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GLOBAL AUTOMOTIVE CONFERENCE
Troy, MI USA • Sept 28-30, 2026
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Welcome TO THE

2026 SPE TPO GLOBAL AUTOMOTIVE CONFERENCE

INNOVATION AMID TRANSITION

CONFERENCE CO-CHAIRS

Neil Fuenmayor,
Orinko Advanced Plastics North America

Mike Balow,
Auxin Consulting, LLC

Rob Philp,
President,
SPE Detroit Section

For 27 years, the SPE TPO Global Automotive Conference has brought together the people, technologies, and ideas shaping the future of automotive polyolefins.

In 2026, that future is arriving faster than ever.

The automotive industry is experiencing a period of profound transition. Electrification is reshaping vehicle architectures and manufacturing strategies. Sustainability is moving from an aspirational goal to an increasingly critical business requirement. Global markets and supply chains continue to evolve. Cost pressures are intensifying. Consumer expectations are changing. And advances in materials, manufacturing, and digital technologies are creating opportunities that would have seemed impossible only a few years ago.

Against this backdrop, our theme for 2026 — ***INNOVATION AMID TRANSITION*** — could not be more timely.

Innovation has always been at the heart of automotive progress. But today, innovation is taking place while the industry itself is changing beneath our feet. Companies are being challenged to develop new materials and technologies while simultaneously addressing cost, performance, sustainability, manufacturing, and global competitiveness.

For the TPO industry, this moment represents both a challenge and an extraordinary opportunity.

Polyolefins continue to play a critical role in vehicle design, and the demands placed upon these materials are evolving rapidly. Lighter weight, improved performance, greater durability, enhanced aesthetics, recycled and renewable content, advanced processing technologies, and new applications are driving innovation across the entire value chain.

The question is no longer simply what comes next.

The question is how we innovate while getting there.

The Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE) Detroit Section and the 2026 Planning Committee are proud to bring together an outstanding community of OEMs, Tier suppliers, material producers, compounders, processors, technology providers, researchers, and industry experts for three days dedicated to exploring that question.

A PROGRAM BUILT AROUND THE FUTURE

The conference opens Tuesday morning with keynote insights from **Mark Barrott of Plante Moran,** presenting *"Innovation in an Affordability Era: Where Do Suppliers Prioritize Innovation in a Cost-Constrained World?"*

Innovation requires investment—but today's automotive industry demands that innovation deliver measurable value. This keynote will examine the difficult decisions suppliers face as they balance technology development and long-term innovation with immediate cost and affordability pressures.

Following the keynote, our **Automotive Sustainability Panel** will bring together experts from **Ford Motor Company, General Motors, Hyundai, IAC, Magna,** and the **University of Maryland** to examine the rapidly evolving sustainability landscape.

Sustainability touches virtually every aspect of automotive materials—from design and material selection to manufacturing, recycling, energy use, and end-of-life considerations. The panel will explore how the industry is responding and where meaningful opportunities for innovation remain.

On Wednesday, our **Automotive Panel Discussion** will turn its attention to **Megatrends,** featuring leaders from **Advanced Composites, General Motors, Haartz, INOAC Interior Systems,** and **Teknor Apex.**

Megatrends are the powerful, long-term forces that reshape industries, economies, and society. Electrification, sustainability, globalization, changing consumer expectations, technology, and evolving manufacturing strategies are among the forces influencing automotive today.

The discussion will examine these trends through the lens of TPOs and the broader automotive materials industry—and consider what they mean for the opportunities and challenges ahead.

WHERE IDEAS BECOME INNOVATION

Beyond the keynote and panel discussions, the 2026 conference features one of our most comprehensive technical programs to date.

More than **57 presentations across three technical tracks** will showcase the people and technologies working at the leading edge of automotive polyolefins. Topics will span **additive manufacturing, advanced materials, performance-driven innovations, sustainability, processing technologies, and emerging automotive applications.**

Together, these presentations provide a window into where our industry is heading—and, more importantly, the innovations being developed today to help get us there.

But innovation doesn't happen in isolation.

Some of the most important conversations at this conference happen between sessions, across exhibit booths, over coffee, and during networking events. They happen when an idea from one company encounters a challenge from another. They happen when a researcher meets an engineer, when an OEM meets a material supplier, or when an established technology is viewed from an entirely different perspective.

That spirit of collaboration is one of the defining strengths of this conference.

CONNECTING THE AUTOMOTIVE POLYOLEFIN VALUE CHAIN

The integrated **Exhibition Hall** provides another important dimension to the conference, showcasing technologies and capabilities from our Diamond, Platinum, and Gold sponsors, along with exhibitors representing the breadth of the automotive polyolefin value chain.

Expanded exhibit hours, sponsor-hosted receptions, and networking opportunities provide attendees with valuable opportunities to explore new technologies, exchange ideas, strengthen relationships, and establish new partnerships.

With more than **600 industry professionals expected to attend,** the TPO Global Automotive Conference once again brings together a remarkable cross-section of the industry in one place.

27 YEARS—AND STILL LOOKING FORWARD

Reaching our 27th year is an accomplishment worth celebrating. But perhaps more importantly, it is an opportunity to look ahead.

For 27 years, this conference has evolved because our industry has evolved. The challenges discussed here today will influence the materials, technologies, processes, and vehicles of tomorrow.

That progress would not be possible without the people who make this conference happen.

We extend our deepest appreciation to our **42-member volunteer Planning Committee,** whose dedication, expertise, and countless hours of effort have shaped this year's program. Their commitment represents the collaborative spirit that has defined this conference throughout its history.

We also extend our sincere thanks to our **speakers, sponsors, exhibitors, and attendees.** Your knowledge, ideas, questions, participation, and support are what transform a conference program into a true industry forum.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Transition can create uncertainty. It can also create opportunity.

The automotive industry is being challenged to rethink how vehicles are designed, how materials are developed, how products are manufactured, and how sustainability is incorporated throughout the value chain.

Those challenges demand innovation.

And innovation demands collaboration.

That is why this conference matters.

For 27 years, we have gathered to share what we know, challenge what we think we know, and discover what comes next.

INNOVATION AMID TRANSITION is more than a theme for 2026. It describes the moment our industry is living through—and the opportunity we have to help shape what comes next.

Thank you for being part of the **2026 SPE TPO Global Automotive Conference.**

Thank you for bringing your expertise, your curiosity, and your willingness to share ideas.

Here's to 27 years of innovation—and to the discoveries, partnerships, and breakthroughs that will define the next 27.

Welcome to the 2026 SPE TPO Global Automotive Conference.

The future is changing. Let's innovate our way forward.

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EXTERIOR TRIM AND STRUCTURAL APPLICATIONS

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Dhruv Gambir, *Tesla*
John Walling, LyondellBasell

INNOVATIONS IN INTERIORS

Dr. Raziyeh Mohammadi, *Ford Motor Co.*
Austin Wagenhals, *Ford Motor Co.*
Kevin O'Malley, *Hyundai America Technical Center, Inc.*

MATERIALS AND PERFORMANCE INNOVATION

John Walling, *LyondellBasell*
Dr. Birat KC, *Magna International*
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Dr. Murali Reddy, *CpK*
Joshua Cram, *Continental Surface Solutions*

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MEGATRENDS PANEL

Jesse Peterson, *INOAC Interior Systems*
Jeremy Kelley, *General Motors, LLC*
Steve Van Loozen, *Teknor Apex*
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MONDAY 9 | 28

12:00 - 6:00PM EXHIBITION SET-UP

PM 6:00 — NETWORKING RECEPTION *SPONSORED BY* ***SPE DETROIT SECTION***

TUESDAY 9 | 29

All Times Shown in EDT USA (UTC - 04:00)

AM 7:00 — REGISTRATION / EXPO / NETWORKING / BREAKFAST

8:15 — WELCOME REMARKS: **Neil Fuenmayor,** *Orinko Advanced Plastics North America;* **Rob Philp,** *President, SPE Detroit Section;* **Michael Balow,** *Auxin Consulting, LLC*

DIAMOND SPONSOR PRESENTATION: DOW

8:45 — KEYNOTE: **Innovation in an Affordability Era: Where do Suppliers Prioritize Innovation in a Cost Constrained World?**
Mark Barrott, *Partner, Management Consulting - Strategy & Operations, Plante Moran*

9:30 — NETWORKING BREAK *SPONSORED BY* ***SPE DETROIT SECTION***

	HALL I	HALL II	HALL III
	MATERIALS & PERFORMANCE INNOVATION *Moderators:* Dr. Birat KC, *Magna International* Austin Wagenhals, *Ford Motor Co.*	**SUSTAINABILITY, CIRCULARITY & REGULATORY READINESS** *Moderators:* Dr. Murali Reddy, *CpK* Dr. Raziyeh Mohammadi, *Ford Motor Co.*	**NEW APPLICATION, DESIGN & PROCESS DEVELOPMENTS** *Moderators:* Kevin DeGrood, *Borouge Group International* Paul Sieradzki, *TORAY Plastics*
10:00	**Propylene-Rich Copolymer for Mitigation of Tiger Stripes in Auto Thermoplastic Polyolefin (TPO)** Brian Satterley, *ExxonMobil Product Solutions Company*	**Upcycling Polypropylene through Functional Masterbatch for Automotive Interior Applications** Dr. Raziyeh Mohammadi, Xiaojiang Wang & Ellen Lee, *Ford Motor Co.*	**Characterization of Strain Rate Dependency** Dr. Charlie Yang, *LyondellBasell*
10:30	**Advancing TPO in Exterior Body Panels** Dr. Xian Jiang, *Dow*	**Manufacturing and Recycling Mono-Material Door Assemblies** Dr. Aristotle J. Zervoudakis, *Inteva Products*	**Establishment of a Film Decoration Technique Applicable to Large PP Parts** Yutaro Kawasaki & Joel Cambell, *Nippon Paint Automotive Americas, NPAA / Taikisha USA Inc.*
11:00	**Next Generation TPO Artificial Leather: Advancing Surface Durability Beyond Conventional Performance Limits** Joshua Cram, *Continental Surface Solutions*	**Incorporating Fiber to Create Unique Aesthetics, Reduce Costs, and Promote Sustainability with Molded in Color TPO's** Perry Banta & Kristina Sova, *LyondellBasell*	**Ditch the Paint Shop: Class A Polyurethane Overmolded TPO Parts for Interior and Exterior Applications** Raphael Bretz, *KraussMaffei*
11:30	**TPO Translucent Composite Development** Louis Martin, *BYK*	**Automotive Seating Reimagined: Polyolefin Innovations** **Dr. Shankar CV Ram,** *Dow*	**Enabling Paint Elimination Through Engineered Molded-in-Color Systems** Christian Aho & Dr. Bhuvanesh C. Yerigeri, *Americhem*

PM 12:00 — NETWORKING LUNCH *SPONSORED BY* ***SPE DETROIT SECTION***

1:15 — PANEL DISCUSSION - SUSTAINABILITY:
PANELISTS: **Ellen Lee,** *Ford Motor Co.;* **Kellen Mahoney,** *University of Maryland;* **John Skelly,** *Hyundai America Technical Center, Inc. (HATCI);* **Sue Kozora,** *IAC Group;* **Parvinder Walia,** *Magna International*
MODERATORS: **Austin Wagenhals,** *Ford Motor Co.;* **Ewa Lebert,** *General Motors LLC*

