



## SABIC SPEAKER DISCUSSES OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES OF GLOBALIZING AUTO INDUSTRY AT SPE® AUTO TPO SHOW

**TROY, (DETROIT) MICH.** – The polyolefin supply chain has experienced major changes in recent years that are providing both challenges and opportunities for automakers and the entire supply community. To help attendees of the *SPE® Automotive TPO Global Conference*, the world's leading automotive polyolefins conference, better understand the impact of changing conditions, four keynote speakers have been selected highlight trends that are reshaping the global automotive-plastics market.

On Day 2 of the conference, **Tuesday, October 4<sup>th</sup>**, *Leon Jacobs*, Polypropylene (PP) global business director, *SABIC Innovative Plastics* (<http://www.sabicautomotive.com>), will open the event with a keynote address entitled ***“The Opportunities & Challenges of a Globalizing Automotive Industry.”***



According to Jacobs, his talk will discuss how the globalization of the automotive industry is impacting plastics raw-material supply, in particular the supply of PP-based materials, taking into account the differing markets, their requirements, OEM specifications, and available raw materials in the context of environmental, economic, and political considerations.

“As automotive OEMs continue to globalize, they are increasingly demanding materials that meet global quality standards and specifications,” says Jacobs. “This presents a number of challenges, not least of which may be fewer global suppliers to choose from. While important benefits can be realized by working to global specifications, material purchasers must be prudent and ensure they align with those value-chain participants who have capabilities to meet demand in the short term *and* deliver supply reliability over the long term.”

In his current role, which he has held since June 2009, Jacobs is responsible for running SABIC's existing polypropylene automotive business in Europe, and expanding these activities in other regions. Prior to this assignment, Jacobs held leadership positions as general manager of the STAMAX® and PP-copolymer businesses of SABIC, and was general manager of the European sales office for large and international accounts.

Jacobs began his career in 1986 as an analytical chemist at DSM and has since held various commercial roles in marketing, sales, and product management. He became part of the SABIC organization when DSM's petrochemicals operations were acquired by SABIC in 2002. He holds an MBA in Marketing and Finance from the University of Diepenbeek in Belgium.

## **About the Automotive TPO Global Conference**

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. Throughout that time, polyolefins have been the fastest-growing segment of the global plastics industry owing to their excellent cost / performance ratio. The show typically draws over 400 attendees from 20 countries on four continents who are interested in learning about the latest in rigid and elastomeric thermoplastic polyolefin (TPO) as well as thermoplastic elastomer (TPE) and thermoplastic vulcanizate (TPV) technologies. Fully a third of conference attendees say they work for a transportation OEM, and roughly 20% work for a tier integrator / molder, with the balance representing materials or reinforcement suppliers, equipment OEMs, industry consultants, media, and members of academia. As such, the event offers attendees a rich environment in which to network and explore the latest developments in materials, processing, and applications for these versatile families of thermoplastic resins.

Traditional technical sessions on *Materials Development*, *Polypropylene Compounds*, *Applications Development*, and *Surface Enhancements* are planned for this year's program, as well as new sessions on *TPO / TPE Interfaces* and *Polyolefin Foams & Advances in Olefin Processes*. A venue change to the Detroit-Marriott-Troy hotel (<http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/dtttt-detroit-marriott-troy/?clusterCode=MW1>) has been made for the 2011 conference. A variety of sponsorship packages are available for companies interested in showcasing their products and/or services. There is still time for those interested in submitting papers or presentations for the technical program, which should be eMailed to [TPOpapers@auto-tpo.com](mailto:TPOpapers@auto-tpo.com).

For more information about the ***SPE Automotive TPO Global Conference***, to view the conference's evolving technical program, or to register to attend the event, please visit <http://auto-tpo.com>, or contact the group at +1.248.244.8993, or write SPE Detroit Section, 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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