



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (18 June 2015) SPE-TPO-2-2015

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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS ANNOUNCED FOR 2015 SPE® TPO AUTOMOTIVE ENGINEERED POLYOLEFINS CONFERENCE

TROY (DETROIT), MICH. – The seventeenth-annual **SPE® TPO Automotive Engineered Polyolefins Conference**, the *world's leading automotive engineered polyolefins forum*, will showcase talks by five keynote speakers from Ford Motor Co., Auto Harvest Foundation, Sumika Polymers North America, Inc., Asahi Kasei Plastics North America, and General Motors Co. Interspersed throughout the two-and-a-half-day conference, the keynotes will highlight important issues facing the automotive-plastics market, including customer wants and needs, future automotive trends, global outlook for automotive polyolefins, oil and shale gas impacts on vehicle lightweighting, and evolution of TPO material performance. Organized by the **Detroit Section** of the **Society of Plastics Engineers** (SPE), the 2015 technical conference and exhibition returns to the Troy Marriott in the Detroit suburbs from **October 4-7, 2015**.

On Monday morning, after brief remarks by conference co-chairs the event begins with a keynote entitled **TPO: A Customer's Perspective** by **Michael Whitens**, director-Vehicle & Enterprise Sciences at **Ford Motor Co.** "We automakers live in a rapidly changing world where we're under relentless pressure to lower CO₂ emissions, reduce vehicle weight, increase safety and fuel efficiency, and of course continually add new technology while maintaining or lowering the cost of our vehicles," notes Whitens. "That's a very challenging set of deliverables for this whole industry. In my talk I'll discuss what a customer, namely Ford Motor Co., wants and needs with regard to thermoplastic polyolefins (TPOs). I'll cover some key improvements that have boosted performance and lowered cost over the past few decades, then describe areas where we'd like to see these materials improve as we move forward. If the TPO community can do this, it'll create the window of opportunity for TPOs to displace more costly materials."

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Immediately after Whitens, **Dr. David Cole**, chair, [Auto Harvest Foundation](#) will give the second keynote of the morning entitled ***The Auto Future: Fast, Furious and Exciting***. "The auto industry has gone through an amazing transformation in the past few years," explains Cole. "Through capacity reduction, restructured labor contracts, financial restructuring, staff reductions, new technological tools, global scale, and more, the U.S. auto industry's break-even has been significantly reduced. The domestic manufacturers, in particular, have become far more competitive as they have moved from a cost disadvantage to cost parity with many of their international competitors. This is evident with their surprising level of profitability. There are a number of concerns however: there is still excess capacity at the global level, with re-expansion of the domestic market there is a growing shortage of appropriately educated future employees, and that's exacerbated by accelerated retirement of 'Boomers.' Furthermore, there are tough new regulations to meet, economic uncertainty across many of the world's economies, and much more. Because of all this, we're at the edge of a revolution in both product and process technologies. New production facilities are both lean and agile with advanced software control everywhere. In the product area, the powertrain is moving to at least partial electrification, but advanced internal combustion engines assure a lively competition for some time to come. New material systems are being developed that feature significant advances in both materials and their manufacturing processes. And the connected vehicle is becoming a reality that will yield enormous benefits, particularly in safety. All in all, the modern auto industry is on the move and the process of change is accelerating."

On Tuesday, the conference's second day, **Brian K. Weider**, president-[Sumika Polymers North America, Inc.](#) will lead off with a keynote on the topic of ***Global Outlook for the Polyolefin and Automotive Businesses***. "I'll start off by discussing long-term trends affecting polypropylene, polyethylene, and the elastomers supply base," says Weider. "Then I'll look at current trends in the automotive industry for TPOs and TPEs. Finally I'll discuss some future trends we anticipate that will affect the entire global automotive resin market."

Day 2 will feature a second back-to-back keynote from **John Moyer**, president & chief operating officer, [Asahi Kasei Plastics North America](#) who will give a talk entitled, ***Oil, Shale Gas, Fuel Efficiency, Lightweighting, & Other Funny Things that Happened on the Way to the TPO Forum***. "My talk will begin with a discussion of all the changes in the world of energy costs," remarks Moyer, who adds "and I expect that there will be more changes between now and October of this year. I will also talk about compounders — both how we fit into this world of plastics and how we can change rapidly to meet the ever-changing world."