2:15 — NETWORKING BREAK SPONSORED BY ***SIRMAX***

	MATERIALS & PERFORMANCE INNOVATION	SUSTAINABILITY, CIRCULARITY & REGULATORY READINESS	NEW APPLICATION, DESIGN & PROCESS DEVELOPMENTS
	Moderators: Dr. Birat KC, *Magna International* Austin Wagenhals, *Ford Motor Co.*	*Moderators:* Dr. Murali Reddy, *CpK* Dr. Raziyeh Mohammadi, *Ford Motor Co.*	*Moderators:* Kevin DeGrood, *Borouge Group International* Paul Sieradzki, *TORAY Plastics*
2:30	**Advanced Short Glass Fibre Reinforced Polypropylene Solutions for Structural Door Applications** Nicolas Schlutig, *Sumika Polymers*	**Bridging Performance and Circularity in Automotive Interior Materials** Luca Gazzola, *Sirmax*	**Predicting the Lifetime of PCR PP Compounds for Automotive Applications** Todd Glogovsky, *Orinko Advanced Plastics North America*
3:00	**Compression Set Improvement at High Temperatures Using a Novel HSBC** Ryohei Akatsuka, *Asahi Kasei Europe GmbH*	**Blue Value for Automotive Interiors** Noah Dunlap, *Advanced Composites*	**Atypical Twin Screw Extrusion System Configurations Used for TPO Processes** Brian Haight, *Leistritz*
3:30	**A New Talc Portfolio for Automotive TPO Modification: Enabling Mechanical Properties Trade-Offs Across Particle-Size Classes** **Piero Ercoli,** *IMIFabi Spa - Italy*	**Sustainable Solutions for HDPE and Polypropylene** Andy Johnson, *KW Plastics*	**Beyond Twin-Screw Compounding: CPM's Ring Extruder in Modern TPO Compounding** Daron Fraim, *CPM*

4:00 — NETWORKING BREAK *SPONSORED BY* ***SPE DETROIT SECTION***

	MATERIALS & PERFORMANCE INNOVATION	SUSTAINABILITY, CIRCULARITY & REGULATORY READINESS	NEW APPLICATION, DESIGN & PROCESS DEVELOPMENTS
	Moderators: Dr. John Mara, *Amfine* Dr. Dave Patel, *GuruTech Systems, Inc*	*Moderators:* Joshua Cram, *Continental Surface Solutions;* John D. Walling, *LyondellBasell* Dhruv Gambhir, *Tesla*	*Moderators:* Kevin O'Malley, *Hyundai America Technical Center, Inc.* Charlie Yang, *LyondellBasell*
4:15	**Research and Application of Self-Healing Polypropylene Materials** **Dr. Kenny Lei,** *Kingfa Sci. & Tech. (USA), Inc*	**Core-Shell Lignin Additives for Tough, Flame-Resistant, and Recyclable Polypropylene** Reza Bhahrami, *Texas A&M*	**Hotmelt Moisture Cure for Challenging Automotive Interior Trim Applications** James Hammond, *H. B. Fuller*
4:45	**Highly Efficient Isotactic Polypropylene Degradation Induced Via Rapid Non-Thermal Plasma Hydrogenolysis Over Y-Zeolite** Marziyeh Shabani, *University of Akron*	**Supporting More Sustainable Automotive Materials: Recycled PP Production and Data** Renee Haney, *LyondellBasell*	**Hot Melt Adhesive for Multi-Substrate Bonding for Interior Automotive Applications** Dr. Nayera Abdelaziz, *Henkel Corporation*

5:15 — NETWORKING SESSION

5:30 — NETWORKING RECEPTION *SPONSORED BY* ***ADVANCED COMPOSITES & SPE DETROIT SECTION***

REV2

WEDNESDAY 9 | 30

All Times Shown in EDT USA (UTC - 04:00)

AM 7:00 — **REGISTRATION / EXPO / NETWORKING / BREAKFAST**

8:15 — **WELCOME REMARKS:** **Neil Fuenmayor,** *Orinko Advanced Plastics North America;* **Rob Philp,** *President, SPE Detroit Section;* **Michael Balow,** *Auxin Consulting, LLC*

DIAMOND SPONSOR PRESENTATION: KINGFA

8:45 — **NETWORKING BREAK** *SPONSORED BY* ***SPE DETROIT SECTION***

	HALL I	HALL II	HALL III
	MATERIALS & PERFORMANCE INNOVATION *Moderators:* Dr. John Mara, *Amfine* Dr. Dave Patel, *GuruTech Systems, Inc.*	**SUSTAINABILITY, CIRCULARITY & REGULATORY READINESS** *Moderators:* Joshua Cram, *Continental Surface Solutions;* John D. Walling, *LyondellBasell* Dhruv Gambhir, *Tesla*	**NEW APPLICATION, DESIGN & PROCESS DEVELOPMENTS** *Moderators:* Kevin O'Malley, *Hyundai America Technical Center, Inc.* Charlie Yang, *LyondellBasell*
9:00	**Non-Halogenated Flame Retardant Compounds for High Performance Applications** Ritch Koeth, *LyondellBasell*	**A New Practical Approach for Measuring Inclusion Count in Recycled Polymers for Class A Parts** Dr. Birat KC, *Magna Exteriors*	**Advanced Short Glass Fibre Reinforced Polypropylene Solutions with Reduced Cycle Time for Cost Saving** Nicolas Schlutig, *Sumika Polymer Compounds Europe*
9:30	**Santoprene Halogen Free Flame Retardant TPV Grades** Dr. Hongyu (Henry) Chen, *Celanese Corp.*	**Innovations in Sustainable TPE and TPO Compounds with ELV Content** Anthony Marozsan, *PRISM Worldwide*	**Effect of Ethylene-based Elastomer Compositions on Mold Shrinkage of TPO Compounds** Giri Gururajan, *ExxonMobil Product Solutions Company*
10:00	**Advances in HFFR Technology: FR GFPP vs. FR GFPA** Dr. Gary Rex, *JLS*	**Next Generation Low Density TPO for Bumper/Fascia** Dr. Jane Lu & David Kramer, *LyondellBasell*	**Advanced Design of Transparent/Translucent Automotive TPO Materials Using Polymer Additives** Akitomo Sato, *Amfine Chemical*

10:30 — **NETWORKING BREAK** *SPONSORED BY* ***SPE DETROIT SECTION***

10:45	**Advanced Styrenic TPE Solutions for Static and Dynamic Automotive Sealing** Stephanie O'Kon, *Kraiburg TPE Corporation*	**PCR/PIR Usage for Painted Bumper Applications** Kevin DeGrood, *Borouge Group International*	**Ablation Resistant Long Glass Fiber Thermoplastics Enabling Next Generation Lightweight and Fire-Resistant EV Structures** Yongtai Zhao, *Kingfa Sci. & Tech. (USA), Inc*
11:15	**Advanced TPE Materials for Airbag Cover Applications** Dr. Shinichiro Shimomura, *Sumitomo Chemical Co. Ltd.*	**Recent Development Progress in Sustainable/ Low CLTE/Translucent Materials** Nobutaka Oba, Dr. Andrew Meyer, Dr. Ted Kalbfleish, *Mytex Polymers*	**Physical Foaming as a Cross-Application Process Enabler for Auto TPO Parts** Frank A. Schumann, *Trexel*

11:45 — **NETWORKING LUNCH** *SPONSORED BY* ***SPE DETROIT SECTION***

PM 1:00 — **PANEL DISCUSSION - MEGATRENDS:**
PANELISTS: **Jesse Peterson,** *INOAC Interior Systems;* **Jeremy Kelley,** *General Motors LLC;* **Steve VanLoozen,** *Teknor Apex;* **Mike Falcocchio,** *Advanced Composites;* **Pravin Sitaram,** *Haartz Corporation*
MODERATORS: **Mark Lapain,** *Advanced Composites;* **Dave Helmer,** *General Motors LLC*

2:00 — **NETWORKING BREAK** *SPONSORED BY* ***SPE DETROIT SECTION***

	MATERIALS & PERFORMANCE INNOVATION *Moderators:* Heejung Kwon, *SONGWON* Dr. Christian Aho, *Americhem*	**SUSTAINABILITY, CIRCULARITY & REGULATORY READINESS** *Moderators:* Sharad Thakkar, *Niche Polymer (Retired)* Dr. Bhavesh Shah, *Lion Elastomers*	**NEW APPLICATION, DESIGN & PROCESS DEVELOPMENTS** *Moderators:* Mark Pilette, *Magna Exteriors (Retired)* Stu Kapp, *Leistritz*
2:15	**POE Evolution Helping Enable Soft TPO Automotive Interiors** Mark Allen, *Dow*	**Enabling Automotive Circularity: Production Approval of 100% ELV-Derived PCR PP Copolymer** Scott J. Oppliger & Mario Maselli, *Toyota Motor North America R&D / Tandem Recycling*	**Driving Cost Efficiency and Material Innovation in TPO Processing with KM Direct Processing Technologies** Eugen Schubert, *KraussMaffei*
2:45	**Engineered TPV and SEBS Compounds for High-Performance Dynamic Seals** Serif Erdogan, *Elastron*	**UV-Stabilization of Automotive TPO Compounds Impact of Sustainability, Recycling & E-Mobility** Dr. Noah Liu, *Rianion*	**Maximize Resin Quality and Yield with In-Line, Off-Line, and Lab Pellet Inspection and Sorting** David Citron, *Inspec.Tech*
3:15	**Enhancing the Long-Term Thermal Stability of PP/TPO in Interior & Under-the-Hood Automotive Applications** Heejung Kwon, *SONGWON*	**Designing for Circularity: Closing the Loop Between Material Science and End-of-Life Reality** Kari Bliss, *Padnos*	**Technical, Logistical, and Commercial Challenges of Scaling ELV Recycling** Kevin Potrias, *Post Plastics Inc.*

3:45 — **NETWORKING BREAK** *SPONSORED BY* ***SPE DETROIT SECTION***

	MATERIALS & PERFORMANCE INNOVATION *Moderators:* Heejung Kwon, *SONGWON* Dr. Christian Aho, *Americhem*	**SUSTAINABILITY, CIRCULARITY & REGULATORY READINESS** *Moderators:* Sharad Thakkar, *Niche Polymer (Retired)* Dr. Bhavesh Shah, *Lion Elastomers*	**NEW APPLICATION, DESIGN & PROCESS DEVELOPMENTS** *Moderators:* Mark Pilette, *Magna Exteriors (Retired)* Stu Kapp, *Leistritz*
4:00	**Emerging DBDPE Alternatives for Automotive Applications & the Formulation Impacts** Jakub Lison, *ICL Group*	**A Success Story: TPO Made of rPP** Dr. Rabeh Elleithy, Ph.D., *PureCycle Technologies*	**Upcycling of Polyolefin Feedstock into Usable Filter Media using Plant-Based Solvents** Moni Ghosh, *University of Akron*
4:30	**Balancing Light Stability and Interior Compliance in PP/TPO Using Low-MW HALS** Dr. Tad Finnegan & Dr. Lily Liu, *BASF Corp.*	**Sustainable Fibers for Enhancing the Functionality of Thermoplastics** David B. Boone, *JRS Fibers*	**Simulation-Driven Sustainability: Enabling Recycled Materials, Lightweighting, and Process Optimization** Anand Bora, *Moldex3D*

