FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (1 November 2011)

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CHRYSLER GROUP LLC WINS 2011 VEHICLE ENGINEERING TEAM AWARD FROM SPE® AUTOMOTIVE DIVISION

TROY, (DETROIT) MICH. – The interiors of the 2011 model year (MY) Chrysler® 200 and Dodge® Avenger® mid-size sedans, which were developed and launched as part of vehicle facelifts in just over a year, won Chrysler Group LLC and its interiors supplier, Faurecia, the 2011 ***Vehicle Engineering Team Award*** (***VETA***) from the ***Automotive Division of the Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE®)*** as part of the group's 41st-annual ***Automotive Innovation Awards Competition***, the oldest and largest recognition event in the automotive and plastics industries. James N. Lyijynen, system responsible – Interior Cockpit, System & Component Engineering, at Chrysler Group LLC will accept the award on behalf of all OEM and supplier team members during SPE's annual ***Automotive Innovation Awards Gala*** on **November 9, 2011**, at Burton Manor in Livonia, Mich.

Unlike other SPE executive awards, VETA recognizes the technical achievements of entire teams comprised of automotive designers and engineers, tier integrators, materials suppliers, toolmakers, and others whose work—in research, design, engineering, and/or manufacturing—has led to significant integration of polymeric materials on a notable vehicle. This is the fifth time in eight years that the award has been presented. The first winner was Porsche AG for the 2004 MY Porsche® Carrera GT supercar, and Ford Motor Co. has won in three previous years with, respectively, its 2009 MY Ford Flex™ cross-over-utility vehicle (CUV), 2010 MY Ford® Taurus sedan, and 2011 MY Ford® Explorer sport-utility vehicle (SUV).

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SPE Honors Chrysler 200 & Dodge Avenger with Vehicle Engineering Team Award
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Chosen by a panel of Blue Ribbon judges and SPE Automotive Division board members from nominations by each of the Detroit Three automakers, the winning team was selected, in the words of one judge, "because of the incredibly tight timing and the highly integrated team approach taken with key suppliers."

All new interiors for both the 2011 Dodge Avenger and Chrysler 200 sedans were developed in a record 54 week time period, just over 12 months from surface freeze to start of production (SOP). The previous-generation Chrysler Sebring and Dodge Avenger interiors were developed on a 30 month time line. Partly as a result of the 2008 global economic downturn and the ownership change of Chrysler Group LLC in 2009, the new company was at risk of not having a competitive sedan in the D segment, the second-largest segment in the automotive market. To remain competitive, Chrysler Group needed a solution that could be brought to market rapidly.

Not only did the team face a compressed development cycle, but other challenges also presented themselves, including ongoing product changes (e.g. late theme and feature/content changes); no plan for a design/validation test phase or prototype vehicles; short lead times to build (hard) production tooling and limited tool-trial runs planned before launch; as well as unknown model year phase out/phase timing at the start of the program.

To help the team create two distinct interior "personalities" for the two vehicles in the compressed timeframe, three key factors were used: a craftsmanship benchmarking report from Chrysler Group, Faurecia's perceived-quality methodology, and use of a number of carryover components (e.g. a common cross-car beam, instrument panel retainer, glove-box door, and drive-side knee bolster). The team had strong support from both organizations. For example, there was full respect for surface freeze dates, materials to be used for the interior components were confirmed by mid-November 2009 with no further changes allowed; and between tool kickoff and first parts and between tool-tuning loops/iteration no changes were allowed to help freeze the product definition and keep it there. Further, a full complement of virtual validation tools was used. And with regard to the expedited tooling schedule, critical tools were sourced locally, and rapid in-mold graining tools—achieved with nickel-shell tool technology—were used.

Dedicated Chrysler support for both surface approvals and graining, and executive oversight by both the automaker and Faurecia helped support the timeline and facilitated rapid decision making. Co-location of a dedicated Chrysler console stylist at Faurecia, and management of Class A design for consoles and door trim by Faurecia employees, plus a daily "war room" huddle kept both companies fully engaged in the process. And owing to Faurecia's global organization, team members in the U.S., Mexico, France, India, and China participated, allowing for a true 24/7 response to the development effort.

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SPE Honors Chrysler 200 & Dodge Avenger with Vehicle Engineering Team Award
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Thanks to the unique collaboration and team discipline, the new Chrysler 200 and Dodge Avenger sedans launched with beautifully updated interiors featuring premium materials, ambient lighting, and other accents, all at a lower cost than the outgoing models. Other benefits of the collaboration included halving the normal delivery time; use of nickel-shell tools, which allow for quick and accurate duplication as production demands increase but provide a quality equivalent to electroplated tooling; higher quality parts with smaller and more accurate tolerances; and an increase in the perceived quality for grain definition. To prepare for sales globally, production of interior components now takes place in the U.S., Mexico, Spain, and China to serve global demand. The interior of both vehicles makes use of 183 primary tools for both injection and thermoforming and represents the first production application of rapid nickel-shell in-mold grain tools.

Representatives of both vehicles' development program will be honored on November 9 at SPE's annual ***Automotive Innovation Awards Gala*** at Burton Manor (www.Burtonmanor.net) in Livonia, Mich. The event begins with a VIP Cocktail Reception at 4:30 p.m., generously sponsored by Ticona Engineering Polymers. At 5:00 p.m. the main exhibit area will open for general admission and guests can review this year's ***Automotive Innovation Awards*** part nominations, as well as enjoy the specialty and antique vehicles that are always a highlight of the show. Dinner will begin at 6:30 p.m. and the awards program itself will last from 7:00-9:00 p.m. For those who wish to extend merrymaking and networking activities, the ever-popular *Afterglow* – also sponsored by Ticona – will run from 9:00-11:00 p.m.

SPE's Automotive Innovation Awards Program is the oldest and largest competition of its kind in the world. Dozens of teams made up of OEMs, tier suppliers, and polymer producers submit nominations describing their part, system, or complete vehicle and why it merits the claim as the Y*ear's Most Innovative Use of Plastics*. This annual event typically draws 600 to 800 OEM engineers, automotive and plastics industry executives, and media. As is customary, funds raised from this 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.

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 for 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.

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SPE Honors Chrysler 200 & Dodge Avenger with Vehicle Engineering Team Award
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For more information about the ***SPE Automotive Innovation Awards Competition and Gala***, please visit the ***SPE Automotive Division*** website at **http://speautomotive.com/inno** and **http://speautomotive.com/awa**, or contact the group at +1.248.244.8993, or write SPE Automotive Division, 1800 Crooks Road, Suite A, Troy, MI 48084, USA. For more information on the ***Society of Plastics Engineers*** or other society events, visit the ***SPE*** website at **www.4spe.org**, or call +1.203.775.0471.

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ATTENTION EDITORS: High-resolution digital part photography for all of the 2011 nominations, including the Vehicle Engineering Team Award winner may be found at http://www.flickr.com/photos/speautomotive/collections/72157627886707996/.

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