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Organizers Announce 2015 Keynotes for SPE Auto TPO Conference
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On Wednesday, the conference's third day, the event will begin with a keynote from **Matt Carroll**, engineering group manager, **General Motors Co.**, who will discuss ***The Evolution of TPO Material Performance***. "The performance of thermoplastic polyolefins for both interior and exterior components has been scrutinized and steadily improved over the past 20 years," states Carroll. "Besides the all-important dimensional stability of parts, material properties like UV stability, oxidative stability, impact resistance, scratch and mar resistance, stiffness for handling, and paintability are all keys to producing successful parts. In several cases, the property needs are in conflict and a 'balancing act' is required to optimize part performance. In this talk, I'll review improvements in the performance of TPO over time and provide some personal thoughts about future usage and growth of this class of polymer in the automotive industry."

About the TPO Conference

Since 1998, the ***SPE TPO Automotive Engineered Polyolefins 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. 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 show 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>. For more information about the Society of Plastics Engineers or other SPE events, see www.4spe.org.

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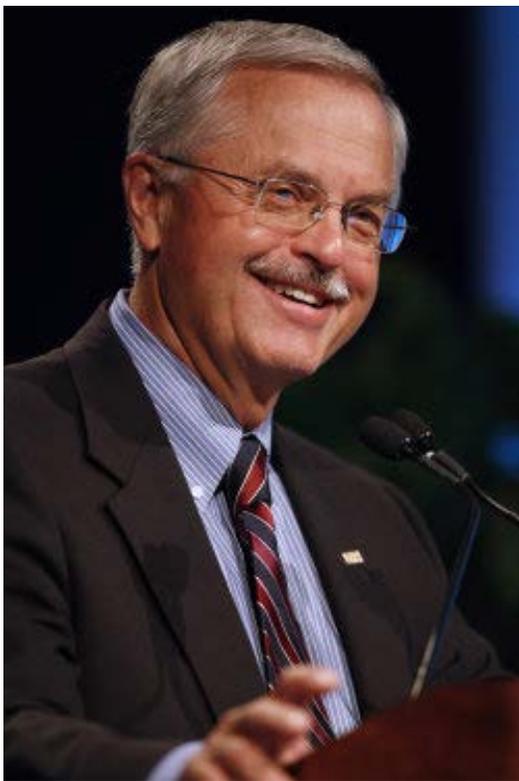


TROY (DETROIT), MICH. – Michael Whitens, director-Vehicle & Enterprise Sciences at **Ford Motor Co.'s** Research and Innovation Center will deliver the opening keynote address on the topic, ***TPO: A Customer's Perspective*** at this year's ***SPE® TPO Automotive Engineered Polyolefins Conference***. An automotive industry veteran with more than 29 years of experience, Whitens has spent most of his career at Ford in various body engineering disciplines. He assumed his current role last July. Before that, Whitens was engineering director responsible for leading Global Ford Body Interior Engineering. In this capacity he was responsible for global design and development of Ford interior systems —from concept to customer. A recognized industry leader in the development of automotive interiors, Whitens and his teams have won many industry accolades, including the Premier Automotive Suppliers' Contribution to Excellence (PACE) award and SPE Automotive Innovation awards, as well as been issued numerous patents for component innovation, new material development, and interior execution. Whitens also has been the recipient of several quality awards, including national recognition for U.S. Design for 6-Sigma. He currently is a member of the board of directors of the SPE Automotive Division and a member of Michigan Technological University's (MTU's) external advisory board for the Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering. He holds a Bachelor's of Science degree in Electrical Engineering from MTU and a Master's degree in Engineering Management from Wayne State University.

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TROY (DETROIT), MICH. – Dr. David E. Cole, chair, Auto Harvest Foundation will give a keynote entitled *The Auto Future: Fast, Furious and Exciting* at this year's **SPE® TPO Automotive Engineered Polyolefins Conference. Cole**