REV2

5:00 — **CONFERENCE ENDS**

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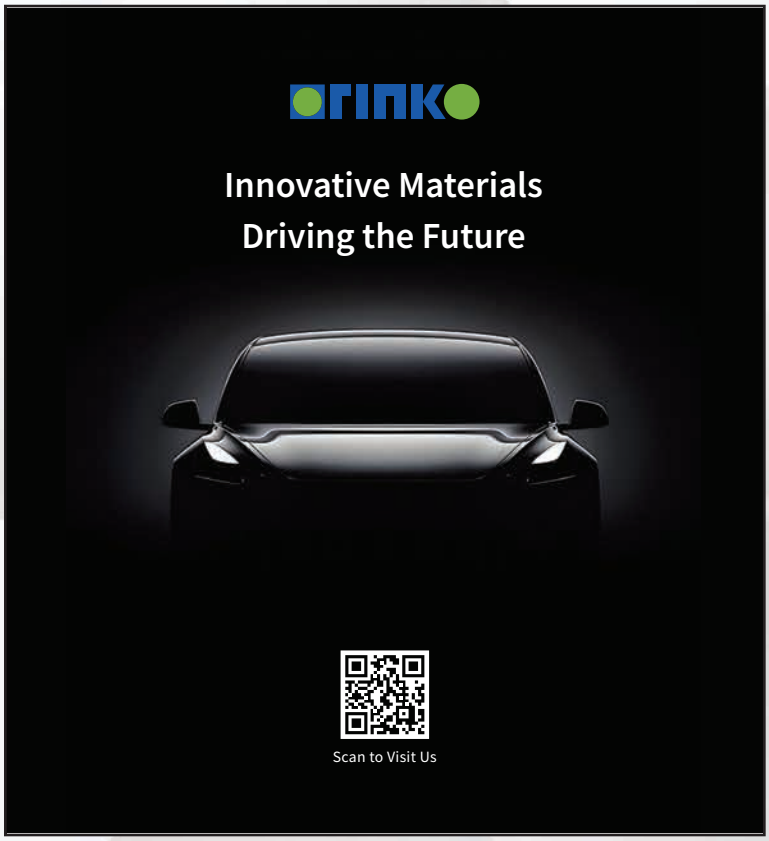

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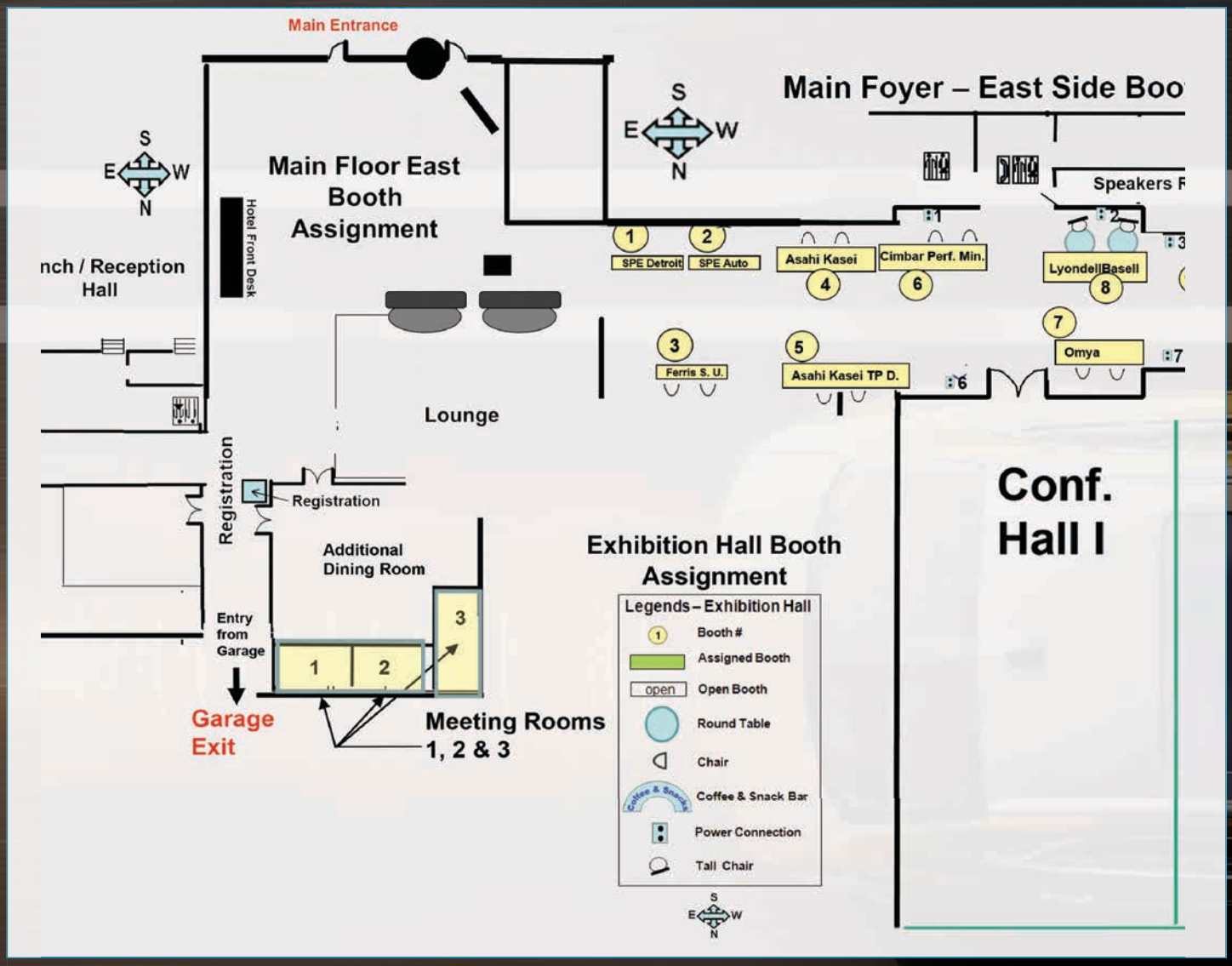
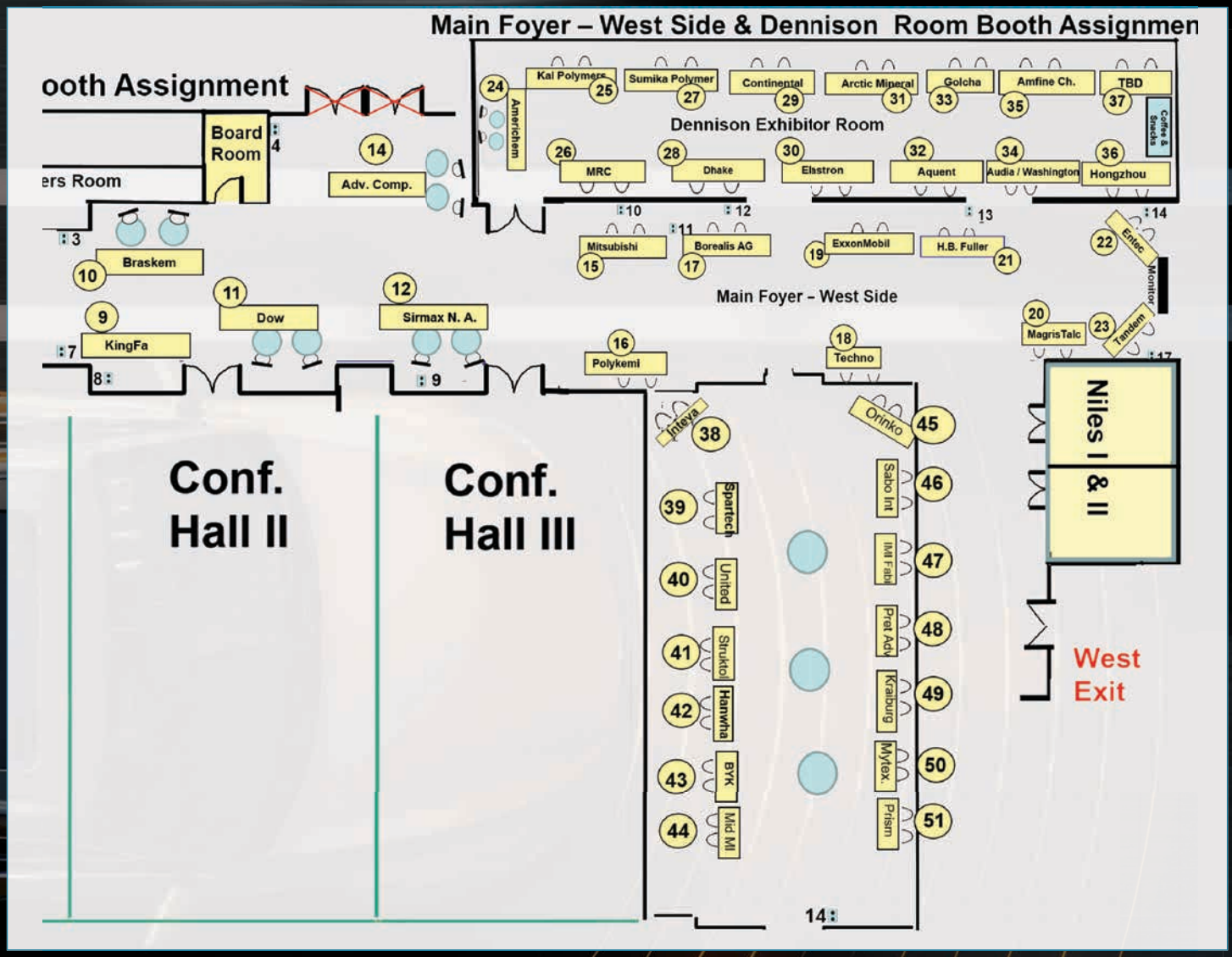
2026 EXHIBITOR LOCATIONS



2026 EXHIBITORS ALPHABETICALLY

Company			Booth
Advanced Composites	**Reception Sponsor**	**Platinum**	**14**
Americhem		Gold	24
Amfine Chemical		Gold	35
Aquent Advance Materials		Exhibitor	32
Arctic Minerals		Exhibitor	31
Asahi Kasei Plastics		Gold	4
Asahi Kasei Thermoplastic		Gold	5
Audia / Washington Penn		Exhibitor	26
Borouge Group International	**Tote Bags**	**Gold**	**17**
Braskem		Gold	10
BYK		Exhibitor	43
Cimbar Performance Minerals		Gold	6
Continental		Gold	29
Dhake Industries		Exhibitor	28
Dow		**Diamond**	**11**
Elastron		Exhibitor	30
Entec Polymers		Exhibitor	22
ExxonMobil Product Solutions		Gold	19
Ferris State University		University / Students	3
Golcha Group		Exhibitor	33
Hangzhou JLS Chemical		Exhibitor	36
Hanwha Advanced Materials		Exhibitor	42
HB Fuller		Gold	21
IMI Fabi LLC		Exhibitor	47
Inteva Products		Gold	38

2026 EXHIBITOR LOCATIONS



2026 EXHIBITORS ALPHABETICALLY

Kal-Polymer	Exhibitor	25
Kingfa Sci. & Tech.(USA), Inc	**Diamond**	**9**
KRAIBURG-TPE	Exhibitor	49
LyondellBasell	Gold	8
M Holland	Notebook	N/A
Magris Talc	Gold	20
Mid Michigan Plastics	Gold	44
Mitsubishi Chemical America	Gold	15
MRC Polymers	Gold	34
Mytex Polymers	Exhibitor	50
Omya Performance Polymers	Gold	7
Orinko Advanced Plastics NA Event Recordings	**Exhibitor**	**45**
Polykemi Group	Gold	16
PRET Advanced Materials	Exhibitor	48
Prism Worldwide	Exhibitor	51
Sabo International Americas Inc	Exhibitor	46
Sirmax North America, Inc	**Break Sponsor Gold**	**12**
Spartan Polymer	Lanyard Sponsor	N/A
Spartech	Exhibitor	39
SPE Automotive Division	SPE / Local Division	2
SPE Detroit Section	SPE Section Hosting the Event	1
Struktol Company of America	Exhibitor	41
Sumika Polymers	Exhibitor	27
Tandem Recycling/Post Plastics	Exhibitor	23
Techno-UMG	Exhibitor	18
United Paint & Chemical Corp.	Exhibitor	40

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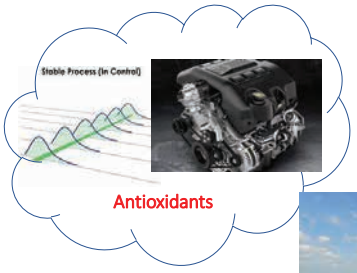
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2026 PANEL DISCUSSIONS

TPO® 2026 PANEL DISCUSSION: SUSTAINABILITY

TUESDAY 9 | 29 1:15-2:15PM

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You're invited to participate in a candid "green conversation" at the 2026 SPE TPO Global Automotive Conference. Leading sustainability voices from Ford, Hyundai, Magna, IAC, and Suppliers Partnership for the Environment come together to dig into the toughest questions facing sustainable TPO — exploring trends, cost, regulation, and industry definitions. Join us for this live and interactive session on Tuesday 9/29 from 1:15–2:15pm, as this expert panel pushes past the surface for real answers.

