

Media Release

Automechanika Leading International Trade Fair for
the Automotive Sector
Johannesburg Expo Centre, 18 - 21 March 2009

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MUCH INTEREST IN AUTOMECHANIKA SA'S INNOVATION AWARDS

Automechanika South Africa's first ever Innovation Awards competition is proving popular, with 24 entries received. This event to encourage automotive innovation is an integral part of the "menu" at the Automechanika automotive aftermarket trade fairs held around the world. The inaugural local event will take place at Expo Centre, Johannesburg, from March 18-21.

The entries in the South African competition represent a wide spectrum of aftermarket focus – anything from windscreen wipers to tyres, shock absorbers to wiring testers, vehicle alarms to GPS equipment, CVT gearboxes to vacuum rings, parking aids to electronic spares catalogues, gas analysers to headlamp globes, oil filter crushers to work lamps, breathalysers to lambda sensors; tyre pressure monitoring systems to specialised welding machines used in the vehicle repair industry.

Among the companies represented are Bosch, Goodyear, Monroe, Tenneco, Shatterprufe, Varibox and Bohler Uddeholm.

Entries have been received from a number of domestic designers and manufacturers, as well as from distributors of products imported from China.

A team of 10 jury members have been tasked with assessing the entries – they are Richard Bean (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research - CSIR); Twala Boco (Retail Motor Industry organisation - RMI); John Ellmore (RMI); Dr. Paulo Fernandes (Automotive Investment Holdings - AIH); David Furlonger (Financial Mail); Norman Lamprecht (National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of SA - NAAMSA); Lekgolo Lebepele (SA Bureau of Standards - SABS); Hoffie Maree (CSIR); Jeff Osborne (RMI); and Roger Pitot (National Association of Component and Allied Manufacturers - NAACAM).

More

Product information as submitted by the entrants, plus pictures and score sheets, has been mailed electronically to all jury members. Responses are beginning to come in.

Some members of the jury have reported that the task of selecting the finalists is far more demanding and time consuming than they anticipated, but they are excited by the variety and range of products submitted. All score sheets are due in by March 3, following which eight finalists will be announced, based on collective scores of jury members.

The jury is looking to uncover products that hold the promise of performing beyond expectation, that are innovative and promote efficiency. Simultaneously, the products must be perceived to represent good value for money, be of excellent quality and bring fresh perspectives to the aftermarket segments in which they compete. Functionality, practicality, styling, benefits to users, environmental friendliness and other perceived pioneering qualities are among the specifics jury members are looking for.

Once the eight finalists have been determined, entrants will be asked to submit for scrutiny two examples of each of the products – part of a second round of judging aimed at finding the competition's overall winner. The announcement of the winning product will be made at the official opening ceremony, which is scheduled to take place at Expo centre on March 18, where all of the items selected as finalists will be on show in two separate display areas.

- The competition is being organised under the banner of *Automobil*, the motor trade magazine that is also the voice of the Retail Motor Industry organisation (RMI). The editor of the magazine, Wynter Murdoch, is doing sterling work in putting the competition together, including the appointment of the judging panel and the circulation of the entries to the judges.

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