



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (8 June 2014)
SPE-TPO-2-2014

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**LEADERSHIP OF SPE® TPO AUTO. ENGINEERED POLYOLEFINS
CONFERENCE ANNOUNCES FIVE 2014 KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**

TROY, (DETROIT) MICH. – The sixteenth-annual **SPE® TPO Automotive Engineered Polyolefins Conference**, the *world's leading automotive engineered-polyolefins forum*, will showcase talks by five keynote speakers from WardsAuto, ExxonMobil Chemical Co., Dow Chemical Co., LyondellBasell, and General Motors Co. Interspersed throughout the two-and-a-half-day conference, the keynotes will highlight important trends facing the automotive-plastics market, including access to new feedstocks, approaching vehicle-efficiency mandates, and key pressures driving innovation. Organized by the **Detroit Section** of the **Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE)**, this year's technical conference and exhibition returns to the Troy Marriott in the Detroit suburbs from **October 5-8, 2014**.

On Monday morning, the conference begins with a keynote on **Fuel Economy: Getting to 2025 as Efficiently as Possible** by **John Sousanis**, director-Information Content & Presentation, WardsAuto.com and author of the *WardsAuto State of the Industry Fuel Economy Report*. "The 'final rule' announced by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) for fuel economy and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for 2017 through 2025 model light vehicles is the key driver behind accelerated *lightweighting* efforts throughout the automotive industry," explains Sousanis. "If met via fuel economy, the GHG emissions standards would require a projected fleet-wide average fuel economy rating of 54.5 miles per gallon (4.32 liters per 100 kilometers). However, the new standards face a midterm review beginning in 2017, with a 'final-final' ruling due in 2018. In my talk, I'll discuss how automakers are progressing toward these 2025 standards, what challenges remain, and what the outcome of the midterm review hearings might be."

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Organizers Announce 2014 Keynotes for SPE Auto TPO Conference
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A second keynote on Monday morning will immediately follow by **Kurt Aerts**, vice-president, global supply chain at [ExxonMobil Chemical Co.](#) on the topic of ***The Changing Role of North America in Global Chemical Production Due to Shale Gas***. "Over the coming decades," explains Aerts, "energy sources will continue to evolve and diversify, and natural gas will play an increasingly important role in meeting global energy needs. North America is a leading natural gas-producing region, which provides advantages for this country from an energy security as well as economic standpoint. Growth in production of natural gas and liquids from shale development on this continent is providing a feedstock and energy advantage for the U.S. chemical industry, which, in turn, is driving planned investments for the first time in several decades. Shale is not the first feedstock to shake up our industry, and it won't be the last. While shale has rightly dominated recent business headlines, it's not the only important trend underway in chemical feedstocks. For example, access to shale will not be enough on its own to sustain long-term success for chemical producers. To maintain a competitive advantage in this ever-changing environment, we must continuously innovate across the value chain —from raw materials to finished consumer products."

On Day 2 of the conference, **Bart Bowser**, global product and asset director, Dow Elastomers, Electrical & Telecommunications, at [The Dow Chemical Co.](#) will lead off the morning with a talk entitled ***North America Plastics Industry Revival Fueled by Shale Gas***. "The economic effects of new investment by the chemical industry in the U.S. are overwhelmingly positive," says Bowser. "Recent breakthroughs in technology have made it both productive and profitable to tap into the vast amount of shale gas resources that are here on this continent. Dow's long-term investment in domestic-manufacturing projects reaffirms the importance that the chemical industry plays for us in supporting the growth of technologies to produce differentiated, high-performance elastomers for the fastest growing segments in Dow's existing markets, such as the automotive industry."

A second keynote on Tuesday morning will immediately follow by **Sergey Vasnetsov**, senior vice-president, Strategic Planning & Transactions, Global Polypropylene Compounds, [LyondellBasell](#), whose topic is ***Materials Innovation — What it Takes to Meet the Current & Future Demands of the Global Automotive Market***. "This keynote addresses innovation from the perspective of the world's largest TPO materials supplier and the requirements that will be necessary to address the needs of tomorrow's demanding automotive market," notes Vasnetsov. "The talk also will cover factors that drive innovation in the global automotive community, megatrends that demand new product development, performance targets that are challenging the boundaries of TPO today, and key elements required by a supplier to support global and multiregional OEMs."

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Organizers Announce 2014 Keynotes for SPE Auto TPO Conference
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The third day of the conference will again begin with a keynote talk — this from **Doug Pickett**, engineering group manager - Product Development at **General Motors Co.**, who will discuss ***Future Trends in Vehicle Efficiency — An Opportunity or Challenge to Future Growth of TPOs in Vehicle Interiors***. "After almost three decades of product improvement and expansion in the automotive market, TPOs as a class of material now dominate the vehicle interior on a kilogram per vehicle basis," explains Pickett. "However, the trajectory of that growth is now facing a disruptive challenge with mandatory vehicle-efficiency improvements, which are unprecedented in the history of the automobile. In my presentation, I'll highlight some of the factors that have led to the dominance of TPOs as preferred interior materials, and then explore future growth opportunities linked to the approaching vehicle-efficiency initiatives."

About the TPO Conference

Since 1998, the ***SPE TPO Automotive Engineered Polyolefins Conference*** has highlighted the importance of rigid and flexible thermoplastic polyolefins (TPOs), thermoplastic elastomers (TPEs), and thermoplastic vulcanizates (TPVs) throughout the automobile – in applications ranging from semi-structural composite underbody shields and front-end modules to soft-touch interior skins and bumper fascia. Engineered polyolefins have been the fastest-growing segment of the global plastics industry for more than a decade owing to their excellent cost / performance ratio. The show typically draws more than 700 attendees from 20 countries on four continents who are interested in learning about the latest in rigid and elastomeric TPO as well as TPE and 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 from materials or reinforcement suppliers, equipment OEMs, industry consultants, and members of academia. A variety of sponsorship packages are available for companies interested in showcasing their products and / or services. The conference is organized by volunteers from the ***Detroit Section*** of the ***Society of Plastics Engineers*** (SPE).