PANELISTS

ELLEN LEE
Ford Motor Co.

KELLEN MAHONEY
University of Maryland

JON SKELLY
Hyundai America Technical Center, Inc. (HATCI)

SUE KOZORA
IAC Group

PARVINDER WALIA
Magna International

MODERATORS

AUSTIN WAGENHALS
Ford Motor Co.

EWA LEBERT
General Motors LLC

TPO® 2026 PANEL DISCUSSION: MEGATRENDS

WEDNESDAY 9 | 30 1:00-2:00PM

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Megatrends are large, transformative, and long-term global forces that shape industries, economies, and everyday life over decades. This panel will discuss multiple megatrends to gain a greater perspective on how they affect TPO and the broader industry. Supply chain localization, increasing use of CAE, lower cost TPO executions, and artificial intelligence will all be discussed by our panelists.

PANELISTS

JESSE PETERSON
INOAC Interior Systems

JEREMY KELLEY
General Motors LLC

STEVE VANLOOZEN
Teknor Apex

MIKE FALCOCCHIO
Advanced Composites

PRAVIN SITARAM
Haartz Corporation

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MARK LAPAIN
Advanced Composites

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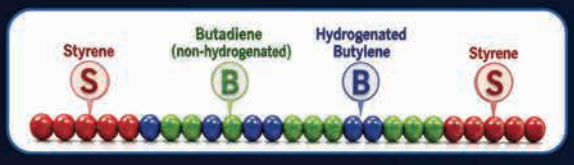

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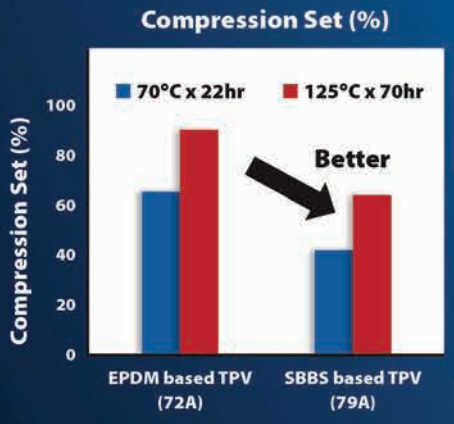

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DETROIT SECTION

2026-2027

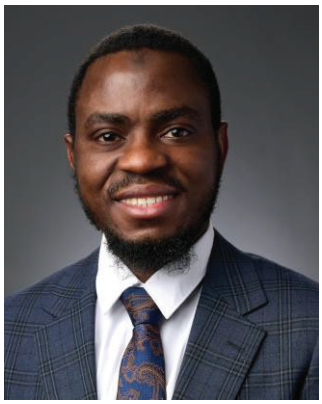
Scholarship Recipient Recognition

During tonight's reception

Person to Watch Recipient: $6,000

(In honor of Sandra McClelland)

Laura Rodarte-Escobedo, MSU Senior
Chemical Engineering



Future Leaders Recipient: $6,500
Kunle Adeyemo, MSU Grad Student
Civil & Mechanical Engineering

Pete Grelle Recipient: $5,500
Evan Portner, Ferris State Senior
Plastics & Polymer Engineering Tech

Reginald Bell Recipient: $5,000
Javardo Lawrence, Kettering Univ Senior
Computer Science

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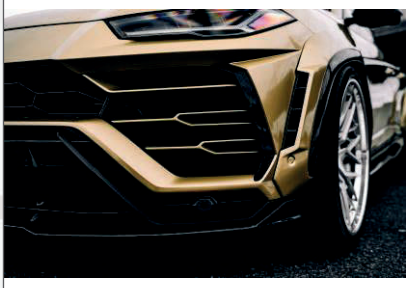

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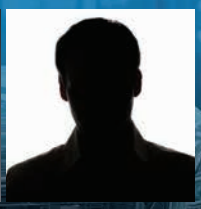
MATERIALS AND PERFORMANCE INNOVATION

SESSION CO-CHAIRS:

John Walling, *LyondellBasell* | **Dr. Birat KC,** *Magna International*
Dhruv Gambir, *Tesla*



Advanced Short Glass Fibre Reinforced Polypropylene Solutions for Structural Door Applications

Nicolas Schlutig,
Sumika Polymer Compounds Europe

At this particular time, lightweighting and cost saving is the main driver in automotive sector.

SUMIKA Polymer Compounds will showcase some solutions to achieve lightweighting in structural applications inside door components.

Further technical solutions using advanced Short Glass Fibre Reinforced Polypropylene (SFGPP) will be deeply explained showing that SFGPP could be an alternative to engineering plastics well supported by advanced CAE tools.

Advanced Short Glass Fibre Reinforced Polypropylene Solutions with Reduced Cycle Time for Cost Saving

Nicolas Schlutig,
Sumika Polymer Compounds Europe

Nowadays, the market is seeking solutions that deliver both cost optimization and high performance to remain competitive.

Keeping leading in technology is also very important

This presentation will showcase solutions provided by Sumika Polymer Compounds to achieve huge cost saving throw reduced cycle time for technical parts for different group in automotive industry. Cost saving throw reduced cycle up to 12 % will give key benefits to our values customers, given them 1 month by year or free injection time.

Further technical solutions using advanced Short Glass Fibre Reinforced Polypropylene (SFGPP) will be deeply explained targeting high structural automotive parts.

Compression Set Improvement at High Temperatures Using a Novel HSBC

Ryo Akatsuka, *Asahi Kasei Europe GmbH*

Asahi Kasei is a global leader in hydrogenated styrenic block copolymer (HSBC), offering a broad portfolio of grades with diverse physical properties for a wide range of applications.

Improving compression set performance at elevated temperatures when using HSBC remains a common challenge across multiple fields, including automotive and industrial applications. In this presentation, we introduce solution concepts tailored to different temperature ranges. Newly developed grades, including a novel cross-linkable development grade, will also be presented.

A New Talc Portfolio for Automotive TPO Modification: Enabling Mechanical Properties Trade-offs Across Particle-Size Classes

Piergiovanni Ercoli Malacari,
IMI Fabi Spa - Italy

Automotive TPO talc modification requires selecting grade fineness to manage mechanical properties trade-offs. A new talc portfolio spanning ultrafine-to-standard particle-size classes is presented. Property trade-offs are mapped using consistent compounding and test protocols, linking grade selection to modulus, impact retention, and dimensional stability indicators (shrinkage/CLTE). Results are benchmarked against established high-brightness talc reference grades used in automotive TPO compounds.

Establishment of a Film Decoration Technique Applicable to Large PP Parts

Yutaro Kawasaki, *Nippon Paint Automotive Americas, NPAA*
Joel Cambell, *Taikisha USA Inc*

Taikisha Group and Nippon paint Group are conducting research into film decoration technology as a next-generation decoration technology.

Since 2025, we have built a demonstration line for film decoration targeting bumpers, and through verification of the line, extracted mass-production challenges and developed solutions.

We will report the feasibility for market implementation identified through these developments, as well as future outlooks.

Research and Application of Self-Healing Polypropylene Materials

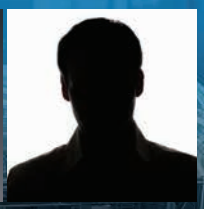
Kenny Lei, *Kingfa Sci. & Tech. (USA), Inc*

A facile and effective strategy was developed to convert commercial polypropylene into a self-healing smart polymer (PTID/EAA) via comonomer-assisted radical grafting and dynamic hydrogen-bond network construction. The resulting material exhibits enhanced tensile strength (~17.7 MPa, 13.5% higher than neat PP) and outstanding thermally activated self-healing capability, recovering nearly 100% of its original mechanical performance after healing at 120 °C for 9 h. This work provides a promising approach for developing durable, safe, and sustainable self-healing polyolefin materials for advanced automotive applications.

MATERIALS AND PERFORMANCE INNOVATION

SESSION CO-CHAIRS:

John Walling, *LyondellBasell* | **Dr. Birat KC,** *Magna International*
Dhruv Gambir, *Tesla*



Ablation Resistant Long Glass Fiber Thermoplastics Enabling Next Generation Lightweight and Fire-Resistant EV Structures

Yongtai Zhao,
Kingfa Sci. & Tech. (USA), Inc

As the EV market grows and safety regulations tighten, conventional thermoplastics struggle to balance lightweight design, mechanical performance, and thermal stability. Kingfa's ablation-resistant long glass fiber reinforced thermoplastics (LFT) offer a promising solution through a three-dimensional fiber network that delivers high strength, low warpage, and excellent impact resistance. The material rapidly self-extinguishes and maintains structural integrity under flame exposure up to 1300°C by forming a dense ceramic-like char layer. Compared with traditional thermoset systems, this LFT solution also provides lower weight and improved processing efficiency for advanced EV battery enclosure applications.

Propylene-Rich Copolymer for Mitigation of Tiger Stripes in Auto Thermoplastic Polyolefin (TPO)

Brian Satterley, *ExxonMobil Product Solutions Company*

Propylene-ethylene copolymers with a wide range of crystallinity and melt flow rate (MFR) were previously shown to compatibilize other propylene-rich and ethylene-rich domains in TPO compounds.

Tiger stripes are alternating regions of low gloss and high gloss on the surface of an injection molded TPO part and can damage surface aesthetics. This paper will discuss the ability of additive levels of a propylene-ethylene copolymer to mitigate tiger stripes when the TPO is injected into a diagnostic spiral mold.

Effect of Ethylene-based Elastomer Compositions on Mold Shrinkage of TPO Compounds

Giri Gururajan, *ExxonMobil Product Solutions Company*

Ethylene-based elastomers are copolymers of ethylene and an alpha-olefin and are well-known as impact modifiers of polypropylene resins in thermoplastic olefin (TPO) compounds. These polyolefin elastomers (POE) have a wide range of densities between and melt index. An auto TPO compound contains 10-30 % of POE and are typically injection molded into various exterior and interior parts. Balanced stiffness and impact are important in TPO compounds, but low mold shrinkage is equally critical. This presentation will discuss the effect of other molecular structural elements such as branching and molecular weight of the elastomer resin on the mold shrinkage.

