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***SPE[®] ANNOUNCES THEME, LOCATION, DATES FOR 6TH-ANNUAL
AUTOMOTIVE COMPOSITES CONFERENCE & EXPOSITION***

***Conference to Feature 2 New Panel Discussions, Plus a Focus on Composites for
Alternative-Fuel Vehicles***

TROY (DETROIT), MICH. – The organizing committee for the SPE Automotive Composites Conference & Exposition (ACCE) today announced the dates, theme, and location for this year's show. Now in its 6th year, the ACCE has become known as a must-attend event for the North American composites industry, although it draws exhibitors, speakers, and attendees from Europe, the Middle East, and Asia / Pacific as well.

Terry Seagrave of Bayer MaterialScience, the 2006 ACCE conference chair, announced this year's theme as *Composites: Efficiency, Value, Performance*. "Our theme this year reflects topics of considerable concern to the automotive and transportation industries worldwide. As energy costs skyrocket, and alternative energy powertrains begin to proliferate, there is greater demand for materials of construction that allow OEMs to produce lighter, more energy-efficient vehicles that maintain current levels of safety, comfort, and aesthetics. Composites, as a class of materials, can solve many of the challenges vehicle manufacturers face by offering durability, high stiffness and strength at low mass, improved impact performance, and high aesthetics. Our conference will continue its tradition of providing a forum where innovation, know-how, and needs can be discussed and solutions found."

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SPE Announces Details for 6th-Annual Automotive Composites Conference
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As it has been for the past 5 years, the conference will once again be located at the MSU Management Education Center in Troy. According to conference Sponsorship Chair, Tim Simko of Polywheels, "We will once again spread exhibits out into rooms on the west side of the building. Our experience with this at last year's event was very positive, moving traffic (and noise) out of the areas adjacent to the auditoriums where papers were being presented. This also freed up more space for exhibitors. Where we had previously been limited to just 20-22 displays, last year we were able to accommodate more than 30, and several of them were fairly large. For our 2006 program, we hope to increase this to 40 exhibitors."

"Another big change we made last year," explained Technical Program Co-Chair, Brian Grosser, DieTech NA, "was expanding the conference to a third day. It was well received, so this year our conference will also last 3 days. Having that extra day will help us accommodate more presentations and more keynote speakers, as well as a second panel discussion."

"If there was one comment we received last year," added Dr. Jackie Rehkopf of Ford Motor Company, "it was that our audience missed the participation of thermoset composite suppliers. In prior years, materials like SMC and urethane composites were strongly represented in both papers and exhibits. Hence, this year we're making a strong effort to get them back in the program, dedicating a special session to thermosets."

Dale Brosius of Brosius Management Consulting and also a contributing editor to *Composites Technology* Magazine returns as the ACCE conference co-chair for the second year in a row. Brosius has led a very successful OEM panel discussion for the past 2 years, which becomes quite lively at times. "Our OEM panel discussion will return," he commented, "and we're planning as many as 2 additional panels at this year's conference. One panel will focus on *Composites for Alternative Energy Vehicles*, and the other on *Marketing the Value of Composites*." Other sessions already being planned for this year's conference include:

- Advanced & Hybrid Reinforcements
- Enabling Technologies for Composites
- Long-Fiber Reinforced Thermoplastics (LFT or LFRT)
- Nano & Bio-Composites
- Natural-Fiber Composites
- New Composite Materials, Processes, & Applications
- Structural Composite Applications
- Thermoset Composite Advances

Abstracts for the conference are due by April 29th and papers are due no later than June 30th to allow time for peer review. Both papers and abstracts can be e-mailed to a special new e-mail address set up for the conference at accepapers@comcast.net. Approved papers and presentations are distributed to conference attendees via CD.

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SPE Announces Details for 6th-Annual Automotive Composites Conference
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The conference is expected to draw a broad offering of sponsors and exhibitors representing composite materials, processing equipment, additives and reinforcements, molders, trade associations, and media headquartered in the Americas, Europe, and Asia/Pacific. This event provides an environment dedicated solely to discussion and networking about advances in the automotive composites industry – aspects sponsors indicate provide them genuine value. That is believed to be the reason the conference has a high repeat rate for exhibitors and sponsors from one year to the next. In fact, more than half of current sponsors have been with the event since the first year in 2001.

The mission of SPE is to promote scientific and engineering knowledge relating to plastics. SPE's Automotive and Composites Divisions work to advance plastics and plastic-based composites technologies worldwide and to educate industry, academia, and the public about these advances. Both divisions are dedicated to educating, promoting, recognizing, and communicating technical accomplishments for all phases of plastics and plastic based-composite developments, including applications, materials, processing, equipment, tooling, design, and development.

For more information about the SPE Automotive Composites Conference, visit the Composites' Division website at www.4spe.org/communities/divisions/d39.php, or the Automotive Division's website at www.speautomotive.com, or contact the group at +1.248.244.8993, or write SPE Automotive Division, 1800 Crooks Road, Suite A, Troy, MI 48084, USA.

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