

Media Release

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

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GERMAN TRADE FAIR EXECUTIVE DELIGHTED WITH RESPONSE TO FIRST AUTOMECHANIKA SOUTH AFRICA

Management board member of the giant Messe Frankfurt exhibition and trade fair organisers, Detlef Braun, said he was delighted with the excellent support for the inaugural Automechanika South Africa automotive after market trade fair, which is his company's first foray into doing business in South Africa.

Speaking at the opening function at Expo Centre on March 18 Mr. Braun said he admired the pioneering spirit of the exhibitions as "being a pioneer can be extremely tough ... especially these days".

He was referring to the fact that the response far exceeded expectations, with over 400 exhibitors from 20 countries when the aim for this first event had been 250 exhibitors. The sold gross exhibition space of 25 000m² was also far and away a record for an inaugural Automechanika trade fair since the brand went global about 10 years ago.

Mr. Braun said it took a long time to bring the brand to the African continent as Messe Frankfurt, which established and owns the Automechanika brand, evaluated the South African proposal. In fact, negotiations lasted 18 months and it took another 15 months for the staging of the first Automechanika South Africa trade fair from the time the contract was signed.

"It is wonderful to see that our confidence in our partners, Dogan Trading, was well-founded," added the Messe Frankfurt senior executive. "I must say that although we were confident in their ability to put on a world class show from the time we signed the contract, it is wonderful now to see that our confidence is fully justified.

"Besides the professionalism of our partner we are pleased to see the excellent support the trade fair is getting from the various trade associations in South Africa and the attention it has attracted from experts in the aftermarket sector in the country.

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“The extensive interest shown by the media, both here in South Africa and in Germany has provided additional motivation and impetus for us at Messe Frankfurt. Under these circumstances, being a pioneer is an enjoyable experience!” explained Mr. Braun.

“I know that the challenges to participate in Automechanika SA have not been as easy as at many other shows for many of you and we value the fact that so many exhibitors have decided to be part of the historic first event of its type on the African continent. It is now, already, one of the most potent newcomers on the international fair and exhibition landscape.

“We are highly impressed with the growth, the energy and the potential of all the South African markets and the country’s people. Our aim is to create a professional international platform for the automotive sector in Johannesburg, which will promote interaction between national and international automotive companies.

“It is a platform that can act as an effective springboard into other world markets for South African companies and paves the way into the local market for international companies. South Africa continues to have a considerable growth potential for the automobile industry, which means that Automechanika South Africa can also hold out a realistic hope of growth into the future, particularly when the global economy improves.

“I would particularly like to congratulate our partners from Dogan Trading and offer a big ‘Thank You’ to Philip Otto, Pula Dippenaar, Andrew Mthembu, Craig Newman and Raymond Burke. You and your team have worked extremely professionally to organise an event of which you can be proud,” concluded Detlef Braun.

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