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INNOVATIONS IN INTERIORS

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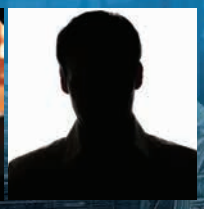
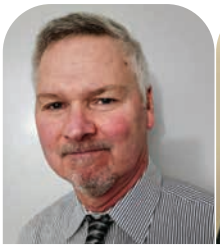
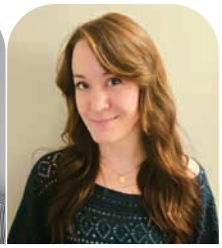
Dr. Raziyeh Mohammadi, *Ford Motor Co.*
Austin Wagenhals, *Ford Motor Co.*
Kevin O'Malley, *Hyundai-Kia America Technical Center, Inc.*



Automotive Seating Reimagined: Polyolefin Innovations

Shankar Ram, *Dow*

Automotive seating has traditionally relied on highly engineered, multi-material constructions. While effective, this complexity makes seats among the most difficult interior components to recycle at end of life, a major circularity challenge. This presentation outlines the challenges, progress, and path forward for mono-material polyolefin seating. It highlights advances in polyolefin elastomers which now enable high-performance artificial leather with improved aesthetics, haptics, and durability. In parallel, innovations such as INFINAIR™ demonstrate recyclable polyolefin cushioning systems that replace conventional foams. Collectively, these advancements mark an exciting leap forward, bringing us closer to achieving a fully mono-material polyolefin seating solution.

Incorporating Fiber to Create Unique Aesthetics, Reduce Costs, and Promote Sustainability with Molded in Color TPO's

Perry Banta & Kristina Sova,
LyondellBasell

Fiber-enhanced molded-in-color (MIC) TPOs deliver unique visual effects and in some cases, a lower-cost alternative to painted or fabric-wrapped parts. Bio-based and degradable fibers can also promote sustainability while enabling simplified, single-phase manufacturing. Some of these fibers have already been used in Automotive applications. These fibers continues to become more widely used as fiber technologies become more versatile and economical.

Advanced Styrenic TPE Solutions for Static and Dynamic Automotive Sealing

Stephanie O'kon,
Kraiburg TPE Corporation

KRAIBURG TPE's styrenic TPE (TPS) portfolio redefines automotive sealing, delivering alternatives to rubber for static and dynamic applications. Advanced lightweight, recycledcontent formulations provide improved compression set resistance, thermal stability, and durability under dynamic loads. Solutions address key challenges including UV/weathering resistance, shrinkage control, and adhesion to polar and nonpolar substrates. Superior processability supports extrusion, coextrusion, and injection molding at lower temperatures with faster cycles and recyclability, reducing carbon footprint and enabling sustainable OEM sealing systems.

Blue Value for Automotive Interiors

Noah Dunlap, *Advanced Composites, Inc.*

Advanced Composites (Mitsui Chemicals Group) has continued to develop materials which advance the capabilities of mold-in-color TPO for automotive interior applications. These newly developed materials are "Blue Value" products reflecting a holistic approach to sustainability. This approach promotes the incorporation of recycled content, while recognizing the value of additional pathways to advance sustainability such as weight savings, reduced material consumption, and improved ease of recyclability. Materials have been developed for each of these pathways as part of a comprehensive TPO product portfolio designed to enable customers to meet long-term sustainability targets.

Next-Generation TPO Artificial Leather: Advancing Surface Durability Beyond Conventional Performance Limits

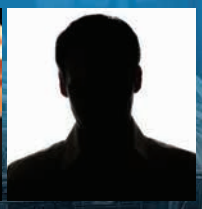
Joshua Cram,
Continental Surface Solutions

As automotive interiors demand lasting appearance and tactile quality, conventional TPO artificial leathers face limits in abrasion resistance and durability. This paper presents a next-generation TPO leather that breaks incremental trends, offering dramatic improvements in abrasion resistance, flex endurance, and surface integrity. Benchmark results show superior performance, resisting initial and accumulated wear. The advancement expands durability for PVC-free skins, redefining expectations for TPO leather in demanding, long-term interior applications.

INNOVATIONS IN INTERIORS

SESSION CO-CHAIRS:

Dr. Raziyeh Mohammadi, *Ford Motor Co.*
Austin Wagenhals, *Ford Motor Co.*
Kevin O'Malley, *Hyundai-Kia America Technical Center, Inc.*



Bridging Performance and Circularity in Automotive Interior Materials

Luca Gazzola, *Sirmax*

Driven by OEM sustainability strategies, tightening regulations, and life-cycle CO_2 reduction targets, the automotive industry is accelerating low environmental impact material development. Interior polymers offer major CO_2 reduction potential through optimized formulations and recycled content, while meeting strict functional, aesthetic, and processing requirements.

Within this context, Sirmax developed a 20% talc-filled polypropylene compound with 25% recycled PP for interior applications such as door panels, central consoles, and instrument panels, delivering verified environmental benefits without compromising performance.

H.B. Fuller's Swift®lock 2087 Adhesive for Interior Trim

James Hammond, *H.B. Fuller*

Automotive interiors are continually changing, and manufacturers are employing increasingly more complex application processes to meet the demands of OEMs. H.B. Fuller has an extensive product portfolio and expertise to find the best solution to meet the needs of an evolving interior trim manufacturing space. H.B. Fuller has recently launched its new Swift®lock 2087 reactive hotmelt. This hotmelt moisture cure adhesive can withstand high-temperature and high-humidity conditions without blocking or staining on coverstock materials, allowing for short-term pre-apply applications. In addition to solving challenging process requirements, this adhesive is designed to be supply chain secure in an ever-shifting world stage.

This presentation will focus on the anti-blocking and staining properties of Swift®lock 2087 and how it compares to other hotmelt moisture cure adhesives and the value it brings to the market.

A Success Story: TPO made of rPP

Rabeh Elleithy, *PureCycle*

This presentation compares typical properties of interior TPO compounds made from virgin resins to TPO compounds made from post-consumer that were sourced from residential curbside bins and subsequently purified using PureCycle's novel dissolution technology. It will be demonstrated that compounds made from purified resins have comparable properties as virgin resins in interior trim compositions at temperatures as low as -30 °C. This promising development presents a real pathway to incorporation of post-consumer content in automotive applications.

Advanced TPE Materials for Airbag Cover Applications

Dr. Shinichiro Shimomura,
Sumitomo Chemical Co., Ltd.,

Sumitomo Chemical and Sumika Polymers North America are dedicated to delivering advanced technological solutions that enhance comfort and ensure maximum safety in the automotive industry through continuous innovation in material development and new design approaches. We have developed innovative ESPOLEX® thermoplastic elastomers (TPEs) that exhibit outstanding performance and reliability for airbag cover applications, contributing to improved vehicle safety and design flexibility.

Hot Melt Adhesive for Multi-Substrate Bonding for Interior Automotive Applications

Nayera Abdelaziz, *Henkel Corporation*

Interior automotive design utilizes low surface energy substrates for their low density, durability and cost-effectiveness Assembly of low-surface energy substrates presents challenges, particularly when joined with a polar substrate.

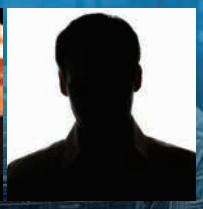
We present a Hot Melt adhesive system capable of bonding both low and high energy substrates without the need of surface treatment

The present system offers excellent adhesion across multiple substrates, while maintaining performance at high temperatures.

INNOVATIONS IN INTERIORS

SESSION CO-CHAIRS:

Dr. Raziyeh Mohammadi, *Ford Motor Co.*
Austin Wagenhals, *Ford Motor Co.*
Kevin O'Malley, *Hyundai-Kia America Technical Center, Inc.*



POE Evolution Helping Enable Soft TPO Automotive Interiors

Mark Allen, *Dow*

Automotive interior materials are evolving to offer high performance while offering improved sustainability benefits, including safer materials, enhanced durability, and reduced environmental impact throughout the vehicle life cycle. This presentation highlights the evolution of polyolefin elastomers (POEs) over the past two decades and their role in helping enable soft, TPO-based compounds for interior skin applications, acoustic barriers, and non-carpet flooring. The impact of polymer architecture and formulation strategies on key performance, processing, and sustainability requirements will be discussed.

Upcycling Polypropylene through Functional Masterbatch for Automotive Interior Applications

Dr. Raziyeh Mohammadi, Xiaojiang Wang & Ellen Lee
Ford Motor Company, Research and Innovation Center

As the automotive industry transitions toward circular economies, interior applications face unique challenges for integrating recycled content without compromising rigorous aesthetic, thermal, and mechanical standards required for in-cabin components. This study presents a scalable functional polypropylene (PP) masterbatch (MB) designed to bridge the performance gap between recycled and virgin resins.

Utilizing reactive blending of maleic anhydride-grafted PP, we created a percolating network within the polymer matrix that enhances the material's structural integrity. Testing via DSC, TGA, and DMA, alongside standard mechanical evaluations, demonstrates that MBmodified blends exhibit superior mechanical and thermal properties and maintain their mechanical performance through multiple high-shear processing cycles.

A standout finding for interior applications is the enhancement in thermal stability and heat deflection temperature (HDT) of PP when blended with up to 15% MB. Development of this functionalization technology using standard high-shear extrusion and injection molding processes provides a robust and scalable pathway for increasing recycled content in applications typically reserved for virgin materials.

Manufacturing and Recycling Mono-Material Door Assemblies

Dr. Aristotle J. Zervoudakis
Inteva Products

To address the challenges raised by recent regulations around automotive plastics we explored how targeted reformulation of different door panel components to TPO, along with Inteva Products's patented ECO process, could open the path for improving automotive circularity. We formulated, processed, and tested a model recycled resin based on this redesigned door panel to simulate how a mono-material assembly could simplify circularity by creating a standalone feedstock or reducing material complexity in automotive shredder residue.

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Dr. Murali Reddy, *CpK*
Joshua Cram, *Continental Surface Solutions*

Technical, Logistical, and Commercial Challenges of Scaling ELV Recycling

Kevin Poitras, *Post Plastics Inc.*

The automotive industry is under increasing pressure to meet aggressive sustainability mandates, including higher recycled content targets and full lifecycle accountability for plastic components. While these goals are clear, the pathway to achieving them—particularly with high-performance materials like polypropylene (PP) and thermoplastic olefins (TPO)—remains complex.

In this presentation, Kevin Poitras, CEO of Post Plastics and VP of our sister company, Tandem Recycling in Quebec, will share a practical, real-world approach to producing high-quality End-of-Life Vehicle (ELV) post-consumer recycled (PCR) resins for automotive use.

Drawing from years of behind-the-scenes development, this session outlines how a vertically integrated recycling model—spanning collection, sorting, decontamination, shredding, grinding, and compounding—can consistently deliver impact-grade PP and TPO materials suitable for demanding automotive applications. The discussion will highlight how collaboration with collision centers, Tier 1 and Tier 2 suppliers, and OEMs enables a true closed-loop system, diverting automotive plastics from landfill and returning them into new vehicle production.

Attendees will gain insight into the technical, logistical, and commercial challenges of scaling ELV recycling, as well as actionable strategies to integrate high-quality PCR materials into existing supply chains without compromising performance.

This session is ideal for OEMs, material engineers, sustainability leaders, and procurement teams seeking reliable pathways to meet recycled content goals while maintaining product integrity.

Sustainable Fibers for Enhancing the Functionality of Thermoplastics

David Boone, *JRS Fibers*

The increasing environmental impact of conventional plastics has accelerated the search for sustainable alternatives in material science. One promising approach involves the integration of sustainable fibers—such as natural, recycled, and bio-based fibers—into polymer matrices to create eco-friendly composite materials. These fiber-reinforced plastics not only reduce reliance on non-renewable resources but also improve mechanical properties, including strength, stiffness, and durability.

