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Media Contact:

Peggy Malnati, SPE Auto. Div. Comm. Chair

Phone: +1.248.592.0765

eMail: [media@speautomotive.com](mailto:media@speautomotive.com)

## **SPE<sup>®</sup> ANNOUNCES DATES, DEADLINES FOR 46th-ANNUAL AUTOMOTIVE INNOVATION AWARDS COMPETITION & GALA**

**TROY, (DETROIT) MICH.** – The Automotive Division of the Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE<sup>®</sup>) today announced the dates, location, and theme for its 46th-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 9, 2016** at Burton Manor ([www.burtonmanor.net](http://www.burtonmanor.net)) in Livonia, Mich., where winning part nominations (submitted by **September 15, 2016**) and the teams that developed them will be honored during an evening that celebrates automotive plastics innovation.

"This is an important year for automakers selling into the U.S. as it represents the midpoint assessment period for 2025 CAFE (corporate average fuel economy) standards," explains Jeffrey Helms, global automotive director, Celanese Corp. who returns as the 2016 *SPE Automotive Innovation Awards* chair. "Regulators are currently reviewing automaker status with regard to increasing fuel-efficiency ratings toward the 2025 targets. That will put the spotlight on methods and materials for taking mass out of vehicles, which should be good for plastics and composites. We feel it's no coincidence that the last few years have represented the highest attendance in the history of our Automotive Innovation Awards Gala and we expect that trend to continue in 2016. Automakers and their suppliers are very interested in any and all design, material, and process options that can help them meet regulatory targets while still offering exciting, safe, beautiful, and affordable vehicles that customers want to buy. This led to selection of *Plastics: Innovation in Motion* as our 2016 program theme."

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*SPE Announces Dates, Deadlines for 46th-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 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 the board of directors of SPE's Automotive Division 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 automotive and plastics 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.

During the competition phase of the event, dozens of teams made up of OEMs and suppliers work for months to hone submission forms and presentations describing their part, system, or complete vehicle module to support claims that it is 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, **September 29-30** in Auburn Hills, Mich. Finalists from that round 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 10** (also in Auburn Hills). Winners of each part category, the Grand Award, Hall of Fame, and Lifetime Achievement winner will all be honored during the ***Automotive Innovation Awards Gala*** on **November 9**. 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 Dates, Deadlines for 46th-Annual Innovation Awards Competition*  
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Current competition categories include:

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

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](http://www.4spe.org).

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**TROY, (DETROIT) MICH.** – For the 46th-time since 1970, the Automotive Division of the Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE®) has issued its annual call for part nominations and announced the dates and deadlines for the group's 2016 **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 9, 2016** 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 **Materials** category as well as **Grand Award** winner of the **Automotive Innovation Awards Competition**, the Ultralight Class A Body Panels on the 2016 model year *Chevrolet Corvette* sports car produced by General Motors Co.

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*Attn. Editors:* A large collection of SPE Automotive Division digital photography is available for download at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/17968829@N03/collections/72157660756291642/> and <https://www.flickr.com/photos/speautomotive/albums>.