Welcome to the 44th-annual SPE Automotive Innovation Awards Gala, sponsored by the Automotive Division of the Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE). I am once again honored to chair this year’s program, the world’s oldest and largest recognition event in the automotive and plastics industries. Each year we see the latest and best examples of cooperative innovation in the automotive value chain and are continually inspired by the ingenuity displayed by automotive designers and engineers, processors and toolmakers, and material suppliers. My colleagues in the Automotive Division are excited to offer this tribute to the latest innovation in plastics and composites in ground transportation.

This year’s theme is Plastics Pay Off. Automakers and their suppliers must deliver vehicles customers want and aspire to own while balancing the demands of regulatory requirements and vehicle cost. This balance of content, cost, weight, and competitive stress provide an exciting platform for plastics and composites. New ways of executing design and performance create ongoing opportunities for plastics and composites through material innovation, processing, and component integration. Each and every year we see plastics pay off in achieving the wide array of vehicle program targets. Many of these new technologies, materials, and processes will be presented tonight. We at the SPE eagerly participate in and support those efforts through our yearly technical programs, educational activities, and this annual recognition event.

Tonight’s program will recognize accomplishments in specific vehicle categories and highlight those select individuals and teams with awards in the following areas:

- Body Exterior
- Body Interior
- Lifetime Achievement Award
- Chassis & Hardware
- Environmental
- Hall of Fame
- Materials
- Powertrain
- Vehicle Engineering Team Award
- Process, Assembly & Enabling Technologies
- Safety
- Grand Award

Before we begin tonight’s program, I would like to thank the many volunteers, sponsors, and judges who make this event possible. It is their dedication and commitment – their passion for innovation – that enable the SPE Automotive Division to recognize the industry’s most innovative use of polymeric materials in automotive applications.

Welcome to the 44th-annual SPE Automotive Innovation Awards Gala. Thank you for joining us and we hope you enjoy the event.

Jeffrey Helms

Jeffrey Helms
‘11-'14 SPE Automotive Innovation Awards Program Chair
Celanese