This presentation explores the types of sustainable fibers commonly used in plastics, including cellulose, hemp, sisal, and recycled cotton and synthetic fibers, along with their processing methods and compatibility with various polymer systems. It also examines the environmental benefits of these composites, such as reduced carbon footprint, biodegradability, and enhanced recyclability, while addressing current challenges like moisture sensitivity, fiber-matrix adhesion, and scalability.

Through case studies and recent innovations, this work highlights the potential of sustainable fiber-reinforced plastics across industries such as automotive. The presentation concludes by discussing future research directions and the role of sustainable fibers in advancing circular economy principles within the plastics industry.

Designing for Circularity: Closing the Loop Between Material Science and End-of-Life Reality

Kari Bliss, *Padnos*

Most materials engineers and product designers have never stood inside an industrial recycling facility. They've never watched what happens to a carefully engineered polyolefin component after it leaves the factory – how it's sorted, why it's rejected, what makes it valuable or worthless in a commodity market, and how a single design decision made years earlier can determine whether that material ever re-enters the supply chain.

This session bridges that gap.

Drawing on over 15 years of experience at PADNOS – a 120-year-old privately held industrial recycler with processing operations across Michigan and Indiana and commodity trading relationships spanning global markets – I will take automotive material scientists, designers, and sustainability leaders on a journey through the end-of-life process they rarely see. From the economics of densification and logistics to the sortation realities of mixed resin streams – including why "technically recyclable" doesn't always mean "economically viable" – attendees will gain a ground-level understanding of what actually determines recyclability at scale.

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Sharad Thakkar, *Niche Polymer*
Dr. Murali Reddy, *CpK*
Joshua Cram, *Continental Surface Solutions*

Sustainable Solutions for HDPE and Polypropylene

Andy Johnson, *KW Plastics*

KW Plastics is a mechanical recycler of Polypropylene and High-Density Polyethylene. Headquartered in Troy, AL, we have over 700M lbs. of extrusion capacity, and over 150M lbs. of total silo capacity, which makes us the international leader in HDPE and PP recycled resins. We are vertically integrated on the Polypropylene side of our business, where we injection mold containers that are used in the paint and coatings industry. The containers are made up of 100% recycled resin produced by our recycling facility. KW Plastics has supplied the automotive industry since the 90's with HDPE and PP recycled resins. We are one of the largest secondary lead smelters and lead-acid battery recyclers in the United States, producing approximately 120,000 - 130,000 tons of lead annually. We are keeping roughly 13 million lead-acid batteries out of U.S. landfills each year.

A New Practical Approach for Measuring Inclusion Count in Recycled Polymers for Class A Parts

Dr. Birat KC, *Magna Exteriors*

Magna has developed a practical, scalable method to quantify solid contaminants in recycled polymers for visible automotive parts. The technique involves forming a thin plate, visually inspecting inclusions, and calculating an average total inclusion count (TIC). A case study evaluating multiple recycled polymer lots establishes a maximum acceptable TIC threshold. Results show strong correlation between TIC and painted surface quality, supporting use of this method as a quality control tool to mitigate appearance risk in recycled Class A TPO parts.

Supporting More Sustainable Automotive Materials: Recycled PP Production and Data from LYB's Jurupa Valley Plant

Renee Haney, *LyondellBasell*

LyondellBasell (LYB) continues to advance circular solutions for the automotive industry through the expansion and optimization of its polypropylene (PP) recycling operations. This presentation will provide an update on LYB's PP recycling plant in Jurupa Valley and introduce the current portfolio of post-consumer recycle (PCR) products being produced at the site, with a focus on data relevant to automotive applications. By showcasing technical progress and early performance data, this session aims to support collaboration with automotive OEMs and suppliers seeking high-quality recycled PP solutions aligned with sustainability and circularity goals.

Core-Shell Lignin Additives for Tough, Flame-Resistant, and Recyclable Polypropylene

Reza Bahrami,
Texas A&M University

PP composites containing 30 wt% lignin as a biobased filler were developed. Styrene-Ethylene-Butadiene-Styrene (SEBS) was used as a compatibilizer to improve lignin dispersion and reduce particle size to 5 µm or less through formation of a core-shell morphology, resulting in improved impact strength without sacrificing modulus. TEM/TOM studies on double-notch four-point Charpy specimens revealed the toughening mechanisms. The core-shell morphology remained stable after five remelting cycles, preserving melt strength, tensile properties, and impact strength. The formulation also showed enhanced flame retardancy.

Innovations in Sustainable TPE and TPO Compounds with ELV Content

Anthony Marozsan,
PRISM Worldwide

PRISM Worldwide has developed the Ancora™ family of thermoplastic elastomer (TPE) and Ennova™ thermoplastic polyolefin (TPO) compounds engineered with significant content derived from ELV content tire streams. This paper shows PRISM's integrated approach to rubber devulcanization and compound design strategies that enable consistent mechanical performance, processing stability, and quality suitable for automotive interior, exterior, and under-the-hood applications. Performance data and case studies will be presented comparing Ancora™ ELV-based TPE and TPO compounds to conventional virgin and post-industrial recycled benchmarks.

SUSTAINABILITY

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Sharad Thakkar, *Niche Polymer*
Dr. Murali Reddy, *CpK*
Joshua Cram, *Continental Surface Solutions*

Recent Development Progress in Sustainable/Low CLTE/ Translucent Materials

Mr. Nobutaka Oba,
Mytex Polymers US Corp.

This presentation explores recent development in sustainable, low CLTE, and translucent materials for automotive applications. The work aims to address emerging requirements in automotive, especially in EV sectors, including CO_2 reduction, lightweighting through metal replacement, and enhanced visual design enabled by high optical clarity. By integrating multiple recycled streams, including PCR and PIR, with optimized selection of material components, a wide range of properties can be finely tuned through formulation design to meet diverse and evolving customer requirements across key application areas. The relationship between material design, processing, and performance is discussed in these three examples to highlight key development strategies.

Enabling Automotive Circularity: Production Approval of 100% ELV-Derived PCR PP Copolymer

Scott J. Oppliger,
Toyota Motor North America R&D
Mario Maselli, *Tandem Recyclage*

This presentation details the development and production approval of an end-of-life vehicle (ELV)–derived post-consumer recycled (PCR) polypropylene (PP) copolymer for automotive applications at Toyota. The work demonstrates how high-recycled-content PP copolymer materials can be engineered to meet stringent OEM requirements for mechanical performance, processing stability, and surface quality despite inherent variability in ELV feedstreams. A structured validation approach is presented, including material formulation, contamination management, durability testing, and supplier readiness to enable consistent, high-volume production. Results show that the ELV PCR PP copolymer achieves performance comparable to conventional virgin materials while delivering cost and sustainability benefits. In addition, this development supports proactive preparation for emerging European Union ELV regulatory requirements targeting increased recycled content in new vehicles, establishing a scalable pathway for integrating ELV-derived resins into future production programs and advancing circular economy objectives within the automotive industry.

Upcycling of Polyolefin Feedstock into Usable Filter Media Using Plant-Based Solvents

Moni Mahesh Ghosh, *University of Akron*

Polyolefins are the most consumed type of polymers and consequently dominate waste streams. This work explores upcycling of HDPE and PP into aerogels for filtration applications like oil-water separation and air filtration. The aerogels are manufactured via thermally induced phase separation from sustainable terpenes. Their properties vary with solvent, polymer type and concentration. Virgin and waste feedstocks were compared and showed performance exceeding benchmarks.

Highly Efficient Isotactic Polypropylene Degradation Induced Via Rapid Non-Thermal Plasma Hydrogenolysis Over Y-Zeolite

Marziyeh Shabani, *University of Akron*

Plastic waste poses major environmental challenges, with most discarded material ending up in landfills and degrading into harmful microplastics. Since PE and PP are the most widely used plastics, efficient recycling is critical. Non-thermal plasma, particularly dielectric barrier discharge systems, offers an energy-efficient, scalable, and renewable-electricity-compatible route for chemical recycling under ambient conditions. Combined with zeolite catalysts, reactive hydrogen species promote C–C bond cleavage, converting plastic waste into valuable light hydrocarbons and monomers for fuels and chemical feedstocks.

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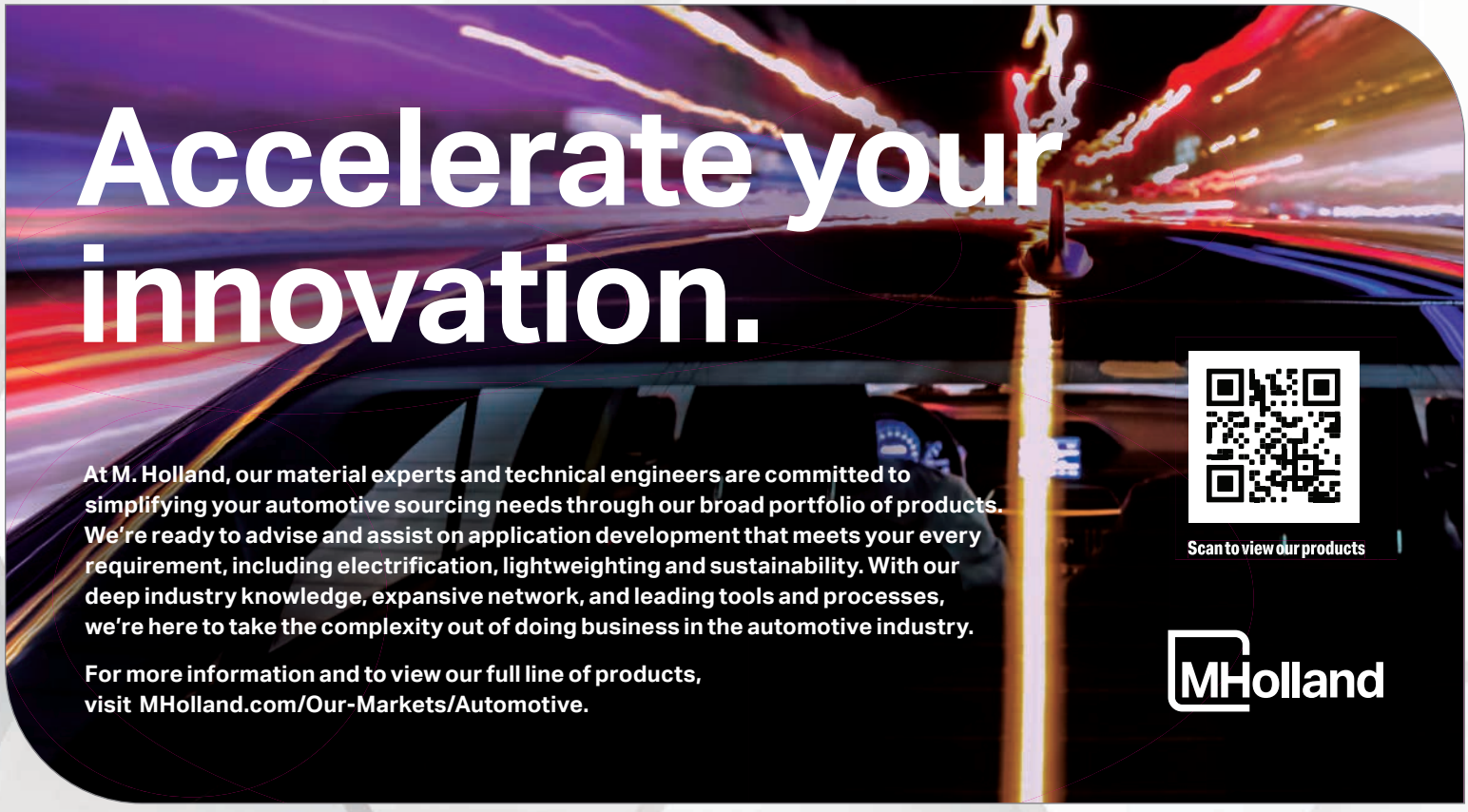

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EXTERIOR TRIM AND STRUCTURAL APPLICATIONS

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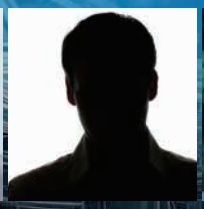
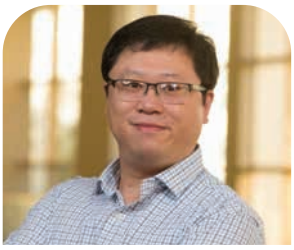
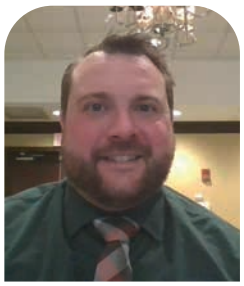




Advancing TPO in Exterior Body Panels

Xian Jiang, *Dow Inc.*

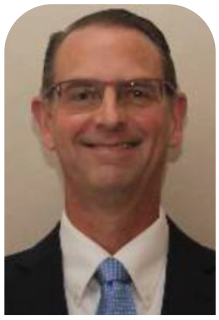
Replacing metal with TPO in exterior closure applications offers benefits in weight reduction and design freedom, yet metal continues to dominate. This presentation reviews the key technical barriers to broader TPO adoption, with emphasis on the fundamental properties of the elastomer component. The discussion highlights how targeted elastomer design enables high-quality TPO formulations capable of meeting demanding exterior body panel requirements.



