



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (07/06/09)**

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**ORIG. EQUIP. SUPPLIER ASSOC. FOUNDER, NEIL DE KOKER, IS  
KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT SPE<sup>®</sup> AUTOMOTIVE TPO CONFERENCE**

**TROY, (DETROIT) MICH.** – The *Detroit Section of the Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE<sup>®</sup>) International* today announced that Neil De Koker, founding president and CEO of the Original Equipment Suppliers Association (OESA), headquartered here, will be a keynote speaker at the eleventh-annual **Automotive TPO Global Conference**. Recognized as an industry expert on issues facing the automotive industry with a particular emphasis on customer-supplier relations, De Koker will present his speech, *“The Automotive Industry in Transition: A New Beginning,”* on Monday, Oct. 5, immediately following lunch. SPE’s **Automotive TPO Global Conference** is the world’s leading forum for automotive usage of thermoplastic olefins, and will be held October 4-7, 2009 at the Sterling Inn, Sterling Heights, Mich., a suburb of Detroit.

The OESA was founded in August of 1998 to represent suppliers of components, modules, systems, materials, equipment and services used in and by the original-equipment automotive industry. The organization provides a forum for members to address issues of common interest, acts as the voice for the automotive supply community, and promotes the interests of members. The association currently represents over 400 companies whose global automotive sales total more than \$300-billion USD.

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*OESA's Neil De Koker Will Give First Keynote at 11<sup>th</sup>-Annual SPE TPO Conference*  
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Neil De Koker has spent his entire 46-year career in the automotive industry, including 23 years with General Motors Corp., where he played a lead role in the development and organization of Saturn Corp. Additionally, De Koker spent four years at Magna International serving as senior vice-president, helping to organize and manage the formation of the automotive-systems groups. He has also served as senior vice-president for Tier 2 supplier companies, The Woodbridge Group and MascoTech Inc., and he has also co-owned a corporate communications company focused on automotive customers.

De Koker serves on a number of industry boards, including those of the Automotive Hall of Fame, Kettering University (formerly the General Motors Institute (GMI)), the Center for Automotive Research, and the Japan America Society of Greater Detroit and Windsor. Additionally, DeKoker is a fellow of The Engineering Society of Detroit (ESD), an organization that honored him as an "Outstanding Young Engineer" in 1978. He is also a member of Tau Beta Pi where he was honored as Eminent Engineer in 1990. In 2004, De Koker was awarded the Executive Leadership Award from the Marketing and Sales Executives of Detroit. He received the 2004 Outstanding Alumni Award from the Michigan State University's Broad College of Business. In addition, he received the 2007 Visionary Leadership Award from the SAE Foundation.

Neil De Koker holds a bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering from then General Motors Institute and an executive master's degree in Business Administration from Michigan State University. He also attended the executive development program at Northwestern University.

Bob Eller, president, Robert Eller Associates, Inc. and an **Automotive TPO Global Conference** planning committee member said, "The rapid changes, supply-chain consolidation, and challenging conditions our industry has endured over the last 14 months have made it especially difficult for the entire automotive supply community but has also provided wonderful opportunities for TPO compounds and fabrication methods to get the attention they deserve. Neil De Koker has been quite outspoken on behalf of automotive suppliers regarding the U.S. government's decision not to extend TARP loans to tier suppliers, so we're sure his speech is going to be both interesting and lively."

Ron Price, president, Global Polymer Solutions and another long-time **TPO Global Conference** planning committee member added, "We're very excited to be able to offer conference attendees the chance to hear two outstanding keynote speakers – Neil De Koker and Dr. David Cole – at this year's show. Both men are widely acclaimed as industry experts and their predictions about the future shape of the automotive industry will carry a lot of weight, particularly while we're still in the midst of such a turbulent period."

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Since 1998, the **SPE Automotive TPO Global Conference** has highlighted the importance of rigid and flexible polyolefins throughout the automobile – in applications ranging from semi-structural composite underbody shields and front-end modules to soft-touch interior skins and bumper fascia. Polyolefins have been the fastest-growing segment of the global plastics industry for a decade owing to their excellent cost / performance ratio. The polyolefin supply chain has experienced major changes in recent years, which are providing both challenges and opportunities for OEMs and the entire supply community. A special session has been developed this year on *Advanced Process Control and Troubleshooting for Injection Molding* to help olefin molders better achieve competitive advantages in the global marketplace.

The **SPE Automotive TPO Global Conference** is organized each year by a volunteer committee. The conference typically draws over 400 attendees from 20 countries on 4 continents. Roughly 35% of conference attendees work for an automotive OEM, with the balance made up of tier integrators and molders, resin suppliers, equipment OEMs, industry consultants, and members of academia. The event is held annually at the Best Western Sterling Inn ([www.sterlinginn.com](http://www.sterlinginn.com)) in Sterling Heights, Mich.

The mission of SPE International is to promote scientific and engineering knowledge relating to plastics worldwide and to educate industry, academia, and the public about these advances. SPE's Detroit Section is active in educating, promoting, recognizing, and communicating technical accomplishments for all phases of plastics and plastic-based composite developments – particularly in the automotive industry. Topic areas include applications, materials, processing, equipment, tooling, design, and development.

For more information about the **SPE Automotive TPO Global Conference**, to view the conference's schedule of presentations, or to register to attend the event, please visit <http://auto-tpo.com/> or [www.speautomotive.com/tpo.htm](http://www.speautomotive.com/tpo.htm) , or contact the group at +1.248.244.8993, or write SPE Detroit Section, Division, 1800 Crooks Road, Suite A, Troy, MI 48084, USA. For more information on the Society of Plastics Engineers International or other SPE events, visit the SPE website at [www.4spe.org](http://www.4spe.org), or call +1.203.775.0471.

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