Welcome to the 2016 Innovation Awards Gala

Welcome to the 46th-annual SPE® Automotive Innovation Awards Gala, sponsored by the Automotive Division of the Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE). I’m honored to once again lead this annual program, the world’s oldest and largest recognition event in the automotive and plastics industries. Each year we see the latest and best results of cooperative innovation by automotive engineers, designers, and their suppliers whose combined ingenuity and creativity reinforce the dynamic nature of the automotive industry. 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, Plastics: Innovation in Motion, reflects the notion of mobility and the changes beginning to take place in the global automotive industry around comfort and convenience while also delivering safe, inspiring, and efficient transportation. Plastics play an important role in delivering what car buyers want. Innovations in lighter weight components, powertrain technologies, and surprise & delight features on new vehicle programs will likely be a differentiating factor in the purchase decisions that we all make when buying our next vehicle. Several of these new technologies, materials, and processes will be presented tonight.

The competition this year was among the most intense in recent years, with a record 75 nominations across 9 different categories. Tonight’s program will recognize the accomplishments of the people and companies involved in this year’s most innovative use of plastics with awards in the following areas:

- Aftermarket
- Body Exterior
- Body Interior
- Lifetime Achievement
- Chassis & Hardware
- Environmental
- Materials
- Powertrain
- Process, Assembly & Enabling Technologies
- Safety
- Grand Award

We also will recognize a new entry into our SPE Automotive Division Hall of Fame and our newest recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award, which recognizes the technical achievements of individuals whose work – in research, design, and/or engineering – has led to significant integration of polymeric materials on passenger vehicles.

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 plastics and composites in automotive applications.

Once again, welcome to the 2016 SPE Automotive Innovation Awards Gala. Thank you for joining us and we hope you enjoy the event.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Helms
Innovation Awards Chair 2010-2016
Global Automotive OEM Corporate Accounts Director
Engineered Materials
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