Closing the Loop: Painted Bumper Solutions with Recycled Polypropylene: A journey through challenges, limitations and success

Kevin DeGrood,
Borouge Group International

Polypropylene (PP), one of the most widely produced thermoplastics, is moving towards circularity also in advanced safety relevant automotive applications. The EU's proposed End-of-Life Vehicle (ELV) regulation targets high post-consumer recycled content in cars by 2032, partly from closed-loop sources. This study explores advanced mechanical recycling for painted PP bumper applications, combining feedstock purification and optimized compound design to achieve high recyclate content without compromising performance. Tests on mechanical properties, paint adhesion and aesthetics, and dimensional stability confirm suitability for automotive exterior use. Results demonstrate that post-consumer and post-industrial recycled PP can meet stringent requirements, supporting ambitious circularity goals.



Next-Generation Low-Density TPO for Bumper Fascia: Balancing Stiffness, Impact Performance, and Sustainability

Jane Lu & David Kramer,
LyondellBasell

Thermoplastic polyolefins (TPOs) have been widely used in automotive bumper fascia applications for decades due to their favorable balance of stiffness, impact resistance, and cost-effective processability. This paper presents LyondellBasell's latest-generation TPO designed to deliver an optimized combination of reduced density, high stiffness, and excellent low-temperature impact performance for next-generation fascia systems. The material enables lightweighting while delivering robust part performance, paintability, and stable, efficient processing, providing a drop-in solution for existing manufacturing lines. A CirculenRecover version incorporating recycled content is also introduced, demonstrating comparable properties and processing behavior, supporting OEM sustainability objectives without compromising application performance.

Characterization of Strain Rate Dependence of Automotive Compounds

Charlie Yang,
LyondellBasell

Accurate CAE material modeling for polymers requires characterization across a broad spectrum of strain rates, from long-term creep and fatigue to high-speed tensile (HST) loading representative of crash and impact events. This paper presents an integrated testing strategy that combines complementary experimental technologies across multiple laboratories within a unified methodological framework to deliver coherent and transferable material data. A key differentiator of LyondellBasell is a globally aligned CAE organization applying consistent testing methods and data interpretation practices worldwide, enabling global OEMs to rely on a single, robust material dataset across platforms and brands. We highlight our capabilities in creep, fatigue, low-speed tensile, and advanced HST testing, with critical high-strain-rate measurements now insourced to enhance data quality, repeatability, and customer confidence in CAE-driven design decisions.

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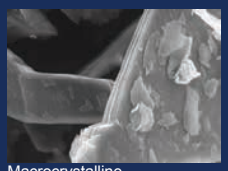
Macrocrystalline, SEM at 2000 X

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POLYOLEFIN ELASTOMERS AND VULCANIZATES

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Dr. Bhavesh Shah, *Lion Elastomers*
Dr. Dave Patel, *GuruTech Systems, Inc*

Santoprene Halogen Free Flame Retardant TPV Grades

Dr. Hongyu (Henry) Chen, *Celanese Corp*

Santoprene Halogen Free Flame Retardant TPVs complement the broad existing product portfolio, delivering key benefits for cable and wire applications. This presentation introduces Celanese's new HFFR grades, designed to address emerging market trends such as evolving electrical applications that must comply with the latest regional standards and directives, while offering increased flexibility, improved processing, and lower cost compared to thermosets. These grades provide cable manufacturers with excellent mechanical properties, as well as certified UL94 V0 flammability rating and compliance with UL1581 VW-1 requirements.

Engineered TPV and SEBS Compounds for High-Performance Dynamic Seals

Serif Erdogan, *Elastron*

This study presents newly engineered EPDM/PP-based TPV and SEBSbased TPE compounds for dynamic sealing applications. The TPV exhibits reduced compression set, enhanced tensile and fatigue performance, and improved weathering resistance. SEBS-based formulations provide optimized elastic recovery, melt processability, and low VOC emissions. Compared to conventional thermoset elastomers, these materials provide enhanced durability, improved processing efficiency, and reduced CO_2 emissions, making them well-suited for foamed dynamic sealing applications

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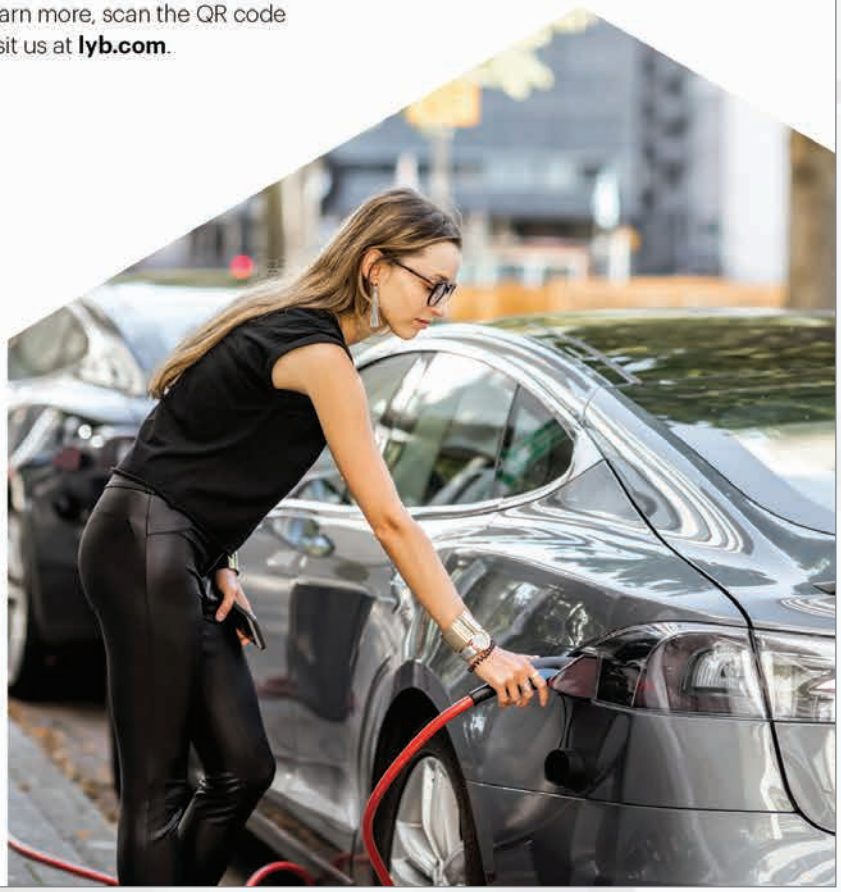

PROCESS ENABLING AND ADDITIVE TECHNOLOGIES

SESSION CO-CHAIRS:

Paul Sieradzki, *Toray Plastics (America)*
Stu Kapp, *Leistritz Extrusion*

Predicting the Lifetime of PCR PP Compounds for Automotive Applications

Todd Glogovsky, *Orinko Advanced Plastics North America*

Recycled PCR PP has been increasing in usage in automotive vehicles to lower the PCF (product carbon footprint). Through Orinko's vertical integration, appliance end-of-life waste streams enable a true end-to-end recycling ecosystem, resulting in high-quality PCR PP to be used in new compounded products for automotive and demanding uses. Orinko conducted a technical study using long term heat aging and applying the Arrhenius equation to model lifetime prediction, providing a quantitative method for estimating durability and thermal stability of PCR based materials in real world automotive environments.

Atypical Twin Screw Extrusion System Configurations for TPO Processes

Brian Haight, *Leistritz*

Co-rotating, intermeshing twin screw extruders are used to compound fillers and additives into plastics, as well as to vent undesirable volatiles from the process melt stream. There is a trend to sequence multiple extruders (single and twin screw) with upstream and downstream sub-systems into the same manufacturing operation, eliminating manufacturing steps and improving quality. Understanding the feedstock materials (i.e. recycled feed streams), careful staging of unit operations and system integration are the keys to success. Examples of unique, atypical extrusion systems integrating twin screw extruders and configured for TPO, TPV and TPE formulations will be presented and defined.

Beyond Twin-Screw Compounding: CPM's Ring Extruder in Modern TPO Compounding

Daron Fraim, *CPM*

CPM's innovative Ring Extruder (RE) technology features a unique multi-shaft design with twelve intermeshing screws around a static core. The RE generates enhanced elongational flow that delivers superior dispersion and mixing for complex multi-phase elastomer and thermoplastic formulations.

In this session, we will explore how CPM's modular RE platform combines the processing flexibility of traditional twin-screw systems with a more compact, space-efficient footprint.

Join us to learn how CPM's Ring Extruder is redefining what's possible in modern compounding.

Physical Foaming as a Cross-Application Process Enabler for Auto TPO Parts

Frank A. Schumann, *Trexel*

As OEMs and molders across the automotive value chain pursue lightweighting, sustainability, and cost efficiency simultaneously, the process by which a part is molded is becoming as decisive as the material itself. This paper presents MuCell®, Trexel's established microcellular foam injection molding technology, as a proven, material-agnostic production process that delivers measurable value across the full range of TPO applications used in modern vehicles.

MuCell uses physical foaming with inert nitrogen — injected as a supercritical fluid directly into the polymer melt — to create a fine, accurately uniform cell structure cycle over cycle. Unlike chemical blowing agents, nitrogen does not react with the polymer and generates no emissions or residues. The result: lighter, more dimensionally stable parts, produced with lower clamping forces on smaller, more energy-efficient injection molding machines, while shortening cycle times.

Maximize Resin Quality and Yield with In-Line, Off-Line, and Lab Pellet Inspection and Sorting

David Citron, *Inspec.Tech (Inspection Technologies)*

Maximize Resin Quality and Yield with In-Line, On-Line, and Lab Pellet Inspection and Sorting Inspection Technologies is a leading manufacturer of inspection and measurement systems for plastic sheet, film, pellet producers, and pellet purchasers/processors.

Achieving and maintaining pellet and final product quality is a constant challenge for most plastic processors today. Our patented Raw Material Inspection (RMI) pellet systems are proven to detect, alarm, and sort for quality problems such as contamination, variations in size/shape/tails, and color shift/cross contamination. These RMI systems are available in a range of sizes for throughputs starting below 1,000 lbs./hr. up to and beyond 20,000 lbs./hr.

