

News Release



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Media Relations
Ken Gordon
614-790-1832
kdgordon@ashland.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ashland research takes top honors at automotive composites conference

DUBLIN, Ohio – Scientists from Ashland Inc. (NYSE: ASH) were recently honored by the Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE) during that organization's Automotive Composites Conference. Ashland's case study entitled, "Tough Low Mass Class A SMC," took the top award as best paper at the conference.

The case study described Ashland's new, tough, low-mass sheet molding compound (SMC) technology, and how it was used to make 40 Navistar, Inc. regional-haul tractor hood assemblies for part of Ashland Distribution's fleet. Produced by CORE Molding Technologies, the SMC material was made lighter by reducing the concentration of the high-density filler materials, using a combination of nanoclay products, AROTRAN[®] resin and low-profile additives. The hoods have proven to be durable and long-lasting in tests, logging 800,000 equivalent miles.

Research shows that the weight of a vehicle directly impacts the hauling capacity and fuel consumption, so any reduction in weight to the body of the truck can prove to be beneficial. The low-mass SMC reduced the weight of the hoods by 21 percent to 79 pounds. This reduction directly affects the amount of product that can be carried at no additional cost.

In addition to the Best Paper award, the SMC material is also a finalist in the Materials category of SPE's Automotive Innovation Awards Competition, the oldest and

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Ashland research takes top honors at automotive composites conference p. 2

largest recognition event in the automotive and plastics industries. The technology was presented to a panel of judges and the winners will be announced at the Automotive Innovation Awards Gala on Nov. 20.

“We’d like to thank SPE for the recognition of our paper and our technology,” said Rob Seats, product manager, Ashland Performance Materials. “It’s very exciting to be able to bring this technology to the transportation industry. We think it can make a major difference in both cost efficiency and the ability to transport products for companies.”

The seven-page case study about the technology was written in collaboration by Seats, Edward Zenk of Navistar, Inc., David Hearn formerly of CORE Molding Technologies, and Kevin Dinan and Cedric Ball of Ashland.

Ashland Performance Materials is a worldwide manufacturer and supplier of specialty chemicals and customized services to the building and construction, packaging and converting, transportation, marine and metal casting industries. It is a technology leader in unsaturated polyester and vinyl ester resins and gelcoats; high-performance adhesives and specialty resins; and metal casting consumables and design services.

Ashland Inc. (NYSE: ASH) provides specialty chemical products, services and solutions for many of the world’s most essential needs and industries. Serving customers in more than 100 countries, it operates through five commercial units: Ashland Hercules Water Technologies, Ashland Performance Materials, Ashland Aqualon Functional Ingredients, Ashland Consumer Markets (Valvoline) and Ashland Distribution. To learn more about Ashland, visit www.ashland.com.