost, safety, aesthetics, or performance. It's an exciting time to be in the automotive plastics industry and we look forward to seeing the kinds of parts our competition draws this year."

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SPE Announces Date, Theme for 45th-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, 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. However, nominations that are accepted into the competition need to be presented (in person or via webinar) by their nominating teams during the first round of ***Automotive Innovation Awards Competition*** judging, **October 1-2**. Finalists from that round will advance to a second presentation before a panel of Blue Ribbon judges made up of media, retired chief engineers, and other industry experts on **October 12**. Winners of each part category as well as a Hall of Fame winner will be honored during the ***Automotive Innovation Awards Gala*** on **November 11**. This annual event typically draws over 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 45th-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 in 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*** see <http://speautomotive.com/inno> and <http://speautomotive.com/awa>.

For more information on the ***Society of Plastics Engineers***, see www.4spe.org.

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TROY, (DETROIT) MICH. – For the 45th-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 2015 ***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 11, 2015** at Burton Manor (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 *Safety* category as well as *Grand Award* winner of the ***Automotive Innovation Awards Competition***, the active glove box on the 2015 model year Ford Mustang sports car produced by Ford Motor Co.

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