Three variations of this technology are available to bridge the gap between existing small scale lab units and very large, expensive, and cumbersome on-line sorting systems.

In-Line Pellet Production: These systems provide early warning detection and alarms, enabling personnel to make needed process adjustments, in real time. Optional sorting technologies are also available.

PROCESS ENABLING AND ADDITIVE TECHNOLOGIES

SESSION CO-CHAIRS:

Paul Sieradzki, *Toray Plastics (America)*
Stu Kapp, *Leistritz Extrusion*

On-Line Material Recovery System: Advancements in sorting technology, combined with intelligent multi-cycle recirculation, enables optimal resin purity to be achieved to maximize both product quality and yield. RMI-LAB: Our Lab pellet inspection system allows much larger sample sizes with faster processing time that improves data consistency and reliability while shortening the inspection latency. Optional air nozzle sorting is also available.

Ditch the Paint Shop: Class A Polyurethane Overmolded TPO Parts for Interior and Exterior Applications

Raphael Bretz, *Krauss Maffei*

This presentation will explore the in-situ polyurethane (PU) overmolding of injection-molded TPO and composite parts, allowing for direct out-of-mold class "A" surfaces. The process and equipment requirement will be outlined as well as the tooling options currently available for PU systems for this process. Comparisons of this technology with existing coating and painting solutions, highlighting advantages and limitations, will be provided. Current market trends, production parts and other related to be explored.

Simulation-Driven Sustainability: Enabling Recycled Materials, Lightweighting, and Process Optimization

Anand Bora, *Moldex3D*

Sustainability in automotive manufacturing requires a careful balance between environmental responsibility, cost efficiency, and product performance. This presentation demonstrates how advanced simulation tools can support sustainable injection molding of thermoplastic polyolefin (TPO) components by addressing challenges in recycled material utilization, process optimization, and lightweighting.

Using Moldex3D simulation, we analyze the impact of increasing recycled content on material behavior, including changes in shear viscosity, flow hesitation, and pressure requirements. The study highlights how optimized processing conditions—such as melt temperature and processing windows—can mitigate these challenges and enable the successful use of high recycled content, including 100% recycled materials.

The session further explores the application of Design of Experiments (DOE) to systematically identify optimal process parameters and improve robustness. In addition, foam injection molding is presented as a viable lightweighting strategy, delivering 6–12% weight reduction, 15–35% cycle time savings, and reduced clamping force, while maintaining structural performance.

Driving Cost Efficiency and Material Innovation in TPO Processing with KraussMaffei Direct Processing Technologies

Eugen Schubert, *Krauss Maffei*

As automotive manufacturers intensify their focus on cost reduction and performance optimization, advanced processing technologies for thermoplastic polyolefins (TPOs) are becoming a key enabler.

This presentation highlights how innovative solutions from KraussMaffei—including direct compounding and direct chopped fiber processing—enable significant material cost savings while unlocking new levels of material customization.

By integrating compounding and molding into a single inline process, these systems eliminate intermediate steps, reduce raw material costs, and provide unmatched flexibility in tailoring formulations.

The ability to incorporate additives, fillers, and fiber reinforcements directly during processing allows manufacturers to fine-tune mechanical properties, surface quality, and weight reduction in real time.

Attendees will gain insight into how these unique processing capabilities translate into lower total cost of ownership, improved part performance, and greater design freedom—supporting the automotive industry's shift toward lightweight, sustainable, and highly engineered components.

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PERFORMANCE ADDITIVES AND COLORANTS

SESSION CO-CHAIRS:

Dr. John Mara, *Amfine Chemical*
Heejung Kwon, *SONGWON* | **Christian Aho,** *Americhem*

Advanced Design of Transparent/ Translucent Automotive TPO Materials Using Polymer Additives

Akitomo Sato, *Amfine Chemical*

Advanced automotive transparent and translucent TPO materials require a careful balance of optical clarity, mechanical performance, and durability. ADEKA/ AMFINE presents high-performance TPO material designs enabled by an optimized nucleating/clarifying agent system. This approach achieves excellent transparency while meeting automotive mechanical and weatherability requirements. The effectiveness of the design is demonstrated through a prototype transparent bumper showing good backlight visibility.

Balancing Light Stability and Interior Compliance in PP/TPO Using Low-MW HALS

Dr. Lily Liu, *BASF Corp.*

Polypropylene (PP) and thermoplastic olefin (TPO) materials are increasingly used in automotive interior applications to support lightweighting and cost efficiency. However, these materials must meet stringent requirements for long-term light stability, thermal aging resistance, and low emissions. Hindered amine light stabilizers (HALS) are essential to achieving these performance targets. Low molecular weight HALS, in particular, provide effective light stabilization due to their high mobility, though careful formulation is required to balance fogging, odor, and tackiness for interior compliance. In this work, we review the benefits and drawbacks of several low molecular weight HALS, and will share several case studies to demonstrate how these products enable durable, compliant, and cost-effective automotive interior applications.

Enhancing the Long-Term Thermal Stability of PP/TPO in Interior & Under-the-Hood Automotive Applications

Heejung Kwon, *SONGWON*

Automotive polypropylene (PP) and thermoplastic polyolefin (TPO) require robust long-term thermal stability (LTTS) in interior and under-the-hood applications. Talc-filled interior compounds can undergo accelerated embrittlement due to filler-stabilizer interactions, while under-the-hood PP is subject to severe high-temperature thermo-oxidative degradation. Tailored stabilization strategies, including optimized stabilizer packages and material design, are essential to maintain mechanical properties. Case studies illustrate effective methods of enhancing durability and performance in both applications.

Non-Halogenated Flame Retardant Compounds for High Performance Applications

Ritch Koeth, *LyondellBasell*

Traditionally, halogenated flame retardants have been very effective in providing a good balance of flame retardancy at an affordable price, while maintaining a material's mechanical properties. However, with a changing regulatory landscape, dynamic raw material market conditions, and growing demands on part performance, the need for alternative flame retardant technologies is as important as ever.

Non-Halogenated flame retardant compounds can provide significant benefits in final material performance in a variety of ways, including improved electrical properties, reduced smoke production during burning, transparency, and material light weighting. Halogenated flame retardant compounds have also been further enhanced by the use of non-halogenated flame retardants to contribute to improved performance and decreased material costs. Utilizing and understanding the strengths and weaknesses of different flame retardant systems is crucial in material selection in order to achieve optimal part performance in an application.

PERFORMANCE ADDITIVES AND COLORANTS

SESSION CO-CHAIRS:

Dr. John Mara, *Amfine Chemical*
Heejung Kwon, *SONGWON* | **Christian Aho,** *Americhem*

UV-Stabilization of Automotive TPO Compounds Impact of Sustainability, Recycling & E-Mobility

Dr. Noah Liu, *Rianlon*

PP and TPO are one of the most important representatives of thermoplastic organic polymers. In term, one of the most important applications for PP and TPO are automotive compounds. As thermoplastics, PP and TPO are mixed and shaped above 200°C (390 F). Due to their organic nature, PP and TPO degrade oxidatively significantly at these elevated temperatures. In consequence, the materials must be stabilized with Anti Aging Materials of various classes to allow melt-processing and to achieve a reasonably long service life.

An initial introduction & review of historic & current stabilization strategies for PP & TPO in automotive applications was given during the 2023 conference.

This paper reviews how sustainability, (mechanical) recycling & e-mobility will impose new requirement and hence do spark future developments. A systematic guide will be discussed including for example antioxidants and light stabilizers.

Enabling Paint Elimination Through Engineered Molded-In-Color Systems

Christian Aho &
Dr. Bhuvanesh C. Yerigeri, *Americhem*

Automotive OEMs are under pressure to eliminate paint operations on exterior components to reduce cost and manufacturing complexity. Achieving Class A surface aesthetics without coatings introduces coupled constraints across material formulation, surface durability, and processing conditions. This presentation examines how molded-incolor systems can be engineered to balance gloss, scratch resistance, UV performance, and molding behavior. Application-based insights highlight development challenges, performance trade-offs, and the conditions required to reduce or eliminate VOC-intensive paint processes.

TPO Translucent Composite Development

Louis Martin, *BYK*

Translucent TPO nanocomposites were prepared by melt processing mixed morphology clays (MMCs) and a series of styrene-ethyl butylene-styrene (SEBS) based elastomers using a twin screw extruder. The effects of surfactant structure of MMC on the transmittance and physical properties were explored for nanocomposites formed from the different elastomer structure of SEBS. Transmission electron microscopy, colorimeter, rheometer, and stress-strain tester were employed to investigate the nanocomposite morphology and physical properties as compared to talc.

Advances in HFFR Technology - FR GFPP vs. FR GFPA

Gary Rex, *JLS*

Halogen-free polyphosphate based flame retardants were evaluated for glass fiber reinforced polypropylene (FR GFPP) and polyamide (FR GFPA) in FR formulations for the electric vehicle market. Non-ammonium polyphosphate masterbatches for FR GFPP improved wick resistance, durability, weathering, and aging performances while maintaining mechanical properties. An optimized melamine polyphosphate for FR GFPA provided thermal stability, high GWIT/CTI, and long-term reliability with very good mechanical retention. These polyphosphate flame retardant formulations enable lighter, durable, sustainable mobility materials.

Emerging DBDPE Alternatives for Automotive Applications & the Formulation Impacts

Kimberly Kern & Jakub Lison, *ICL Group*

Increasing regulatory scrutiny, sustainability targets, and supply chain pressures are accelerating the search for alternatives to DBDPE in automotive flame-retardant systems. We will focus on emerging non-DBDPE flame-retardant solutions for TPO and related automotive applications, highlighting advancements that balance fire performance, processability, and regulatory considerations.

Attention will be given to alternative chemistries including polymeric brominated systems and synergistic additive technologies. We will also address formulation strategies that optimize overall system efficiency, including approaches that reduce reliance on ATO.

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SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES This annual event currently draws over 600 OEM engineers, automotive and plastics industry executives, and media. A variety of sponsorship packages - including tables at the banquet, networking receptions, advertising in the program book, signage at the event and more are available. Contact Teri Chouinard of Intuit Group at **intuitgroup@gmail.com.**

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EMAIL ABSTRACTS TO: EAVConference@speautomotive.com

> **BATTERY AND THERMAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**
Dr. Jeff Helms, Celanese Corp.
Bhaskara Bandakayala, Ford Motor Co.
Maggie Baumann, FRX Polymers

> **ELECTRIFIED POWERTRAIN AND POWER DISTRIBUTION**
Dr. Jeff Helms, Celanese Corp.
Dr. Monoj Ghosh, Eaton Corp.

> **HYBRID AND EXTENDED RANGE TECHNOLOGIES**
Erik LaBelle, Solvay Specialty Polymers
Dr. Karim Hmaza, Toyota

> **AUTONOMOUS DRIVING ENABLERS**
Dr. Nadeem Bokhari, Envalior
Randy Maynard, Celanese Corp.
Debra Preston, JVIS

> **MATERIAL INNOVATIONS**
Harsh Modi, Tesla
Sunit Shah, LyondellBasell
Troy Tingley, BASF

> **EVOLUTION OF INTERIORS**
Dr. Rose Ryntz, Ryntz & Associates
Jim Keller, Mankiewicz Coatings LLC
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Dr. Alper Kiziltas, Amazon
Drew Geda, Hyundai-Kia America
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> **NOISE AND VIBRATION**
Xian Jiang, Dow
Dr. Rodrigo Orozco, ExxonMobil Corp.
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Steve Vanloozen, Lotte Advanced Materials
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