

## **TPE TOPCON 2016 – “Stretching the Performance with TPE’s”**

The Akron Section of the Society of Plastics Engineers, along with the TPE Special Interest Group of the SPE, will be hosting a conference this fall that highlights a unique blend of polymers, Thermoplastic Elastomers. This conference will be held at the Hilton hotel in Fairlawn on September 20-22, 2016. The title of this conference, “Stretching the Performance with TPE’s” includes a Pre-Conference in the form of a TPE Primer.

This conference is highly oriented to the title “stretching” as it will feature presentations that involve use of Bio-Renewable Materials, 3D Printing, Wearable Technology, and of course, Materials, Modifications and Development. These various sessions will highlight the latest, and newly developed technology, and the attributes that thermoplastic elastomers, coupled with recent nanotechnology, have to offer the market. This leap in technology development has helped to bring new materials to the forefront.

This conference will push the envelope of development as we feature two keynote addresses. Deborah Douglas (The Douglas Group), M&A of Thermoplastic Elastomers, and will share information about what makes companies desirable in today’s marketplace, and what the selling process is likely to bring. This is geared for both business owners and executives who create the health and prosperity of the companies where they work. In addition, Matthew Fielder (3D Inc.) is breaking through the current limitations of 3D printing to unlock new applications and growth markets worldwide. Gigabot, the company’s flagship technology, is the world’s largest low-cost, industrial strength 3D printer utilizing an esteemed group of specialty manufacturers, engineers, designers, universities in over 40 countries around the globe. 3D Inc, a recent Kickstarter recipient, will be discussing their new 3D manufacturing process including their ecosystem of hardware innovations, software solutions, and material science.

It was recently noted in the press the worldwide demand for Thermoplastic Elastomer is projected to grow 5.2% per year through 2019. This growth in North America and Western Europe will be driven by on-going product innovations, continued push to replace traditional elastomers where applicable, and some change from the current thermoplastic elastomers. The growth is slated for the TPV - Thermoplastic Vulcanizates in the motor vehicle, consumer and medical arenas. This growth is projected to be out paced in the U.S. while it jump started overseas in India, southeast Asia, Japan, and Africa. The demand continues to be steady in North America and Europe.

We have experienced locally a major shift in the business level as ExxonMobil has just constructed a worldwide technical and research center in Houston ,Texas as their 20 year property lease has recently expired in Akron. In addition, PolyOne is expanding their global footprint and expertise in thermoplastic elastomer innovation and design as they have recently announced they had acquired certain technologies and assets from Kraton Performance Polymers, Inc. The two companies also entered into a supply agreement, whereby Kraton will provide PolyOne certain raw materials used in production for the acquired business.

The end markets utilizing the acquired technologies span new and fast-growing applications in medical devices and personal care products. They have further informed that, "Since our highly successful TPE acquisition of GLS in 2008, we've continually invested and grown in globalized TPE innovation and its broad value-add applications".

A. Schulman has continued their portfolio modification into the automotive arena for both interior and exterior applications. They are known as a global solution provider for a variety of polymer compounds including their TPE line of INVISION<sup>®</sup> products.

In addition, Dow's Multibase facility in Copley, Ohio continues to provide the very soft touch line of TPSiV, their silicone-based TPE products for automotive applications.

Materials firm, Americhem Group, has acquired Vi-Chem Corp., a compounder based in Grand Rapids, Michigan. It's the third acquisition in four years for this Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio-based company. Vi-Chem brings them extensive knowledge in various TPE's. This broadens the types of compounds and material solutions we can provide to the market.

We are excited to provide an opportunity to those that would like to learn more about the basics and latest developments in the TPE Industry. Come join us this fall as the Akron Section of the Society of Plastics Engineers, along with the TPE's Special Interest Group, highlights these unique polymers and special applications. This conference will be held at the Hilton Hotel in Fairlawn on September 20-22, 2016.

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TPE TOPCON