also is chair *emeritus* of the Center for Automotive Research (CAR) and the former director of the Office for the Study of Automotive Transportation (OSAT) at the University of Michigan's Transportation Research Institute as well as an engineering professor at the school. His technical and policy consulting experience includes a variety of assignments for industry, labor, and government and he has spoken to more than 1,000 different groups on automotive issues. He has been and is actively involved in the start up of nine different Ann Arbor, Mich.-based companies and is currently a director on the board of three automotive-related companies. In 1993 Cole received the National Automobile Dealers Association Foundation's International Freedom of Mobility Award. In 1994, *Design News* magazine named him as one of eight engineering leaders, and he was also selected to receive Sweden's Order of the Polar Star that same year. In 1998 Cole was named Marketing Educator of the Year by the Society of Marketing Executives and also received the Rene Dubos Environmental Award for his contributions to the industrial ecology of the automobile. In 1999 he was given the Chevalier of the National Order of Merit from France and he was the 2008 Mechanical Engineering Distinguished Alumni Award recipient from the University of Michigan. In 2013 Cole was inducted into the Automotive Hall of Fame, the industry's highest honor. He long has been active in industry engineering societies, including SAE International® where he served two terms on the board of directors and was named a *fellow* in 1986. He also is active in the Engineering Society of Detroit (ESD) and was elected to *fellow* status in 1990 as well as received ESD's highest award, the Horace H. Rackham medal in 2000. Additionally Cole is a member of the Society of Manufacturing Engineers (SME) and was elected to *fellow* grade in 2009. He is currently a member of the editorial advisory board of *Popular Mechanics* magazine and is listed in Marquis' Who's Who in America. He holds B.S. degree in Mechanical Engineering (M.E.) and Mathematics, as well as M.S.M.E. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Michigan as well as an honorary doctorate from Cleary University.

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TROY (DETROIT), MICH. – Brian K. Weider, president-[Sumika Polymers North America, Inc.](#), a fully owned subsidiary of Sumitomo Chemical Co., will present a keynote on the topic of *Global Outlook for the Polyolefin and Automotive Businesses* at the 2015 **SPE® TPO Automotive Engineered Polyolefins Conference**. Weider has spent more than 35 years in the plastics industry and 30 years of that in the automotive-plastics industry. He began his career in R&D at B.F. Goodrich and later joined the *Santoprene* TPE business of Monsanto. He also worked at GE Plastics in engineering resins and has spent the last 17 years at Sumitomo Chemicals. In his current role, he leads Sumika's North American efforts, which are solely focused on the automotive industry. Weider holds a B.S. degree in Chemical Engineering from The Ohio State University and a Master's degree in Business Administration from the Weatherhead School of Business at Case Western Reserve University.

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TROY (DETROIT), MICH. – At the 2015 ***SPE® TPO Automotive Engineered Polyolefins Conference***, **John Moyer**, president & chief operating officer, **Asahi Kasei Plastics North America** will be a keynote speaker on the subject of ***Oil, Shale Gas, Fuel Efficiency, Lightweighting, & Other Funny Things that Happened on the Way to the TPO Forum***. In his current role, Moyers leads activities for Asahi Kasei Plastics North America, a subsidiary of Asahi Kasei Chemical Corp. and a leading custom compounder of advanced engineered polymers for the automotive, commercial truck, commercial seating, water handling, and construction markets. During his time at the helm, Asahi Kasei Plastics has grown substantially in the U.S. and has expanded its business base to include Mexico, Brazil, Europe, China, India, and Japan. Moyer joined Asahi Kasei Plastics in 2005 as president. Previously he worked for Dow Chemical Co. for 24 years holding various manufacturing leadership roles in the U.S., Indonesia, and Hong Kong. He also has been involved in starting up new businesses in Indonesia and China. Moyers is a member of the board of directors for the Livingston County United Way, the board of trustees for Kettering University, and the board of trustees for Cleary University. He is a past board member for the Livingston Country Red Cross, the Howell Chamber of Commerce, and the Styron Asia Ltd. joint venture between Dow Chemical Co. and Asahi Kasei Chemical Co. Moyer holds a Bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering from the University of Cincinnati.

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TROY (DETROIT), MICH. – Matt Carroll, P.E., engineering group manager, [General Motors Co.](#), will discuss *The Evolution of TPO Material Performance* during a keynote address at this year's **SPE® TPO Automotive Engineered Polyolefins Conference**. Carroll is a registered Professional Engineer in the State of Michigan and holds B.S. and M.S. degrees in Chemical Engineering from University of Detroit and Wayne State University respectively. Earlier in his career he worked at a paint plant for BASF Corp., a polymer plant owned by Huntsman, and at the Chicago-based facility for a plastics machinery manufacturer. Carroll joined General Motors in 1994 as a materials engineer and later became a vehicle system engineer on the *Buick Lucerne* program. In his current role, he is engineering group manager-Materials for the Body Exterior and Electrical group. Carroll has presented 15 conference papers and presentations, is the former newsletter editor and membership chair of the SPE Detroit Section, and is currently a member of the board of directors for the SPE Automotive Division.

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