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 TPO Automotive Engineered Polyolefins Conference***, see <http://auto-tpo.com/> or <http://speautomotive.com/tpo.htm>, or contact the group at +1.248.244.8993 extension 3, or write SPE Detroit Section, 1800 Crooks Road, Suite A, Troy, MI 48084, USA. For more information on the Society of Plastics Engineers or other SPE events, visit the SPE website at www.4spe.org, or call +1.203.775.0471.

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TROY, (DETROIT) MICH. – John Sousanis, director-Information Content and Presentation, WardsAuto.com and author of the *WardsAuto State of the Industry Fuel Economy Report* will deliver the opening keynote address on the topic, ***Fuel Economy: Getting to 2025 as Efficiently as Possible*** at this year's ***SPE® TPO Automotive Engineered Polyolefins Conference***. Sousanis has worked for WardsAuto for nearly two decades, and has been instrumental in building the company's current offering of information products serving the needs of automakers, suppliers, and professional industry observers around the world. He is very involved in the creation of WardsAuto's U.S. Sales forecast and oversees all of the company's forward-looking automotive analysis offerings. Sousanis also is the driving force behind the award-winning WardsAuto.com premium service web platform, and he regularly speaks at gatherings of automotive analysts and other professionals to offer his unique take on where the industry is headed.

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TROY, (DETROIT) MICH. – Kurt Aerts, vice-president, global supply chain, [ExxonMobil Chemical Co.](#) will give a keynote on the topic of *The Changing Role of North America in Global Chemical Production Due to Shale Gas* at this year's **SPE® TPO Automotive Engineered Polyolefins Conference**. Aerts joined the company in 1992 as an engineer at the Antwerp Polymers Plant in Belgium, and moved to ExxonMobil Chemical's European headquarters in Brussels in 1995 as a polyethylene market planner. From 1998 to 2001, he served as a feedstock coordinator and later as feedstock and supply manager for the company's Basic Chemicals operations in Europe. He subsequently held various roles in polyethylene sales, business planning, and marketing in the Netherlands, the U.S., and Belgium. In 2006, he moved to Shanghai, China as the company's Asia Pacific regional polyethylene / polypropylene sales manager. He returned to ExxonMobil Chemical's headquarters in Houston in 2009 as a senior advisor in the Planning & Business Development organization. He was named vice president of the company's global Adhesion Industry Business in 2010. Following an assignment to lead a team to establish a global supply-chain organization, he was appointed to his current position in 2013. Aerts holds a Master's degree in Chemical Engineering from the University of Leuven in Belgium. He is married with two daughters and enjoys spending time with family, traveling, exercising and reading.

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TROY, (DETROIT) MICH. – **Bart Bowser**, global product & asset director, Dow Elastomers, Electrical & Telecommunications, at [Dow Chemical Co.](#) will give a keynote entitled **North America Plastics Industry Revival Fueled by Shale Gas** at the 2014 **SPE® TPO Automotive Engineered Polyolefins Conference**. In his current role, Bowser is responsible for overseeing Dow's assets and developing the long-term asset strategy for the business. He also oversees the global product management team, which is responsible for the daily operations of the business. Bowser joined Dow in 1987 as a plastics sales representative. Throughout his 26 years at the company, Bowser has worked in several business units, including Engineering Plastics, Specialty Films, Polyurethanes & Systems, and Dow Elastomers. He has held a variety of commercial roles including sales management, global marketing, new business development, and product & asset management. He then moved into the role of global product director for Elastomers in 2008 and added Electrical & Telecommunications Products & Assets in 2012. He holds a Bachelor's of Science degree from Purdue University. He and his wife reside in Midland, Mich.

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TROY, (DETROIT) MICH. – At the 2014 SPE® TPO Automotive Engineered Polyolefins Conference, Sergey Vasnetsov, senior vice-president, Strategic Planning & Transactions, Global Polypropylene Compounds, [LyondellBasell](#) will be a keynote speaker on the subject of ***Materials Innovation — What it Takes to Meet the Current & Future Demands of the Global Automotive Market.*** Vasnetsov leads a team responsible for corporate strategy, capital allocation (CapEx, M&A, JVs), investor relations, competitive intelligence and benchmarking, and special projects. In addition, he is responsible for the global polypropylene compounding business serving automotive and consumer durable markets. From 1996 to 2010 Vasnetsov worked at several leading investment banks, including Barclays and Lehman Brothers. He started his career at Union Carbide in 1990. He graduated with a Master's of Science degree and was a George Soros Scholar at Oxford University and later he earned an M.B.A. degree from Rutgers University.

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TROY, (DETROIT) MICH. – **Doug Pickett**, engineering group manager - Product Development at **General Motors Co.** (GM) will discuss ***Future Trends in Vehicle Efficiency — An Opportunity or Challenge to Future Growth of TPOs in Vehicle Interiors*** during a keynote address at this year's ***SPE® TPO Automotive Engineered Polyolefins Conference***. In his current position, Pickett is responsible for the development, selection, and application of materials across vehicle interior components and systems. Pickett — who has spent more than 29 years at GM — has previously held positions where he was responsible for development of automotive textile materials, seat systems engineering, and release and materials engineering for vehicle exterior materials applications. He holds a B.S. degree in Textile Chemistry from North Carolina State University and an M.B.A. degree from the University of Michigan.

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