

# Welcome to ACCE 2007

On behalf of the Automotive and Composites Divisions of the Society of Plastics Engineers, International (SPE®), welcome to the 7th-Annual **Automotive Composites Conference and Exhibition** (ACCE). This year's theme, "*Driving Performance and Productivity*," reflects the challenges facing automakers and the supply community. Consumers continue to demand higher performance in their vehicles – faster acceleration, better style and comfort, higher electronics content, and improved fuel economy – yet remain unwilling to sacrifice features like cost, safety, and vehicle size. Fortunately, the low mass, energy management, and design freedom of composites can help OEMs achieve these often conflicting objectives. The supply community is working hard to address issues like global competitiveness and cost pressures facing the OEMs, as many of the displays, papers, and keynote addresses presented at this year's ACCE demonstrate.

In the span of seven years, we have become the *World's Leading Automotive Composites Forum*, attracting presenters and attendees year after year from Europe, Asia-Pacific, and the Americas. No other conference offers the range of topics related to composites for ground transportation in the kind of depth as the one you are attending.

This year, we have added some new features and expanded the program in key areas:

- ~ We are awarding **two scholarships** to graduate students performing research in the area of composites for ground transportation. These awards, given in honor of noted journalist Steve Loud, who was a fantastic supporter of this conference, are the start of yet another tradition of the ACCE.
- ~ We are presenting **Best Paper Awards** in the categories of *New Materials, Processing / Enabling Technologies*, and *New Composite Applications*. The winning entries were selected from among written papers submitted for peer review in time to make the conference proceedings, and the authors will be recognized at the start of the conference.
- ~ We have developed a new panel discussion on "**Marketing the Value of Composites**," which focuses on how best to educate designers and OEMs on the value provided by composite solutions. As previous attendees have seen, our panel sessions tend to be both enlightening and, at times, controversial and we expect this one to be no different.
- ~ We have developed a program that includes a **record number of technical papers** across multiple technologies and applications, including a new session titled *Virtual Prototyping & Testing of Composites*, in response to issues raised at a panel session last year.
- ~ We have combined all displays into a single large room to facilitate booth visits and improve traffic flow during breaks, making it easier to obtain food and beverage. Please visit our sponsors whose generosity allows us to host this event each year. Two sponsored evening receptions provide further opportunities to network and explore the latest technology on display.

The members of the SPE Automotive and Composites Divisions on the planning committee now work year round to put on this conference. Many of these volunteers have been associated with the event for a number of years, and I would like to personally thank each committee member for his / her contributions.

The conference could not exist without the support of our authors, presenters, keynote speakers, sponsors, and attendees, and I thank each of them as well. I encourage you to take advantage of this unique confluence of automotive composites knowledge to discover ways to improve both the performance of your products and the productivity of your operations.

Enjoy the conference, and please contact any of our committee members if you have questions, need assistance, or to offer feedback to help us make next year's event even better.

Best Regards,

*Dale Brosius*

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