

WELCOME

November 20, 2008

Welcome to the 38th-annual SPE® Automotive Innovation Awards Gala, sponsored by the Automotive Division of the Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE) International. This is the world's oldest and largest recognition event of its type in the automotive and plastics industries.

I am honored to be your chair for this year's Automotive Innovation Awards Program. We believe this year's event is a bright spot in a year of uncertainty. The 2008 nominees provide us with confidence that innovation and creativity are as much alive today as they were in the past. And this evening's program, synonymous with the theme, *Plastics: Vision 20/20*, is packed with ideas on how OEMs can meet the new, corporate-average fuel economy (CAFE) standard of 35 mpg / 15 km/liter by the year 2020 without sacrificing safety, aesthetics, cost-competitiveness, or manufacturing efficiencies.

Tonight's event is an SPE Automotive Division tradition to honor the people, parts, and innovation that make plastics the material of choice in automotive and ground transportation applications. This event also makes it possible for SPE to support and encourage current and future engineers, designers, materials specialists, and scientists as they seek to advance transportation technologies in the 21st Century.

It takes our volunteer team countless hours of preparation to put on this program and I would especially like to thank the following for their contributions:

- Kevin Pageau for managing the entire part nomination process;
- Mark Lapain and Teri Chouinard for recruiting sponsors;
- Peggy Malnati and Jill Gorter for all of the marketing communications support;
- Roeland Polet (and the Ticona Team) for hosting the SPE and Blue Ribbon Judging as well as being the major sponsor of SPE's Automotive Division all year;
- Monica Prokopyshen for coordinating the Blue-Ribbon Panel;
- Nippani Rao for coordinating the *Lifetime Achievement Award Winner*; and
- Suzanne Cole for coordinating the *Executive Leadership Team Award Winner* as well as the gala logistics.

Many thanks also go to our large team of Category Captains, student ushers, vendors, judges, attendees, and loyal sponsors. Their dedication and generous support – in terms of time and money – really helped make this event possible.



Tonight's program is divided into a number of nomination categories and executive awards that include:

- Body Exterior,
- Body Interior,
- Chassis, Hardware & Powertrain,
- Lifetime Achievement Award,
- Materials,
- Past Chair Award,
- Environmental,
- Executive Leadership Team Award,
- Performance & Customization,
- Vehicle Engineering Team Award,
- Process, Assembly & Enabling Technologies,
- Safety,
- Hall of Fame, and
- The Grand Award.

The SPE volunteers who acted as Category Captains – scouting out and recruiting nominations, championing the presentation teams, and guiding the judging process – will recognize the finalists in each category and then announce the winning nomination. The final category, called the *Grand Award*, represents the entry judged most innovative of all the nominations we received this year. It is the highest honor we bestow. In spite of limited vehicle launches, the competition in each category was very intense this year. What you will see tonight are innovations that are truly the “*First-Time Ever Implemented*” resulting in trademarked vehicle options; process, design and material patents; and licensed rights of practice. I would like to thank the Category Captains for their efforts and congratulate each winning nomination.

We will present three additional honors tonight to recognize exceptional leadership in automotive plastics. Congratulations to Mr. Frank Macher who is receiving our *Lifetime Achievement Award*; the FreedomCAR Fuel Partnership, which is receiving our *Executive Leadership Team Award*; and Mr. Paul Mascarenas and the Ford Flex Team, who are receiving our *Vehicle Engineering Team Award*. You'll hear more about the accomplishments of each of these individuals and teams shortly.

Once again, welcome, thanks for coming, and enjoy the show!

Maria Ciliberti

Maria Ciliberti
'08 SPE Automotive Innovation Awards Program Chair
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